

Sayed Hassan Akhlaq

INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL DEBATES IN ISLAM

*A Comprehensive Guide
to Islamic Discourse's Intellectual Origins*



Presă Universitară Clujeană

Sayed Hassan Akhlaq

INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL DEBATES IN ISLAM

*A Comprehensive Guide
to Islamic Discourse's Intellectual Origins*

Sayed Hassan Akhlaq

**INTELLECTUAL
AND SPIRITUAL
DEBATES IN ISLAM**

*A Comprehensive Guide
to Islamic Discourse's
Intellectual Origins*

PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ

2023

Referenți științifici:

Lect. univ. dr. Monica Meruțiu

Prof. univ. dr. Jonathan K. Zartman



*This work is licensed under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license.
(Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International).*

*To learn more about the CC licensing, please visit
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.en>*

ISBN 978-606-37-1890-8

© 2023 Autorul volumului. Toate drepturile rezervate. Reproducerea integrală sau parțială a textului, prin orice mijloace, fără acordul autorului, este interzisă și se pedepsește conform legii.

**Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai
Presa Universitară Clujeană
Director: Codruța Săcelean
Str. Hasdeu nr. 51
400371 Cluj-Napoca, România
Tel./fax: (+40)-264-597.401
E-mail: editura@editura.ubbcluj.ro
<http://www.editura.ubbcluj.ro/>**

*To my wife
Zainab*

*To my children
Ruhollah, Hakima, and Marzia*

Contents

Introduction	11
What Is This Book About?	13
What Is Meant by Intellectual and Spiritual Debates in Islam?	14
What Can this Book Contribute?	17
Why Is This Book Required?	20
Why Include These Subjects?	22
How to Use This Book	25
What Can Readers Expect From This Book?	27
CHAPTER 1.	
The Quran and Sunnah: the two fountains of Islam	31
The Word of God, Meaning and Formation	34
The Quranic Sciences	41
The Diverse Community and Various Interpretations	44
Sunnah.....	58
Sunni and Shia	63
Several Misconceptions	76
Last Glance	79
Suggested Resources	82
CHAPTER 2.	
Islamic Theology (Kalam)	85
Terminology and Background	86
Emergence of Two Major Islamic Denominations.....	88
Two Forms of Salafism	97
Shia Theology	103
The Classical Kalam in a Glance.....	105
Al-Afghani, his Followers, and New-Theology	112
Suggested Resources	126

CHAPTER 3.

Islamic Ethics (Akhlaq) and Practical Wisdom..... 129

- Background and Terminology 130
- Islamic Schools of Ethics..... 133
- Last Glance 145
- Suggested Resources 150

CHAPTER 4.

Islamic Spirituality and Gnosticism (Sufism) 151

- Terminology and Background..... 152
- Two Dimensions of Sufism 160
 - Practical Sufism* 161
 - Doctrinal Sufism* 165
- Last Glance 172
- Suggested Resources 179

CHAPTER 5.

Islamic Philosophy (Hikmah) 181

- Background and Terminology 182
- Islamic Schools of Philosophy 190
- Practical Reflections 206
- Last Glance 210
- Suggested Resources 213

CHAPTER 6.

Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Principles (Shariah) 215

- Significance and Terminology 216
- Formation..... 220
- Jurisprudence and its Principles..... 224
- The Five Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence 235
- Some Examples of Islamic Laws..... 239
- How to Deal with Shariah Today..... 248
- Abuse of Shariah..... 252
- Last Glance 261
- Suggested Resources 267

CHAPTER 7.

Islamic Politics (Siyasah) 269

Background and Terminology 270

Philosophical Approaches 275

Theological Approaches 280

Modern Approaches 286

Mass Excommunication 296

Last Glance 305

Suggested Resources 307

Epilogue:

Reflections on the Past and the Present 309

Bibliography 321

Index 331

Introduction

This book is an introduction to issues of interest and impact from the rich and diverse intellectual traditions of Islam from its inception to present. Those within Islamic study often lament that students and professors do not have a comprehensive and handy text on essential scholarship on the nature and foundations of Islamic civilization to use to explore each intellectual piece in the context of its relationship to other aspects of Islamic thought. Those outside Islamic study often lament that they do not know what's going on, or how to get up to speed in an era filled with shocking news of brutal attacks on humanity in the name of Islam. They ask, has Islam introduced positive contributions to society and civilization? Most of the scholarship is inaccessible to both insiders and outsiders for the same reason: it is highly technical, sophisticated, detailed, and laden with jargon and methodological description. The insiders enjoy them but get lost in a few concrete cases without the ability to understand how those cases relate to other examples of Islam.

Outsiders also have a hard time grasping the true nature of Islamic intellectualism. They need to understand the uniqueness of the foundations of Islamic faith and how they shape dynamics within Islam from liberal and peaceful Muslims, to fundamentalists and militant Islamists. Moreover, there are unique issues influencing practitioners and active communities in cross-cultural, inter- and intra-religious dialogues on human rights, women's rights, and policy-makers in the Middle East. With such contentious and complex topics, they lament that it is not always clear how the approaches of various schools really differ and how to work with

the communities that follow those schools. For example, knowledge of ethical or Sufi perspectives in Islam paves the path toward inter-religious dialogue, knowledge of Islamic philosophy inspires us toward dialogue among civilizations, and knowledge of colonialism and modernization helps us grasp the perspective of political and extremist Muslims. The multiplicity of subjects and cases on one hand and the concentration on the domestic, also, prevents the activists from finding the real meaning of those and analyzing them in terms of Islamic fundamentals.

For instance, a clear understanding of how Shariah law is formed is necessary to see changes of *Shariah* law within the context of secular or common law. Islamic clergies and *Ullama* lament the lack of a handy book possessing a comprehensive look at multiple aspects of Islamic study. While they possess knowledge and skills for training children and for preaching to the faithful, they lack a work to help them in intellectual connections with youth raised in secular theories and humanist trends. This book provides an accessible introduction for students, Islamic clergies, professors, and activists involved with Muslim communities. It helps them to understand what the fundamental perspectives and scholarships are within Islam and why they matter. After all, the study of the intellectual foundations of Islam ultimately affects everyone interested in the Islamic World, whether they are scholars of Islam or not.

The purpose of this volume is to trace the formation process and the current state of Intellectual Islam. It features scholarly works on the basic structures of Islamic intellectual and spiritual debates from a variety of perspectives, including the study of the Quran, theology, ethics, Sufism, philosophy, politics, and *Sharia* law. It aims to help anyone who is studying Islam at the university or seminary (*Madrasa*) level, either for speculative or practical purposes or to enrich their own understanding or to improve the community; their professors, clergymen who use Islamic texts;

bridge-makers and cross-cultural, inter-religious and intra-religious activists; and Middle Eastern scholars of the history of thought. This book will, ideally, enable the reader to discern some of the key concepts, frames, and themes of Islamic intellectualism, to identify several gaps that have been created in the various attempts to articulate them in a comprehensive way, to demonstrate the importance of the intellectual developments in Islam, and to show how they are relevant to the current world.

In short, anyone who engages with Islamic thought ought to benefit from this book, with the possible exception of Islamic scholars themselves. However, I hope that even Islam scholars will benefit, for their expertise is often limited to two or three of the topics covered in the volume; they too may profit from a concise introduction and guide to issues outside their expertise.

What Is This Book About?

As mentioned above, this volume aims to introduce issues of intellectual impact shaping Islamic civilization. This purpose requires some clarification. This work could be seen as a presentation of the cutting edge. By cutting edge, I mean applying a new framework useful to insiders to a comprehensive analysis that puts all aspects of intellectual traditions in their own space to create a clear map of Islam. It uses issues to create a new and comprehensive direction; new because it is targeted to those unfamiliar with intellectual Islam, and comprehensive because it is still useful to those familiar with at least one aspect of intellectual Islam. It may overturn previously held ideas about Islam or open new windows for cooperation and dialogue. In other words, far from extremist distortions of Islam with its characteristic acts of terror and far from mass media depictions, which are highly selective, heavily politically charged and deeply affected by the Arab-Israeli conflict, this volume attempts to examine in both Sunni

and Shia contexts the sacred and secular, the permanent and temporal, and the current and desired goals of humanity inform the ongoing development of Islamic culture. It places these fundamental concerns at the heart of Islamic intellectual tradition as they are approached and debated. Some of the intellectual aspects presented here have been well discussed like Sufism, philosophy, and theology; some issues are not as widely known; particularly the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic ethics. Almost all prior books on Islamic ethics are limited to one perspective, for example, scriptural analysis; few for example discussed secular ethics in Islam. These are introduced here as well.

In addition, this book addresses contemporary concerns about the confrontation between Islam and modernity on the one hand and the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims on the other. It does so by analyzing and discussing Islamic intellectual scholarship in context. In so doing, this work seeks to promote a greater familiarity with mainstream trends in Islamic thought. Consequently, it seeks to foster harmony and mutual respect between Islam and non-Islamic cultures by presenting and discussing religiously neutral aspects of Islamic theology, philosophy, spirituality, ethics, law, and politics to show their points of convergence with Eastern and Western intellectual thought.

What Is Meant by Intellectual and Spiritual Debates in Islam?

It is important to clarify what one means by the “intellectual and spiritual debates in Islam.” Islamic intellectualism is rooted in a concern for truth, benevolence and beauty. This work begins with an intellectual survey of Islamic thought. It explores how eminent Muslim scholars examined such perennial human concerns as: the role of reason, spirituality, and ethical values in human life; the relationship between natural and revealed religion; and belief amidst secularism. This intellectual exploration touches the heart of

Islam as well as the heart of humanity. The search for truth has been mounted through theology, philosophy, and Sufism. Searching for benevolence occurred via ethics. Searching for beauty also happened through Sufism. Islamic Shariah and politics wanted to bring these virtues, namely religious truth, benevolence, and beauty into practice among the public. There is an overlap to some extent between these intellectual circles. Finally, they produced some lively debate on the meaning of spirituality.

These disciplines form not only the intellectual traditions and trends in Islam but also the underlying principles that shape Muslims' religious practices across the globe. They need to be understood in order to make sense of Muslims' reactions, trends, and outputs. This volume, more or less, examines the intellectual rather than anthropological aspects of the culture which inspires Muslims to practice certain common traditions. This book is not intended to be a general introduction to Muslims' practical traditions or customary praxis. Those would require a different work and method; there are many of these works and writing another would not serve my aims as clearly. Rather, the issues of inspiration, guidance, and perspectives are the focus here. The outsider probes these fundamental outlooks as philosophical foundations and the insider traditionally identifies them as the "Islamic rational sciences" (*ulum al-aqliya*). The term "rational," here, means intellectual. Indeed, the Islamic and classic term "rational sciences" refers to a particular branch of knowledge. This knowledge includes well-established disciplines taught and researched among Muslims. Like any field of academic study, they have general principles and a specific methodology to acquire a "true" concept of reality or the "application" of research to human problems. These disciplines provoked genuine and fierce debate about the meaning of faith. They established their own traditions directly related to the Islamic faith's struggle to answer human questions of truth, reality, goodness, faith, and religious behavior.

The “rational” in “Islamic Sciences” is in sharp contrast to the “Islamic revealed sciences” (*ulum al-naqliya*) which deal with the Quran and Sunnah texts *per se*. I prepared a chapter on the Quran and Sunnah as two lasting and inspiring fountains of Islam only as an introduction to Islamic intellectualism. This is suggested merely in order to show how Muslims look at these sources and how spiritual and intellectual traditions owe their nature to them. That chapter, also, attempts to suggest a division between Sunni and Shia Islam in terms of their understanding of Islam and in terms of Islam’s diverse potential (Whenever I say “Shia” in this volume without any modifier, I am referring to Twelver Shia, the largest group of Shia Islam. When referring to any other group, an appropriate modifier will be used to clarify which group is meant).

Islamic emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge through the “rational sciences” is unique. It is exemplified by the relationship between the sacred and the secular in the Quran, whose revealed writing is considered miraculous, and which is the centerpiece of each Muslim’s home. It clearly delineates between scholars and non-scholars; in one section it equates the *scholar’s* witness with that of God and the angels (Quran 3:18). Additionally, God is described as *al-Hakim* (Wise) in many places in the Quran. Accordingly, this name has been applied in the long history of Islamic civilization to people, usually physicians, writers and poets, astronomers, mathematicians or sages who demonstrate the unity of the physical and “rational” sciences. In agreement with the Quran, the significance of science can be found in Muhammad’s *al-Sunnah* or Tradition. For instance, there is a hadith in which the Prophet states: “seeking science (*ilm*) is an Islamic obligation for each Muslim.” From this comes the obligation for all Muslims to learn and practice each science that is necessary for society to function well. Muslims agree studying non-utilitarian sciences increases our knowledge of God, who reveals Himself through nature.

This volume discusses the fundamental questions of life, the world, and truth as they have been raised and answered throughout the history of Islamic civilization and still shape Muslims' thinking and way of life today. Indeed, talking about the Islamic rational sciences *per se* entails the presentation of the special connection between the secular and the sacred, and reason and revelation within the Islamic context. This discussion occurs in all parts of this book, especially in the last part. It is essential to emphasize that these debating disciplines, including philosophy, are not peripheral to Islamic culture; rather they form the spirit of Islamic civilization.

This work only introduces the emergence, development, and trends of the topics discussed. It does not seek to promote or criticize any one aspect of the Islamic rational sciences; that requires additional investigation. It merely seeks to promote an understanding of them within the Islamic context. I did not attempt to present a simple historical survey of Islamic civilization and its socio-political implications; these are readily available elsewhere.

What Can this Book Contribute?

There is currently no other volume that provides a comprehensive image of the intellectual traditions of Islam, both Sunni and Shia, based on original sources in the languages of the Middle East. Over the last few decades, many works have been produced on Islamic intellectual traditions, but either they are focused on one aspect, such as Sufism, philosophy, or Shariah, or are limited to recent Sunni scholarship. Many intellectual works also focus on a single intellectual thinker and serve as case studies; they miss the breadth of Islamic intellectual tradition. This work attempts to highlight the unity behind this vast diversity so that the reader can touch the living sources and understand the methodologies used in these studies. No other single source gathers these issues together: the application of Sunni and Shia original

sources, the vast terminology fundamental to Islamic intellectualism, the milestones for each scholarship, the possible points of commonality or departures among these principles, the rise and collapse and intersections of several traditions, and an insider view open to Western thought.

Moreover, there are currently no other accessible treatments of issues that relate the long historical disciplines to recent debates and inquiries at a level that is accessible for non-specialists. So, in addition to the breadth of perspectives, accessibility also makes this book unique. It gathers together the most significant and influential areas of intellectual development in an accessible manner, so that all students, teachers, researchers, and clerics of Islam, as well as activists in the Islamic world or with Islamic communities, might understand and apply these explorations in Islamic intellectual and spiritual debates.

This book presents Islamic thought using the original sources in the languages of the Middle East: Arabic and Farsi. For many reasons, major Islamic literary works throughout history are written in these languages. The texts, in these languages, embody the insider perspective in which early intellectual concerns over divisions and changes in Islam were debated. Both academia and the *Madrasas* (Islamic seminaries) used these two scholarly languages. Many productive discourses have occurred throughout Islamic history over the original texts in Arabic and Farsi. Thus, to understand current trends and changes in the Middle East, and how those living there understand themselves, it is necessary to use Arabic and Farsi texts. Incorporating the viewpoints of Western scholars in dialogue with original texts enhances the discussion. However, to understand the religious views of the majority of Muslims, it is necessary to study contemporary texts in Farsi and Arabic, because Muslims mostly pray, theologize, and philosophize in these two languages, not in English. It is important to note that although many Islamic countries suffer a lack of philosophical

modernization in sciences and socio-economic-political development, they are producing new religious interpretations in Arabic and Farsi. In contrast, in spite of all the scientific developments in the West, much literature produced by non-Muslim scholars or Muslim intellectuals outside the *Madrasas* fails to penetrate Muslim thought because of Orientalist thinking, anti-imperialism, and the lack of religious identification and empathy. Sometimes the two literatures talk past each other because Western writers do not fully understand the mind and praxis of Islam. I will provide some examples in various chapters.

Many new trends of modernizing intellectuals in the Middle East are academically valuable; however, they have little influence on regional populations for a number of reasons, including inaccessible language, sophisticated methodology, lack of consistency with the predominant common sense, traditionalist/conservatives' populism, mass illiteracy, and association of politics and faith in Islam. This text deals with most mainstream and foundational works in order to introduce fundamental principles.

I focus on intellectual traditions because of my own experience of life in the Middle East and the USA. I realized that there is a gap between Muslims' and Westerners' understanding of each other. In a moderate way, they try to tolerate each other's different cultures and traditions, but differences arise from other aspects to remind them of the gap and reinforce it. This type of tolerance fails because both sides assume they understand each other; however, both fail to fully comprehend the fount of each other's culture. In my Farsi books, published in Iran and Afghanistan, I tried to build a bridge between Islam and the West through philosophy, theology, and mysticism and help Muslims learn about Western intellectual traditions. This short volume takes the same path for English readers and I hope it will facilitate a deeper understanding of the dynamic of Islam in its breadth in order to celebrate the efforts in Islam to promote truth, benevolence,

and beauty and to make room for mutual understanding, which is essential for the survival of both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Why Is This Book Required?

Some readers have obvious answers and don't need further encouragement. Others may require some persuasion. Anyone interested in the Islamic world for any reason needs to become familiar with the intellectual foundations discussed here. These subjects are not mysterious gibberish just for the sophisticated inhabitants of the ivory tower without any connection to the life of ordinary Muslims. Rather, I have been careful to select principles that have shaped and are shaping the foundations of Islamic perspectives. The disciplines discussed in these pages exhibit the contents, implications, effects, and even challenges of the Islamic rational sciences; their unique and dynamic features, despite false assertions that they merely appropriate Western non-Islamic cultures. This dynamic paves the road for dialogue between Islamic and non-Islamic cultures and intellectual traditions. They reflect on critical questions of human existence and ultimate purpose. There is no need to abandon the prospect of unity with non-Islamic intellectual traditions in favor of a plurality of systems or to abandon Islamic and non-Islamic rational traditions for unity. Rather, we can maintain the unity we have over our common concerns, but with the diversity of various traditions. Examined broadly, there is a positive interconnection between Islamic and non-Islamic civilizations. This will be briefly examined in each chapter. In sum, in an era of great concern for a clash of civilizations and dominant media portrayals of Islamic extremism, there is a real need to explore the position of Islamic disciplines toward the "Other." There are a number of reasons to examine these issues:

First, since Muslims form a significant part of the global population, now around twenty percent, they impact others' lives

and in turn are affected by others; consequently, presenting an accurate portrayal of Muslims' positive contributions to civilization can aid in the building of a better global village;

Second, examining critical approaches in Islamic intellectual currents helps us to understand present-day Islamic cultural movements and changes both among intellectuals and ordinary people, since ideas that appear in scholastic circles also influence popular movements, though hidden;

Third, this work provides the means to resist media stereotypes of Islam and its politicized counterpart, Islamic radicalism, which distances people from each other in the global age. Lack of mutual understanding and empathy among Muslims and non-Muslims creates huge obstacles that can be overcome neither by political strategies nor by cultural hints and techniques. Islam forms a substantial part of the Muslim's identity and thus has to be approached wisely. Countless books and articles have been published about Islam and Muslims worldwide, but few of them address the foundations of and diversity within Islamic culture; rather, they merely reduce it into categories. This stereotyping of Islam provides the basis for ideologies of war in both radical trends among Muslims and non-Muslims, and spreads hate under the name of *Allah* or promotion of secular values. It betrays both the search for truth and the people it aims to assist;

Finally, this work serves to offer an Islamic worldview based on self-examination of its own historical experience of the world, the truth, and fundamental human questions. It is a form of religious scholarly endeavor that is a mixture of both reason and revelation similar to *Shariah* or Islamic law which blends the secular or human and the sacred or divine through its reliance on reason to discern from sacred texts the principles and limitations of human behavior.

Why Include These Subjects?

Reference has already been made to some of the considerations in choosing the subjects of study in this volume. Specifically, I examine six critical tendencies or approaches that have impacted the formation of Islamic thought in religion and culture. All of Islamic civilization is derived from these sources one cannot claim to have an Islamic spirit without identifying and utilizing them in some fashion. Some disciplines like the study of the Quran and Sunnah, theology, philosophy, and Sufism, constitute the primary and meta-doctrines and theories in Islam while others, namely ethics, Shariah, and politics appear in the Muslim's practical daily life. I have striven to present one chapter for each subject, beginning with the study of the Quran and Sunnah, followed by *Kalam* (Islamic theology) and Islamic practical wisdom (*al-Hikamat al-Amaliyyah* or Ethics (*Akhlaq*)). The next chapters deal with Islamic Gnosticism or Sufism and Islamic philosophy (*al-Hikmah al-Nazariyyah*). The penultimate chapter debates Islamic *Shariah* and the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, and the final chapter examines Islamic politics (*Siyasah*) and explores the current politicization of Islam. At the end of each chapter, I will introduce the reader to the current state of the subject and potential applications to current local and global human issues.

The first chapter is a short history of the understanding and study of the Quran and Sunnah among Muslims from the earliest time to the present day. It examines the division of Islam into Sunni and Shia through historical events and theological features. It also addresses several misconceptions about the division of Islam into Sunni and Shia.

The following chapter addresses these topics: How ought the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad be systematized into a coherent theological project? How can Islam be both true to its tradition and present its core beliefs to modern non-Islamic

audiences? How can it respond to both legitimate and uninformed critiques? These questions shape Islamic theological thought.

The third chapter combines some of the advances in the ethical study of Islam and examines questions such as: What is Islam's influence on ethics, virtue, and moral philosophy in general? What are the ethical schools that have developed within Islamic civilization? And how have Muslim scholars reconciled ancient Greek ethics with Islamic moral philosophy?

Chapter 4 examines mystical and Gnostic developments in Islam. It deals with spirituality in the Islamic circle by asking how religion has contributed to Islamic spirituality, especially Sufism. What are the unique features of Islamic Gnosticism and mysticism? How has Islamic spirituality been systematized, and how can the individual make use of it?

The fifth chapter studies philosophical questions. How ought faith shape the form and content of Islamic philosophy? What are the pure Islamic elements of Muslims' philosophies and what have they learned from ancient philosophies, especially those of Plato and Aristotle, as well as modern Western philosophies? What are the philosophical schools in Islam, what do they hold in common and how are they different? It finishes with a reference to how philosophy can aid contemporary Muslims in dialogue with other religions and cultures.

Chapter 6 may be the most relevant to mass media representations of Islam as it explains Islamic law (*Shariah*). What does *Shariah* really mean? What is its relationship to Islam? What issues did Islamic sciences aim to address, and what role do they play in *Shariah*? How does it blend the secular and sacred? How does it elaborate on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims? How can *Shariah* law be applied in the current era?

The last chapter introduces the relationship between Islam and politics. What can Muslims learn from their holy text and historical sources about political leadership (*Siyasah*)? How should

Islamization and the recall of the Caliphate or Imamate be understood? What is the potential for democratic values within Islam?

Traditionally, politics in Sunni Islam, which comprises the majority of Muslims, is discussed in Shariah/jurisprudence sections. Traditional Shia discusses it in theology (*kalaam*). But I put it in a separate section: the association of politics and Islam is a major concern for the current world and I wanted to address this concern in a detailed exploration. Traditionally, ethics (*Akhlaq*) is developed as a part of scriptural study, Shariah, Sufism, or philosophy. It is considered a practical philosophy associated with rational sciences as well. I devoted a separate chapter to ethics in this volume because it was a crucial part, perhaps even the core, of the Prophet's mission, as he said, "I was chosen [as a prophet] to promote good traits."

Moreover, though the introductory chapter refers to sciences regarding the text, the Book and Sunnah, however, in nature this book does not systematically cover the sciences or ongoing intellectual developments that are traditionally identified with scriptural interpretation; it does not touch many "revealed sciences" like Quranic recitation (*Qira'a*); detailed study of Quranic exegesis (*al-Tafsir*); narration of the traditions of the Prophet (*al-Hadith* including *al-Riwayah* and *al-Dirayah*); or evaluating the transmitters of hadiths (*al-Rijal*). The inclusion of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and Politics (*Siyasah*) among the Islamic rational sciences, traditionally, is controversial. Distancing myself from the ancient tradition, I discuss how Islamic jurisprudence and politics are uniquely able to bridge the secular and the sacred and so open the field for further development and change allowing the faith to adjust to new human needs. Thus, Islamic jurisprudence, particularly the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, and Islamic politics include many aspects of the practical rational approach.

How to Use This Book

This book can be used for personal study or formal courses. Much of the materials originated in a lecture series for students, seminarians, and senior professors over several months, so it was designed with students in mind and can be used in the classroom. It may be set as a course text or used as an auxiliary reference to supplement other Islamic textbooks.

For personal use, the book is meant for students, clergymen, scholars, and activists alike. Students may read it to develop their understanding of Islamic intellectual achievements and how they emerged and formed. It will also broaden students' terminology and will be especially useful to anyone engaging in Islamic postgraduate studies by providing comprehensive awareness of these scholarly principles. Clergymen will explore much here, hopefully, that will sharpen and refine their interpretation and articulation of Islam. Islamic scholars sometimes need to look at their subject of expertise in connection to the whole of Islam and examine the relationship between the part and the whole. Interdisciplinary professionals should also widen their scope to best practice their craft. This book will be the easiest way to catch these aspects. The same service can be offered to activists who are trying to bridge people, nations, and worldviews.

In part, this volume presents two groups of literature. This is, in fact, an integral component of introducing new disciplines. The first group is referenced during the discussion of the discipline presented in each chapter. These references are the primary sources in that discipline and form the foundation of the discipline. Familiarity with the original texts provides fundamental concepts of the issue and deals with them. Although I wanted to provide a sufficient summary of the key scholars in each field so that this work would be independently useful, I only described issues essential to the evolution of the subject. An eager reader can pursue the already summarized references while a casual reader will find it sufficient.

I use the original Persian and Arabic references. These two languages, particularly Arabic, still serve as the scholarly lingua franca in the Islamic world because they include classical resources. Muslim seminarians, who spend many years studying Islam in *Madrasas* and impress the common faithful across the globe, learn Arabic as the first step of study. I used these sources since I wanted to trace the intellectual foundations of Islamic culture from within, its formation, and its basis in original sources. This does not mean ignoring the rich diversity among Muslims as well as the huge variety of works in Islam in other languages, particularly from the last century. It is meant, rather, to introduce readers to the core of Islamic intellectualism. The second set of literature encompasses secondary sources introduced through footnotes and the bibliography. Here, I introduce many English resources, though the Arabic and Persian texts are engaged for the same reason and to show how Muslim religious scholars approach the disciplines and apply these hermeneutics.

Each chapter concludes with a list of suggested further reading to assist the reader in developing their competence. These works are chosen to suggest a holistic idea of the discipline, though works addressing specific figures or issues are not included. The reader must consider the bibliography separate from the books introduced for further reading. They must further explore the disciplines to gain a more comprehensive understanding since such analogous fields often come together in holistic references. For example, theology and philosophy go together as do *Sharia* and Ethics. The same works for *Sharia* and politics or philosophy and Sufism.

Finally, the reader should think critically about these subjects for themselves. I have attempted to present the materials objectively. However, I did not abandon my own opinions and conclusions. I sought to make them useful to the reader to accomplish this book's purpose.

Please note, references, books, or articles that were written and published in Arabic or Farsi will be cited using the Islamic lunar or solar calendar year unless the Western calendar appears in the printed version; books or articles published in English will be cited using the Western calendar year. Unreferenced numbers within parentheses refer to the chapters and verses of the Quran respectively.

What Can Readers Expect From This Book?

I expect several possible outcomes. First, the reader will be properly introduced to the core subjects and the importance of the intellectual and spiritual formation of Islam. Also, the reader will better understand the intellectual traditions of Islam and their susceptibility to radicalism, liberalism, and dialogue with “Others.” Moreover, studying Islam can be greatly enhanced by exploring the links between the Islamic teachings of today and those from the past. This point may inspire some to learn more about the quest for reformation in Islam. In addition, the reader will be able to engage Intellectual Islam with confidence and relate them to both Muslim praxes and current trends. The reader will understand the Islamic split into Sunni and Shia and the difference between Islamic approaches to scripture and other faiths. Plus, advocates of intellectual history will learn about the contributions of Islam to society and civilization. They will also explore how the first intellectual meeting between Islam and the West occurred and how it was productive and insightful. This book provides avenues for policymakers, intellectuals, and community leaders, as well as theologians and religious experts, to explore and develop their own practical and theoretical interests. It will promote intra- and inter-religious dialogue by providing Muslims with a broader appreciation of their own faith and its cultural import. It also presents to non-Muslims a broader, non-politicized view of Islam

and its contributions to world culture. Furthermore, the reader can counter the negative stereotypes and misunderstandings of Islam and Muslims that, unfortunately, often prevail in predominantly non-Islamic cultures. Also, they will learn how current intellectual debate in Islam is affected by Western colonialism, a historical phenomenon that shapes lived reality in Islamic lands. It calls for mutual understanding and cooperation. In all of these respects, this volume will promote and positively influence the ongoing interaction of religion and culture in society. I hope this small contribution will aid the ongoing efforts to promote mutual understanding among civilizations and the development of a more humane world. Finally, a couple of words should be mentioned concerning the categorization of the schools, groups, and strands, since this serves a pedagogical purpose of delving deeply into the issue, rather than providing an essential interpretation to uncover the underlying nature of these tendencies. It is important to note that fluidity and overlap are a significant part of intellectual currents.

I would like to thank the McLean Center for The Study of Culture and Values, particularly Dr. Hu Yeping, at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC which gave me the opportunity to present the basic content of this book in a lecture series, March to May 2014. These talks, along with the accompanying questions, answers, and debates, helped me clarify and better elucidate them. For the following years, I persisted in my examination of the materials, pursuing new documents, revising my idea, and confronting fresh alterations and progress. Also, I wish to express my appreciation to Saint Joseph Seminary, which provided me a peaceful and welcoming environment that enabled me to concentrate on my work. It also provided me with a greater understanding of the Christian philosophical and theological traditions through my interaction with Catholic priests, brothers, seminarians, and lay persons. I wish to thank John Leblance,

Matthew Buszek, and Mark Walko, who were more than willing to offer their constructive comments on my manuscript. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to two incredible people: the late Dr. John P. Hogan, who supported me throughout this undertaking and whose guidance enabled me to bring forth the most positive aspects of this book. His memory will never be forgotten. Additionally, I am immensely thankful to my student and friend Robert Zayd KiaNouri-Zigmund, who read the entire text and provided generous editorial advice.

CHAPTER 1.

The Quran and Sunnah: the two fountains of Islam

Abstract. This chapter charts the original inspirations of the Islamic faith, the Quran and the Sunnah, in a way that suggests various readings and motivates many intellectual and spiritual movements. The Quran is the incarnation of God's word, similar to Jesus in Christianity, and the Sunnah is composed of the Prophet's words, actions, and implicit agreement (as well as the infallible Imams in Twelver Shia thought). The chapter also elaborates on the meaning of the Quran and Sunnah for Muslims, and the scholarships that historically emerged around the Quran to shape the foundations of Islamic thought. It introduces the pre-modern (narrative, linguistic, theological, jurisprudential, philosophical, and Sufi) and modern (Socio-political, philosophical-theological, and traditional) approaches to the commentary of the Quran. The main sources of *Hadiths* (in both denominations) and their formation also are introduced. It examines in detail the formation of the division of Islam into Sunni and Shia through historical events and theological features. The author uses the example of Salman, the great companion of the Prophet, to discuss philosophical grounds for distinguishing Shia from Sunni. Pointing out several misconceptions in terms of Sunni and Shia differences, the chapter rejects a stereotype that sees only politics as separating these two denominations. It concludes with some remarks about the current status of focusing on the Quran and Sunnah as well as how jurisprudence and Sufism, the two dominant intellectual movements in the history of Islam, relate to Sunnah.

Islam can be examined through various fields of study, including the practices of Muslims; the variety of theological, philosophical, jurisprudential, and mystical schools; the history of Islam; and civilization and culture. That all of them are open to dispute is seen from the enormous diversity concerning all these things within the Muslim community, Islamic scholars, and the cultural manifestations of Islam. What is considered deeply Islamic in the land of the holy cities Mecca and Medina, Saudi Arabia, is seen as a deformation of Islam in Indonesia, the country which has the largest Muslim population. What is called the command of God in the jurisprudence of Averroes and Khomeini is considered non-Islamic and not allowed in the jurisprudential verdict of others like Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Khoei. The same story, more or less, is true of theology, philosophy, and mysticism. In spite of this diversity in theory, practice, time and space, all Muslims are united in the belief that the Quran and Sunnah are the central foundation of their faith. All disputes originate from how to approach and understand the Quran and Sunnah, and how to examine the authenticity of Sunnah. The Quran reflects what was revealed to the Prophet and the Sunnah reports what the Prophet (and for the Twelver Shia also the infallible Imams) has done, said, or approved. The discussion of the Quran and Sunnah thus remains the core of Islam. They serve as fountains that inspire Muslims to both renew and enrich their faith throughout history and in all cultures. They are the origin and the ideal—the origin of inspiration and the ideal by which all are judged. Therefore, every branch of Islamic understanding and literature owes its inspiration, thematic content, and technical terminology to some extent to the Quran and Sunnah. Although these different schools of thought may seem at times contradictory, and in fact sometimes are, they are reflections of the same sources: the Quran and Sunnah.

Rumi, the great Sufi, narrates that once a close friend and a major enemy of the Prophet saw the Prophet. They had attributed

opposite characteristics to the Prophet. He affirmed both attributes. People were shocked and asked him how both two opposing attributes are valid. The Prophet explained he is a mirror that reflects back each person's reflection to each. This is Rumi's conclusion:

"They that were present said, 'O king, why didst thou call both of them truth-tellers when they contradicted each other?'

He replied, 'I am a mirror polished by the (Divine) hand: Turcoman and Indian behold in me that which exists (in themselves).'" (Rumi, 1: 2365-2379)

In other words, the Quran and Sunnah provided a tool for Muslims to reflect upon the various styles for searching for truth (e.g. Sufism, philosophy, and the like). Islamic texts, like all religious texts, mean what their varied adherents say they mean. Texts do not have a voice of their own. They speak through their community of readers and contemplators. There is a mutual interaction between the text and its readers. The holy texts provide believers with religious experiences and the believers give the text a voice. Every order, approach, school, and denomination in Islam found its ideal in the Quran and Sunnah and attempted to justify its own achievement in terms of them. Muslim philosophers found them pro-philosophy, theologians as theological sources, Sufis as mystical fountains, Shariah scholars as legal springs, and ordinary Muslims as all of these. The Quran and Sunnah contain what Muslims with diverse backgrounds, aims, and talents reflect. These mutual reflections between the Quran, the Sunnah, and their advocates are reflected in the various understandings of a large (1.3 billion people) and old (1,400 years) community. The intellectual foundations of Islamic culture require a close examination of how Muslims look at the Quran and Sunnah. Why are they central in Islam? How do Muslims reading the Quran and Sunnah differ from those of other religions reading their sacred texts? What do the Quran and Sunnah mean to Muslims? How has the study of the

Quran and Sunnah structured Islamic intellectual and spiritual debates and broader life? To answer these questions, two major themes occupy this chapter on the Quran and Sunnah: it elaborates their meaning, significance, dimensions, and formation; and related scholarship in the Islamic context.

The Word of God, Meaning and Formation

In contrast to the Christian New Testament, which was multi-authored and relatively delayed in its formation as a unified canon (Renard, 2011, 27), the Muslim community formed as the scripture was being revealed, and Muslims consider the Quran, as God's revelation, to have no human author, not even the Prophet. Authorship, however, is not the only barrier the Quran presents to outsiders. Its content is different from other religious texts as well. It is not explicitly metaphysical like the Hindu Upanishads, nor is it full of dramatic narratives as the Indian epics are. Nor does it have the historical organization and narratives of the Hebrew Scripture. Finally, God is not revealed in human form as in the Gospels and the Bhagavad-Gita. While the Old and New Testaments are explicitly historical and indirectly doctrinal, the Quran is explicitly doctrinal and indirectly historical (Smith, 2005, p.28).

To be a Muslim means to subscribe to several fundamental tenets: There is only one God; God sent people many prophets to guide them on the straight path; and there is a Day of Judgment. Historical facts are merely reference points that have no significance in themselves (Hogan & Akhlaq, 2017, p. 769). This is why the Quran cites the prophets out of chronological order: several events are recounted and repeated, and even biblical stories are abbreviated. The doctrinal foundations of Islam render theory more important than practice.

Less than one-twelfth of Quranic verses concern general canonical prescriptions such as acts of worship and interactions.

The rest discuss ethical and doctrinal subjects that link the omnipotent, omniscient, and merciful God to rational and free people. They can receive God's revelation through their human existence, the physical world, general history, and scripture. Human existence, growth, nutrition, rest, joy, work, reason, and emotion, are all signs of God (30:8 & 20-24; 51:21). Nature contains indicators or "signs" (*Ayat*, singular *Ayah*) of God, its creator and sustainer (3:26-27; 51:20); the history of the rise and fall of nations, victory and defeat, also reveals God's traditional way of acting (*Sunnat Allah*) (17:77; 33:62; 35:43; 48:23). The Quran is God's sign to guide his people, and each of the over 6000 verses are called signs as well (*Ayah*). The Quran, however, presents itself as a continuation of all previous revelations (10:47; 4:164) and also a culmination of the Old and New Testament (3: 3 & 46-48). It states: "Indeed, those who are faithful and those who are Jews or Christians or Sabeans - those [among them] who have faith in God and the Last Day and do righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve."¹ (2:62, also see, 5:69).

The word "Quran" in Arabic literally means recitation and reading. According to Muslims, it is the verbatim word of God delivered to the Prophet Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel (*Jibrail* in Arabic) in manageable segments over the twenty-three years of his prophethood. Four-fifths the length of the New Testament, the Quran is divided into 114 chapters or *Surahs*. The *Surahs* and verses are labeled as either Makki or Madani, that is, those revealed to the Prophet when he was in Mecca and those after he migrated to Medina. All chapters (with exception of chapter 9) began with "*Bismillah al-Rahman ar-Rahim*" (In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate). Chapter 27 repeats "*Basmalah*" twice so that there are the same number of "*Basmalah*" phrases as there

¹ The translations from the Arabic are my own.

are *Surahs*. Muslims usually start their business, lecture, study, and work by reciting this phrase asking for God's blessing². Traditional Muslims apply many Quranic phrases in their daily life: *Alhamduli'llah* (Praise be to God) is said to finish an act or event with gratitude; *Insha'allah* (God-willing") accompanies every utterance concerning the future; and *al-salamu alaykum* (Peace be upon you) is the greeting of the people of paradise as described in the Quran.

Muslims memorize many passages of the Quran as children. As the eminent comparative religion scholar, Huston Smith, states, the Quran is perhaps the most recited and read book in the world; it is the world's most memorized and possibly the book with the greatest impact on readers throughout the world – including both those who have read the Quran, and those who have not read the Quran. For those people who have read the Quran, the Quran has the greatest impact of all the books they have read. The Quran is a memorandum for the faithful, a reminder of daily praxis, and a repository of revealed truth (Smith, p. 24 & 30). Muslims, men and women, with various cultural, racial, and economic backgrounds from different times and places reread parts of it in their daily prayers in its revealed language – Arabic. Nightly during Ramadan, after fasting, Muslims used to hold celebrations with competitions to reward those who could best recite the Quran. Muslims also attempt to read the entire Quran at least once during this month. Many Muslims recite parts of the Quran in memory of a deceased. Traditionally, the Quran is read to babies when they are born to mold their souls, is repeated in their daily prayers and at marriage ceremonies, and is chanted beside the dying (Nasr, 2002. p.22).

² To learn more details about the concept of basmalah and its widespread among Muslims, see my work, "Introducing a Comparative Ecotheology: Islamic Concept of Basmalah and Luther's Commentary on the Ten Commandments," in *Religion, sustainability and Education*, edited by Mary Philip, Chad Rimmer and Tom S. Tomren, (Embla Akademisk & Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, 2021), pp. 141-168.

The Quran, not Muhammad, is considered God's word, as Christ himself is in Christianity. It is said that "If Christ is God incarnate, the Quran is God made into a book." In the Quran, God speaks in the first person, instructing the Prophet to repeat the words. Many verses are begun by God's order to the Prophet to "Say", and Muhammad is forced to repeat the word "Say." For example, chapter 109 begins with "say: 'o unbelievers, I do worship not that which you worship,'" and Mohammad delivered to the people "say: 'o unbelievers, I do worship not that which you worship.'" All chapters 112 to 114 began with the same "say". This is because Allah describes himself in the Quran. The Quran is not *about* the truth: it *is* the truth. It is not about revelation: it is the revelation. Muhammad had no control over the flow of the revelation; it descended on him independently of his will. God in an earlier chapter tells the Prophet that He will cast upon him the words (73:5). The Quran mentions that some people asked the Prophet to change some of his words, and he replied that he had no control or authority over it because he only delivered it (10:15-16)³. There are also verses in the Quran that describe how the Prophet Muhammad heard them while in a state of revelation (75:17-18; 87:6). The words that Muhammad received were memorized by his followers and recorded on bones, bark, leaves, and scraps of parchment. Mohammad also received and delivered the structure of the chapters. During the caliphate of Uthman (577-656), some twenty years after the death of the Prophet, as many of those who had memorized the Quran were dying in various battles, the definitive and complete text of the Quran was copied into several manuscripts and distributed through Islamic world. There exists

³ Authorship of the Quran by God, in the current format and language, is made clear in many verses including: authorship, 29:47-48; Arabic, 12:2; 19:113; 39:28; 41:3; 42:7; 43:3. This type of verse illustrates that at least Quranic revelation cannot fit the modern western analysis of the revelation as a religious experience (see Yasrebi, 1389, p. 360).

only one version of the text of the Quran, upon which all denominations of Islam agree.

This revelatory nature of the Quran explains why Muslims focus on experiencing the words themselves, even their sounds, the lines they are written in, and the sheets of paper they are written on. They are a vehicle of grace because each sentence is viewed as a separate revelation. While the Jewish and Christian Scriptures place religious meaning in reports of events, the Quran is God's direct pronouncements. The book appears as a revelation of God. This gave primacy to the written word, and today the printed word, among Muslims.

Since God chose to reveal His word in Arabic (13:37), this language remained the language of religious learning. Translated Qurans are often accompanied by the Arabic text because no translation can embody the revealed words of God in the original Arabic⁴. Quranic Arabic plays a role in Islam similar to the role of Christ's body (the Eucharist) in Christianity⁵.

For Muslims, the Quran is the "standing miracle" of God which each person can have in his or her own room, or they can put a passage in their pocket for protection. They carry the Quran with awareness of its sacred reality and do not touch it without making their ablution and undergoing ritual cleansing. They kiss and pass under it when going on a journey. This is a source of blessing, or *Barakah* for them in all moments of need. The Prophet, who was an

⁴ However, as early as the 10th and 11th centuries, Persian translations of the Quran, which were word-for-word translations of the Arabic, already existed. In 1726, an Armenian - who was not a Muslim - printer printed the first edition of the Quran's translation into Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul. In 1933, Cairo's prestigious Shaykh al-Azhar declared that a translation of the Quran would be beneficial to those who do not understand Arabic, maintaining that the translations still embody God's words. (Hillenbrand, 2015, 82)

⁵ Nasr makes an analogy, saying, "As Christians consume bread and wine as symbols of the flesh and blood of Christ, Muslims pronounce, using the same organ of the body, that is, the mouth, the Word of God in the daily prayers." (Nasr, 2002, p.23)

unschooled and unlettered man (*Ummi*) who could barely write his name, without a miracle could not have produced a book that provides the fundamental blueprint of all knowledge needed for human happiness, and that is also grammatically perfect and without poetic peer. The Quran is a special and everlasting miracle, and it is linguistically and thematically inimitable. "No people in the world" writes Philip Hitti "are so moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs. Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such irresistible influence as Arabic." Smith, quoting Hitti, continues that crowds in Cairo, Damascus, or Baghdad can be stirred to the highest emotional pitch by statements that, if translated, seem banal. The rhythm, melody, cadence, and rhyme produce a powerful hypnotic effect. Thus the power of the Quran lies not only in its inner meaning, or spirit, but also in the language, its body or outer form, in which this meaning incorporated, including its sound; this is why Muslims have sought to teach others the language in which God spoke (Smith, pp. 27-28). Muslims believe the miracles of each prophet correspond to what was important in his time. Since magic was so significant in Egypt, God gave Moses the power to turn his staff into a serpent. Since medicine was so important during the time of Christ, God gave him the miracle of raising the dead or curing incurable patients. Accordingly, because poetic eloquence was the most prized of all virtues for pre-Islamic Arabs, God revealed through the Prophet the most eloquent of all Arabic works. Muslim tradition emphasizes numerous accounts of pagan poets who sought to create speeches as powerful as the verses of the Quran, yet ultimately were unable to do so. "Indeed, throughout history" John Esposito writes, "many Arab Christians as well have regarded it [the Quran] as the perfection of Arabic language and literature." He highlights the incalculable and enduring influence of the Quran on the development of Arabic grammar, vocabulary, and syntax - all achieved by an unlettered person. It is the first prose book in Arabic and sets the style for future works. As Hitti states, "It kept the

language uniform. So that whereas today a Moroccan uses a dialect different from that used by an Arabian or an Iraqi, all write in the same style.” (Esposito, 2005, p. 19)

The second aspect of its miraculousness is its content. Averroes, a prominent Islamic philosopher and jurist, believed the Quran was a certain or known miracle, compared to probable previously mentioned ones, because it meets the objective of prophecy, teaching us about God, the Last Day, and human life. Averroes defines certain miracles as those which reveal the nature of human happiness, God, the Last Day, and human life. The miracles of Moses, such as turning a staff into a serpent, did not reveal any of these things and are thus not certain. Averroes argues that another miracle of the Quran is that it discusses the subjects in a way benefiting both scholars and the public (Averroes, 1998, p. 182-185). The classical scholarship in Islam argues that the Quran’s content is miraculous and calls it a comprehensive foundation of all the knowledge needed to achieve happiness, here and hereafter. Like a lasting fountain, the Quran feeds all Islamic intellectual and spiritual traditions, including theology, philosophy, Sufism, and jurisprudence, although there are some conflicts between these branches of knowledge. For example, the unity of God means different things in theology, philosophy, and Sufism. Many Muslim jurists do not accept all of these meanings and consider several philosophical, Sufi, and even theological interpretations heretical and reject them. However, Islamic intellectualism in all its colorfulness and richness is proud of drawing from the Quran. There is a new tendency in Islam that sees an aspect of the Quranic miracle to be its new message for each new era. For example, they suggest the Quran respects rationalism and humanism, which are current concerns of humanity.⁶ The Quran itself emphasizes its own miraculousness and challenges others to produce a similar text.

⁶ A clear example is *Tafsir-e Rooz* by Sayed Yahya Yasrebi. I will touch on several points of this commentary very soon when I am elaborating modern exegesis and address the philosophical-theological commentaries.

After the first fifty short chapters of the Quran were revealed, it asked if anyone can produce something like them (17:88). Then it reduced the difficulty of the challenge and asked for only similar ten (11:13). Finally it asked for only one similar chapter (2:23). This challenge is known as “*Tahhaddi*” (Calling for combatant).

The Quranic Sciences

This unique significance of the Quran within Islam, its self-confidence for comprehensiveness and its lasting miracle has been inspiring Muslims to use the Quran to shape study, work, and arts. Calligraphy is an example of Quranic influence on art. From the beginning it is closely associated with the Quranic text and along with architecture constitutes the supreme sacred arts of Islam. In architecture, there are three aspects of sacred art. First, the interior surfaces are decorated with calligraphic Quranic verses. Second, the Quran shapes the design and layout of the building itself so that it enhances the ability of those present to hear the Quran spoken aloud. Finally, the Quran influences architecture by shaping the way and method it is recited in the mosque. Architecture also grows from and finds its highest expression in the mosque as well as the recitation and chanting of the Quran as well. However, many traditional sciences appeared and grew and are still common in Islam because of the Quran. It includes many studies on the Quran like recitation, miraculous aspects (*ijaz*), abrogation (*naskh*), alteration (*tahrif*), its history, the process of revelation (*wahy*⁷), the occasions of revelation (*asbab* or *shan-i nuzol*), its language, its interpretation, the various levels of its content (*zahir* and *batin*), and the like. Each study consists of very sophisticated skills and aspects. For example, the art and science of recitation of the Quran possess

⁷ The Quran and Islamic tradition use the term “*wahy*” referring to “revelation” to highlight the descending and falling down namely a vertical event instead of some horizontal event.

two aspects. The external aspect is based on strict traditional sources that have been preserved and transmitted from generation to generation going back to the Prophet on how to recite and chant the Quran: one is not allowed to do it as one wants. The very pauses and intonations are determined. The external aspect of recitation covers several etiquettes (*adab*) like posture and ritual cleanliness. There is also an internal aspect that suggests how to read the Quran in order to touch its spirit and be inspired by it in daily life. For example, it encourages readers to recite the Quran in the way they imagine the Prophet, or Gabriel, or God would recite and reveal it: this corresponds to the spiritual state of the reader. This aspect is discussed in ethical books and is called the internal etiquettes (*adab al-batini*) of the recitation.

Since the Quran was revealed over twenty-three years with many different circumstances it is necessary to understand the circumstances in which it was revealed. For example, the verses encouraging fighting polytheists targeted a very small group who betrayed Muslims while the two were at peace (al-Zamakhshari, 1998, 3: 7, 9 & 13). Forgetting this context and the particular target may lead to a very violent reading of the Quran. In addition, there is a story that once Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Medina each boasted that they had the very best faith. Verses 123-4 of chapter 4 were revealed in this context and say the criteria for salvation is good deeds, not wishes and ambitions (al-Suyuti, 2002, 92-3; al-Tabarsi, 2006, 3:164). In this context, we can also understand the story behind verse 62 chapter 2 which very clearly recognizes religious pluralism when Salam Farsi, the great companion of the Prophet asked him about his precious friends in other faiths⁸ (Suyuti, 14-15). Chapters and verses revealed in Medina vary from the ones in the Meccan period in both the structure of language and the content. Shifting between these two groups has inspired Muslims to think about the impact of time, space, and social

⁸ This verse is repeated with a little change in chapter 5, verse 69.

atmosphere on the faith and God's message. The linguistic nature of the Quran laid a foundation for philosophical investigation in Islam to study the Quran. Many linguistic examinations of the Quranic study throughout history have enriched Arabic rhetoric and grammar including codification and systematization of Arabic and study of context. I will refer to the jurisprudential aspect later in the Shariah chapter.

The Quran is like the sun, it enlightens humanity but looking directly at it causes problems; it describes itself as "healing" for the faithful and "harm" to evil-doers (17:82). Muslims distinguish between two levels of meaning within the Quran. The first comes from explaining the verses in context and in harmony with other verses. It is called *tafsir* (interpretation) rooted in the Arabic term *f-s-r* (unveiling and explaining). The second level of meaning comes from examining the verse in the context of the whole of the Quran and its meaning and spirit. It is called *ta'wil* (inner interpretation) rooted in the Arabic term *a-w-l* (reaching the origin and source). The Prophet encouraged the faithful to use both levels. He gave several interpretations when asked for clarification of some verses. He also prayed for God to give his companion Ibn Abbas (619-687) the science of *ta'wil*. The Quran divides its verses into two groups: decisive (*muhkam*) and allegorical (*mutashabih*). The first group offers fundamentals; however, only wise scholars can discern the allegorical meaning (3:7). In the classical approach, *Al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Quran* (translated into English as "The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Quran") written by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445-1505) still is considered a good encyclopedia of Quranic sciences. Also, *al-Tamhid fi Ulum al-Quran* "An Introduction to the Quranic sciences" written by Muhammad Hadi Marefat (1930-2006) can be seen as a contemporary and Shia version of *al-Itqan*⁹.

⁹ Lacking an English translation of the book, *al-Bayan* of the grand Ayatollah al-Khoei (1899-1992) is very helpful. It is translated by Abdulaziz Sachedina titled *The Prolegomena to the Quran*.

The Diverse Community and Various Interpretations

There are many narrations reporting that Muslims used to ask the Prophet about the meaning of Quranic verses. The Prophet's encouragement to learn more about the Quran and his interpretations initiated Quranic interpretation. Muslims consider ten companions of the Prophet to be the first group of interpreters: Ali ibn Abitalib, Ibn Masud, and Ibn Abbas are the most influential. The tradition of interpretation has continued up to today. Step by step this scholarship has taken responsibility for different jobs including (1) giving a historical and articulated interpretation of the Quranic message and purpose; (2) examining the Quran with regards to various communities, needs, and circumstances in a harmony with the whole text; and (3) answering new criticisms and even challenges to the Quran as a guide book, as a miracle, and as core of Islam. The first phase of interpretation, done by the Prophet's companions, only included some linguistic points, some stories about the occasions of the revelation, explanations of several verses by comparing them to other verses, and some Hadiths (quotations of the Prophet). In the second generation the numbers of Hadiths grew.

However, the tradition of Quranic interpretation is divided into two periods: pre-modern and modern interpretations. The pre-modern interpretations primarily cover the first seven centuries of Islamic history (i.e. the first half of the fourteen centuries). The most productive centuries were the 9th and 10th centuries of the Common Era. The modern period consists of the last two centuries. Between these two periods, there is a vacuum in terms of original production, in all Islamic intellectualism including Quranic interpretation.

The pre-modern interpretations emerged and developed in response to and reflection of the new diversity of the Islamic community. Al-Jahiz (776-868), the great Muslim theologian and an elite writer, narrates a very meaningful story. It illustrates how Muslims practiced an unparalleled plurality in their golden age.

The Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (786-833) asked a person for the reason for his apostasy from Islam. He answered the many divisions and diversity in Islam made him confused. Al-Ma'mun explained there are two kinds of diversity in Islam; diversity of schools concerning practicing the faith, and diversity of understanding sacred texts. The first diversity merely provides us with free choice, flexibility, and openness. This is why Muslims do not condemn each other for their different practices. The second diversity comes from dealing with the sacred text. This diversity which is common to the members of all religions originates in the nature of ordinary language. God did not want to bring all things to completion because the worldly life is based on attempt, competition, and struggle for better status: God left room for us to make judgments and decisions in this world so that He can make the Final Judgment at the end of days (al-Jahiz, 1998, 3:375-377). This story also suggests how huge diversity within Islam was justified with reference to the Quran. Abu Darda (d. 652), a companion of the Prophet, said, "a person does not acquire an in-depth understanding of religion (*fiqh*) unless he believes different meanings for the Quran" (Ghazzali, 1993, 1:290). Also, there is an often-quoted statement of the Prophet saying, "Disagreement of my community is a source of mercy." If it is an authentic narrative, of course, it refers to the disagreement within valid parameters and partakes in sound scholarly exertion (Kamali, 2010, 117).

The diversity of Muslims, in fact, was a result of constructive interaction between sacred texts and non-Islamic cultures. Islam entered new districts and experienced new concerns and perspectives. To keep its influence and also to prove its originality Islam needed to update. The first Islamic school of theology, Mu'tazila, greatly welcomed the new explorations. Correspondingly branches of theology established and developed and highlighted many controversies. Moreover, the translation movement brought Muslims into contact with Greek philosophy. The rational quest for

the truth expanded and gradually called for new meanings of the fundamental concepts of faith. Mysticism as a great feature of spirituality also pointed out a new level of religiosity and new meanings of how to be faithful. Meanwhile the conservatives, the people of *Hadith*, raised their voices to call for focusing merely on *Hadiths*. In addition, various schools of jurisprudence formed and attempted to answer practical questions. This rich and deep evolution could not and cannot happen and be justified without endless referrals to the Book. The multiple approaches to the Quran produced many commentaries. To have a clear idea, I will elaborate on them by focusing on the main features of these different commentaries because they do possess some similarities. Also, many of these schools of thought will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Narrative Commentaries. The first commentaries were filled with many sacred narrations about the Quranic verses. The idea behind that was God's words can be understood better through narratives of the Prophet rather than human reasoning. They served Islam by protecting sacred narrations from being forgotten. This type of commentary only focused on those verses which were associated with a narration (*Hadith*). *Tafsir-e Tabari* is the archetype of this group and still is a prototype for any internal interpretation of the Quran. The author Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838-923) was a very profound exegete and historian. The same position belongs to *Tafsir al-Ayyashi* in Shia-Islam. Muhammad ibn Masud Ayyashi (d. 932), like Tabari, was non-Arab. Only the first half of his commentary is survived.

Linguistic Commentaries. The linguistic approach considers the Quran as a text which deserves syntactical, grammatical, and rhetorical examination. Linguistic analyses provided these interpretations with a more scientific and unbiased approach. Commentaries of Abu Ishaq al-Zajjaj (855-923), Abu Jafar al-Nuhas (d. 950), al-Sharif al-Radi (969-1015) are among this group.

Although Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari (1073-1142) produced a theological commentary, since his work involved skillful linguistic study, his work is still used in traditional *Madrasahs* (Islamic seminaries) as a linguistic commentary.

Theological Commentaries. This group considers the Quran to be the main source of theology attempting to justify their theological views in terms of the Book. Discussions on subjects like the Oneness of God, justice, the meaning and mission of the prophethood, relevance of reason to revelation, free will, human nature, Imamate, God's rewarding goods and punishing the wicked are the main contents of these exegeses. The great theologians have produced major interpretations to prove how the Quran confirms their schools as well as how the counter schools are wrong. Commentaries of Qadi Abd al-Jabbar (935-1025), Abu Mansur Maturidi (853-944), Abu al-Muzaffar Isfaraini (d. 1078), and Shaykh Tusi (995-1067) reflect theological exegesis of Mu'tazila, Maturidi, Ash'ari (three Sunni schools), and Shiite schools respectively. The pinnacle of the Ash'ari School was reached by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149-1209). All these figures are exemplary representatives of their schools of theology and were from central Asia and current-day Iran and Afghanistan.

Jurisprudential Commentaries. This group examines the Book to deduce Shariah law for practical purposes, thus, like narrative commentaries, they focus on particular verses. The first Jurisprudential commentaries were written by Imam Shafi'i (767-820), Abu Bakr al-Jassas (917-980), and Sharif al-Murtaza (966-1044) respectively from Shafi'i, Hanafi and Shiite schools. In the last stages of creating Shariah law, as we will discuss in the section on Shariah, two sciences were used to deduce Shariah: Jurisprudence and the Principles of Jurisprudence. The Quran uses common language and the Principles of Jurisprudence examines the general rules of common language. The Principles of Jurisprudence and the Commentary share many terminologies, such as abrogation,

universals and particulars, and *Ta'wil*. Although there are no commentaries of the Quran utilizing the Principles of Jurisprudence the experts of the Principles of Jurisprudence apply many Quranic statements to develop and enrich their study.

Philosophical Commentaries. Philosophy or self-sufficient reasoning, in its Islamic context, has produced very few interpretations of the Quran. Avicenna (980-1037) wrote the first philosophical commentary and it is still one of the best peripatetic commentaries. In the Islamic context, peripatetic refers to Aristotelian methodology because of his practice of walking while teaching. Avicenna only interpreted several chapters of The Book using philosophical language and methods. For instance, he discusses in detail the small Quranic chapter *Tawhid*, which means 'Oneness of God', saying that with respect to its content the *Tawhid* equals one-third of the Quran. He used this chapter as an opportunity to elaborate his philosophical ideas on God and His nature. In his illustration of the chapters *Falaq* and *Nas*, he believes the former discusses refuge in the First Cause and the latter refuge in the Closest Cause, i.e. Active Intellect. However, Avicenna provided a firm base for further philosophical investigation in Islam. Averroes (1126-1198) used many Quranic verses in his major work *al-Kashf* to criticize Muslim theologians and suggest new philosophical arguments. I cannot imagine the detailed commentaries of Mulla Sadra (1572-1640) without Avicenna's pioneering work.

Sufi Commentaries. Sufis are recognized for their quest to reach a deeper layer of faith that touches the hidden but fundamental aspect of our lives. They pursue this path through spiritual practices in order to share in the Prophet's holy experiences. Instead of focusing on rhetoric or jurisprudence, they concentrate on the esoteric. They thought that many simplistic interpretations lost the spirit of the Quran. As much as they use the Prophet's quotations, they also use the wisdom of saints and Sufis

to strengthen individual spirituality. In other words, Sufis promote sacred quotations like The Book of God consists of four meanings: external expressions for the public; signs for professionals, subtleties for the close friends of God (*Awliya*), and truths for prophets. Sufis attempt to reach the last meaning. The works of Abu Abd al-Raham Sulami (941-1021) and Abu al-Qasim Qushairi (996-1072) are among the earliest Sufi interpretations.

Comprehensive Commentaries. There is a productive and leading period also acknowledged for putting together some encyclopedic exegeses which are called Comprehensive Commentaries. This genre promotes the common idea among Muslims that the Quran has multiple aspects and touches the foundations of all branches of knowledge. It combines narratives, rational arguments, linguistic analysis, theological agenda, and legal and historical considerations in order to present the broader horizons of the Book. The works of al-Thalabi (d. 1035) and Shaykh Tusi (995-1067), Sunni and Shia respectively, exemplify this genre¹⁰.

Until the last two centuries, the mainstream Islamic commentaries were remarkably similar; there were only more sophisticated versions of the same paths. The historical moment for the creation of modern commentaries appears with the new socio-politico-cultural changes and phenomena. A debate between two approaches can help us reach the center of modern commentaries.

As I will suggest in detail in the following chapters, all modern thought in Islam begins with Sayed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897). He is indeed the inspiring fountain of all new intellectual and spiritual debates in Islam. At this point, I want to point out his paper about the ideal interpretation of the Quran. It

¹⁰ Later, Shaykh al-Tabarsi (1073-1153) penned the most eloquent and extensive Shia commentary of the era, documenting both Sunni and Shia opinions. Prominent Sunni Mufti Mahmud Shaltut (1893-1963) acknowledged its objective approach and critical thinking. It displayed the great commonality between Shia and Sunni Mu'tazila views; thus, it is said that this commentary was a Shia version of Tafsir al-Zamakhshari (Jafari, 1373, 157-158).

was published to criticize a new exegesis of the Quran written by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) of India. Al-Afghani suggests a desired interpretation must help Muslims to educate and improve their socio-political affairs without touching the philosophical and theological issues. Rather than examining metaphysical and mystical issues like angels, the holy spirit, the process of revelation, miracles, or the fire and the paradise, it must target the daily affairs, common attitudes, and social values. He argues that these things create national progress not particular opinions: education and social reform are more important than detailed discussions of metaphysics. Al-Afghani argued that criticizing the already established creeds of Muslims harms self-esteem and serves Muslims' enemies (al-Afghani, 1925, 513-522). This criticism distinguishes between two modern approaches in exegesis: socio-political versus theological-philosophical.

The clash between two Sayeds (Sayed/Syed is an honorific title describing a person as a descendent of the Prophet) highlights two major approaches in modern Islam which appear larger as we get closer to our present era. The seeds of the modern debate were sown in this clash: I expand upon it in order to make the situation more understandable. I talked about socio-politico-cultural change just a few lines above. This change came through Western modernity and thus inspired modern commentaries as a response to modernity. It is not only with respect to political matters that the Indian Syed is known as pro-Western and the Afghani Sayed as anti-Western; within their thoughts are two totally different understandings of what is the true nature of the West. The Indian Syed says the West is a philosophical entity while the Afghani Sayed says the West is socio-political. Although al-Afghani personally had a philosophical understanding, as I will discuss in the next chapter, he established a socio-political movement. Pointing to socio-political issues, and neglecting the philosophical aspects of faith, he advocated Muslim pride in Islamic history. He

avoided and called for others to avoid self-criticism because it gives Islam's enemies ammunition. Al-Afghani accused Muslim deconstructionists of plotting with Islam's enemies to undermine the faith (Ibid, 522). Post-al-Afghani interpreters often hold all these views going so far as to accuse their Muslim opponents of being part of a conspiracy to destroy Islam. In contrast, the Indian Syed's approach requires one to understand and respect Western rationality and reread Islamic fundamental concepts using this methodology. While these two trends belong mostly to modernizing intellectuals coming from universities, often there is a strong third approach in *Madrassahs*. Let's take a closer look at these three.

Socio-political Commentaries. The socio-political aspects of Islam, colonialism, corrupt governments, discrimination, regional conflicts, huge poverty, and underdevelopment encouraged Muslim intellectuals to cooperatively interpret the Quran, the living miracle, and the divine guide for socio-political reasons. New concepts emerged and became central to these commentaries. Concepts, such as Islamic social identity; social values; social justice; religious solidarity; Islamic systems of government, society, economics, and education; friends and enemies of Islamic society; dialogue among or clash of civilizations; Islamic ideology, and Islamic legislation. *Fi Dhilal al-Quran* (In the Shade of the Quran) by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), a Muslim Brotherhood theorist, is an archetype of this genre. His work conceives of Islam as consisting of an ethical system, political administration, social organism, economic structure, and international law and solidarity. The Quran is the critical border of ignorant (*Jahiliyyat*) and enlightened periods; each nation that does not follow the restrictive interpretation of the Quran is ignorant because there are only two statuses: restrictive Islam (extreme) and ignorant. Another radical work belongs to Abu ala Maududi (1903-1979), the founder of the *Jamaat-e Islami* Pakistan. It is called *Tafhim al-Quran* (The Meaning of

the Quran). He tries to connect the core of Islam, the oneness of God, to a theocracy; as Muslims are asked to worship only one God, they also must obey only one government that applies God's restricted commands. There is a direct path from the Oneness of God to totalitarian authority. The idea of comprehensive Shariah which neither needs nor permits other influences and ideas is used to justify both Qutb's and Maududi's theory, even though they only promote their socio-political understanding of Shariah rather than institutionalized schools of Jurisprudence. In this case, comprehensive Shariah excludes using other methods, such as those methods which Indian Syed advocated.

Philosophical-Theological Commentaries. Empirical and positive philosophies structure the nature of these kinds of modern commentaries. Through the application of their philosophical presupposition to the Quran they illustrate the priority of modern reason over revelation. Although in theory, al-Afghani uses the approach of positive philosophy to accuse classical Islamic philosophy of being very speculative and abstract, in practice he inclined toward socio-political facts rather than philosophical and theological matters: I will discuss this more in the next chapter on new-theology. He also did not produce any commentary. In contrast, Syed Ahmad Khan of India opened a path to study Quranic concepts using very rational and positive philosophy. He discussed Islamic revelation in terms of Holy Experiences, he placed the rewards of paradise and fiery punishments in this world, he examined the Quranic story of miracles such as those of Moses in physical terms, and so on. He strongly believed in modern sciences and interpreted the Quran accordingly. In his work, the Quran can inspire Muslims with ethical, rational, and even scientific conclusions. A shift from a scientific to a more philosophical content occurs with Iqbal of Lahore, Pakistan, in his work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Although not a Quranic commentary, this book joins positive philosophy, which promotes scientific

exploration, with process philosophy which is based on intuition. I think *Tafsir-e Rooz* [The Present Day Interpretation] is the last, and also a clear example, of this type of commentary. Sayed Yahya Yasrebi (1956-), the Iranian philosopher, promotes a humanistic interpretation of the Quran grounded in rationalism. Since his masterly reinterpretation of the fundamental concepts of Islam in a systematic and humanistic frame is unique I would like to give you a scheme of his work.

An Example. *Tafsir-e Rooz* with the subtitle “a rational and practical exegesis of the Noble Quran regarding contemporary matters”, 7-volume book, includes a detailed introduction describing the author’s method, questions, and aims. Yasrebi suggests a humanistic criterion to evaluate religion. It means if a religion acknowledges human understanding and free will and directs daily life toward its aim, it is the right religion; otherwise, it is false. Then he argues Islam fits this criterion and uses several verses of the Quran confirming this. To explain how Islam affirms human understanding and that its fundamental concepts are recognized as a matter of discussion and reasoning, the *Tafsir* points out the following: humans are earthly beings with the same great moral and intellectual capacity as the caliph of God. Nothing is predetermined and they are born with a pure nature that enables them to reach salvation or damnation. Their free will is clearly recognized and they can overcome natural problems step by step. Islam does not accept non-rational faith and submission. Our knowledge begins with empirical comprehension; the lack of common sense is condemned. The Quran in the history of Abraham confesses that empirical experience even can improve the prophet’s faith. Also, it suggests that human knowledge is limited and expandable. It orders the Prophet to ask for more knowledge from God. Islam promotes independent reasoning based on an individualistic understanding for the purpose of further knowledge with constant reform.

Yasrebi suggests Islam considers the worldly life limited but serious because it provides for great opportunities: to acquire knowledge (since they were born a *tabula rasa*) and to merit otherworldly happiness (since the world's produce is gathered hereafter). This is also connected to individualism so that the individualistic, physical, and worldly features of Judgment Day are highlighted. The Quran greatly promotes egalitarianism by acknowledging that the prophet is like other people – he is without any special missionary or political privilege (p. 57).

What is the mission of faith in the humanistic worldview? After examining the position of humanity and its potential in Islam, Yasrebi continues that faith assists humanity in seeking a permanent life of high quality. He articulates his vision regarding the God-people relationship in the Quran which is called Lord-Servant system. The lordship consists of six parts: (1) God's interaction with humanity is in the boundary of Grace (*Lutf*); (2) Prophethood is associated with a man who is not divine; (3) the divine guide means educating people to know the true from the false and then that it is not attainable through force; (4) Guardianship (*Wilayat*) means supporting humanity in reaching worldly and otherworldly happiness (striking a balance between humanism and divine awareness). Yasrebi examines the Quranic terminology of *Wilayat* to prove that it does not mean government or dominion; (5) these factors must not hurt rationality and human dignity; (6) Servanthood is a knowing and free relationship between God and people (a justified belief in God and His Lordship) leading to submission to Shariah. Being a good servant requires "*Ita'at*" (rational submission) because the Quran uses "*Taw'a*" in contrast to "*Kurh*," (respectively voluntary and non-voluntary). This system aims to protect humanism, and to direct people toward worldly and otherworldly happiness. Accordingly, God addresses people directly, emphasizes commonality between the people and the

prophets, presents a book as the last miracle (*Mujizah*), and puts people on trial to allow for the use of reason and free will.

If the purpose of faith is supporting humanity, the author argues, it must express its content so clearly that everybody can find it helpful. Quranic terms like *Noor*, *Mubin* and *Bayan* confirm this. Having two skills are required to understand the Quran: Arabic language and cultural/historical context. The Quran is like nature which can always be explored more thoroughly through direct and exact contemplation. Accordingly, Yasrebi relates *Mutashabihat* and *Ta'wil* to external cases and *Muhkamat* and *Tafsir* to universal concepts.

Showing himself to be always rational, Yasrebi applies his method to the entire Quran. Regarding socio-political issues, he offers several principles rather than adjudicating between opposing political systems. His emphasis on education, free will, and rationality skillfully interprets the fundamental concepts of Islam in a way consistent with humanistic values (Yasrebi, 1387).

Many philosophical approaches to the Quran have been published in separate works or theological books rather than as a commentary. They are influenced by modern Western philosophy trying to apply their philosophical methods and conclusions to Islamic features of faith such as the Quran. Some apply modern hermeneutics to the Quran, and others reduce the nature of the prophethood and revelation to holy experience and spirituality.

Traditional Commentaries. There is a scholarship among Madrasahs aiming to adjust the Quranic doctrines with respect to new conditions in terms of language, method, concerns and purposes. *Tafsir al-Manar* written by al-Afghani's close colleague, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) is the first. Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari (1870-1940), the Egyptian scholar, wrote his 27 volume commentary *al-Jawahir* over 13 years to apply new sciences to the Quran. In his introduction he is shocked why Muslims do not take science as seriously as they do jurisprudence since more than 750 verses in the

Quran discuss scientific issues and less than 150 verses clearly refer to jurisprudential issues. Also, in light of new scientific exploration, these commentaries reformed traditional interpretations of the Quranic verses concerning subjects such as the seven heavens, geocentrism, the true movement of the sun, the extension of the sky, and even evolution. Being concerned with colonialism, western ideologies, and secular intellectualism, they attempt to examine social issues with a new model. For example while classical commentaries approached the gender issue in the Quran from a masculine culture and then felt no need to justify issues like polygamy, the privilege of social leadership of men, or the right for a man to punish his wife in some cases, the new traditional commentaries tried to justify and show the reasonableness of these teachings which today seem to be discriminatory because of changes in culture, society, and history. They discuss how these laws are progressive in terms of historical context and how they provide potential for further reform. Other authors of this type of commentary are Rashid Reza, Muhammad Jawad Mughniya, and Maraghi. In addition, *Tafsir-e Namunah*, *al-Mizan*, and *Min Wahy al-Quran* in Shia context address this method but with a greater focus on educational issues.

In addition, new approaches of interpretation appear in the modern era: Quran by Quran Commentaries and Thematic commentaries. The first exegetes explore the main message of a verse by examining other relevant verses. Since the Quran was revealed over more than two decades and it partially deals with the same issue in various parts, this method helps the reader examine a particular issue. Exegeses like *Azwa al-Bayan* and *al-Mizan* reflect this method as well. In the second, exegetes examine a theme in the Quran separately. Indeed, the emergence of new ideas in the humanities like the position of humanity in the world, socialism, capitalism, democracy, banking, modern education, human rights, women's rights, nationalism, and historical discoveries encouraged

Muslim scholars to probe these issues in the Quran, especially in light of Comprehensive Book and Shariah. Muhammad Ghazzali, Sami Atif al-Zain, Abdullah Jawadi Amuli, and Jafar Subhani produced this kind of exegeses.

In general, modern commentaries are written in simpler language than pre-modern ones. The authors do not want to merely understand the holy text but to teach and satisfy their audience. The sacred narrative plays a smaller role: it is only a small part of the overall commentary. Rationality and interpreting the Quran by the Quran have found a greater role. The Quranic verses lead the main message and the narratives are utilized only as long as they confirm the meaning of the verses. The position of the occasions of revelation is reduced because, as Rashid Reza argues, the narratives break the unicity of the Quran into several discontinuous parts. Modern commentaries study the stories in the Quran in order to draw out God's tradition of working among nations through history. Thus this provides them with a divine view of the rise and fall of a nation as it is mentioned in the Quran (7:34; 35:43). For instance in accordance with chapter 2, verses 248-252, Muhammad Abduh deduces the following: foreign invasion spurs a nation to look for solidarity and a just guide and leader. A nation's awareness depends on its elites. The elites must put their theory into practice and convince the people of the validity of their theories. Looking for a just guide and leader divides people. Therefore they must approach a reliable and wholly-acceptable authority that is divine. Often these exegeses pay less attention to already well-examined jurisprudential verses related to individual obligations as they were discussed in pre-modern commentaries. Finally, while the pre-modern commentaries have highlighted the miraculous aspect of the Book with regard to linguistics, the modern ones focus on scientific or philosophical aspects.

Sunnah

There are three terms in Islam with very similar meanings: *Sunnah*, *Hadith*, and *Riwayah*. The first literally means tradition and the other two mean quotations, report, or narrative. In the Islamic context they refer to the Prophet's statement and conduct and his approval of something said or done in his presence (Shia adds also infallible Imams' as well¹¹). Muslims give Muhammad very impressive esteem, respect, and affection because he appeared to them to be an exceptional example in all areas of life. He shared with ordinary people many aspects of his life and he manifested an exemplary character on a daily basis. The many examples of the Prophet provided permit everyone to find a pattern to follow. The Prophet is a model for shepherds, merchants, hermits, exiles, soldiers, lawmakers, peace-builders, rulers, and mystics. He was also an orphan, and for many years was the husband of one wife who was much older than himself. He was a bereaved father many times, a widower, and finally the husband of many wives, some much younger than himself. Muslims demonstrate their respect for the Prophet incorporating all these aspects when they mention his name with benediction "Blessing and peace be upon him [and his family in Shia tradition]" (Smith, 2005, 23). Like all prophets, he is a great example: a role model that has to be followed (*Uswah*) (33:21). Also there are many Quranic verses saying that if Muslims want to show their faith to God, they have to follow the Prophet in practice (3:31; 4:59; 7:158; 16:64). Therefore, Sunnah offers Muslims two unique opportunities: an example of righteous living demonstrated through the life of the Prophet; and the ability to grasp the spirit of Prophetic narrations that are applicable to our day and age, all

¹¹ The Twelver Shia distinguishes between the Prophet and infallible Imams mentioning two points: (1) the Prophet receives *Wahy* (revelation) from God while Imams merely receive *Ilham* (inspiration); (2) the Prophet appointed *Imams* among people to teach God's instructions and teachings which are brought generally by the Prophet already, not to bring a new path.

while in accordance with the teachings of the Quran. The Prophet used to encourage his companions to record his statements (Sunnah) and transmit them to others.

While Sunni and Shia share belief in the same Quran, they differ concerning the Sunnah: both in their narrators (transmitters) and their own extensive *Hadith* literature. Sunnis believe that although the Prophet prohibited Muslims from recording his quotations during a certain part of his life, during the longer period of his life he encouraged them to record his sayings. It is said he prohibited the recording of Sunnah because he did not want Muslims to be distracted from the Quran by his sayings. Abu Bakr (573-634), the first caliph, restricted the reading of the Prophet's narratives (he even burned a collection of hadiths attributed to the Prophet). Umar (d. 644), the second caliph, took it one step further by prohibiting Muslims from deeming any book or sayings to have the same degree of sanctity as the Quran. It was Umar II (682-720), the Umayyad caliph from 717-720, who ordered the Sunnah to be written and spread, nearly eighty years after the Prophet's death in 632. During the Abbasid Caliphate, many collections of Hadiths were produced and among them, the most celebrated one was *Muwatta* of Imam Malik ibn Anas (711-795). This is the first written collection of hadiths, and it also included the subject of Shariah Law. The second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur (714-775), wanted to declare this book to be the official and exclusive collection of Hadiths to be used by all Muslims but Imam Malik rejected this exclusivity. The lack of a written tradition caused so many narrators of fake *Hadiths* to emerge that some Abbasid Caliphs including al-Mansur killed a few of them. Gradually the science of Hadith has formed to establish and elaborate different kinds of hadiths, their narrators, and their way of narration. This led to the production of *The Six Major Hadith Collections* which are called *Sahih* (authentic hadiths) in the Sunni context. These six collections are known by their authors' names as follows: Al-Bukhari (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875), Abu Daud

(d. 888), al-Tirmidhi (d. 892), al-Nasai (d. 915), and Ibn Maja (d. 886). The two first collections are the most significant ones and have the most accurate and verified narratives (Ahmadian, 3-7).

Shias believe the Prophet encouraged Muslims to record his quotations and that the prohibition of recording hadiths was not religiously valid (Abidi and others, 1373, 110-113). Ali ibn Abitalib (599-661), the fourth caliph of Sunni and the first Imam of Shia used to encourage Muslims to ask him about the Prophet's Sunnah. Accordingly, he fought against Kharijites. Kharijites were rebellions against both Sunni and Shia. They established the idea of mass excommunication (*Takfir*) and Emigration (*Hijrah*) in Islam which feeds current-day militant Islam as I will discuss in the chapter on politics. Ali sent his disciple Abdullah ibn Abbas advising him, "Do not debate with them [Kharijites] in terms of the Quran because it merits various possible interpretations. You will say something and they will say something else. Debate with them based on the Sunnah for they cannot deny it¹²" (Ali, 2004, 465). Also, Imam Hussain son of Ali encouraged Muslims to write down the Hadiths (Abidi and others, 116). Shia narrates most of their Hadiths from the family of the Prophet, particularly Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq. Although Shia believed four hundred treatises (they historically were called *Asl*) were written during the lifetime of the twelve Imams, they did not survive. Their primary extant books, which are four in number, were written after the disappearance of the last infallible Imam, Twelfth Imam, the Mahdi, in 874. These four major books are as follows: *al-Kafi* of al-Kulayni (d. 329), *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih* of Ibn Babuya (d. 991), and *Tahdib al-Ahkam* and *al-Istibsar* of Shaykh Tusi (d. 1067). Shia considers the first one to be the oldest, greatest, and most accurate and verified. However, unlike Sunnis, Shias do not consider any of their hadith collections to be *Sahih* (authentic) in their entirety. Therefore, every individual hadith in a

¹² The translations from Arabic are my own.

specific collection must be investigated separately to determine its authenticity. For example, Ayatollah Asif Muhseni, a contemporary eminent specialist in Shia Hadith, believes that no narrative book includes only valid *Hadiths* (Muhseni, 1381, 9). In his examination of the largest Shia encyclopedic collection of *Hadiths*, *Bihar al-Anwar* of Allamah Majlisi (d. 1698), Muhseni states it contains sixty-seven unknown names among its narrators (Ibid, p. 16-20).

In both the Sunni and Shia contexts some sciences developed to study Sunnah including the Science of Biographical Evaluation (*Ilm al-Rijal*) and the Science of Understanding (*Ilm al-Dirayah*). The first evaluates the chain of narrators of *Hadiths* in a very sophisticated manner to distinguish between reliable and unreliable narrators and then clarifies the degree of reliability. The second encompasses contextual and critical analysis which determines the accuracy of a narrative. It means a Muslim, including a great Mufti, cannot issue a Fatwa based on a *Hadith* without examining the Sunnah, its narrator, and its context carefully.

Although Sunni and Shia have various sources of Sunnah, and are expected to have many different traditions, in reality, they are very similar. Their differences are more in the way that they have narrated *Hadiths*, rather than the content. Sunnis mostly narrate them through chains of the Companions (*Sahaba*) and then successors (*Tabi'un*) while Shias narrate through the *Household* (*Ahl al-Bayt*) of the Prophet. Ayatollah Asif Muhseni, a great Shia scholar of *Hadiths* and who is widely respected by Afghani Sunnis, tells us a wonderful story. Once he wanted to publish with a Sunni publisher in Afghanistan a book on the benefits of religion consisting of many *Hadiths* of Imam Muhammad Baqir and Imam Jafar Sadiq. The publisher was shocked that Muhseni attributed many *Hadiths* of the Prophet to his great-grandsons, Baqir and Sadiq. There were many similarities between the Prophet's *Hadiths* found in Sunni narratives and those found in infallible Shia Imams narratives, even in the words they used. Both the author and

publisher agreed to publish these *Hadiths* saying “as they report the Prophet’s *Hadiths*” because the author believed the infallible Imams merely reported the Prophet’s tradition (Muhseni, 1390, 14-15). Muhseni always emphasizes an ecumenical attitude between Shia and Sunni’s jurisprudence and *Hadiths*.

However, in terms of *Hadiths* per se, Islam experienced various perspectives between two opposing ends: those who put the main focus on the Quran and neglect the *Hadiths*, and those who focus on the *Hadiths* and prefer the *Hadiths* to the Quran. The Mu’tazila School of theology and the jurist Abu Hanifah were not interested in *Hadiths*. Mu’tazilaite was critical of *Hadiths* and was criticizing many *Hadiths* which were about meeting God on Judgment Day, Divine attributes, and predestination (*Qadar*) and degraded their narrators. Some advised to not call it the Prophet’s quote, but say that it is merely narrated of the Prophet¹³. There are several positions with which Mu’tazilaite hermeneutically reinterpreted the common *Hadiths* in a way which supports the rational positions to establish the priority of reason over *Hadiths* (Al-Amarraji, 2000, 98-100). Although some latter scholars dispute the matter, it is reported by the great scholar Ibn Khaldun that Imam Ahmad ibn Habal, considered by some current academics to be the Salafists’ spiritual leader, believed in 30,000 *Hadiths*, Imam Malik narrated 300 *Hadiths*, but Abu Hanifah accepted only 17 *Hadiths* and used to reject even proven *Hadiths* which seemed no longer to make sense (Ibn Khaldun, 1984, 2:539-540). This huge difference divided the earliest Islamic jurisprudence into two schools: Hijaz which privileged *Hadiths* and Iraq which privileged reason.

¹³ Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar reinterpreted Sunnah as something commanded by the Prophet to be done constantly or something done by the Prophet which has to be followed. Giving something like Sunnah this meaning is hard and does not include many *Hadiths* (Abd al-Jabbar, 186).

In Shia, there is a well-known *Hadith* that whatever is attributed to the Prophet or to infallible Imams must harmonize with the Quran otherwise people have to throw it away. In spite of that, for a short time (during the late Safavid dynasty) Shia experienced its version of people of *Hadith*, those who focused only on the *Hadiths* and diminished the role of the Quran, called *Akhbaris*, which comes from *Khabar* which is another name for *hadith*. They believed we as ordinary people cannot understand the real meaning of the Quranic verses and also we are not allowed to apply the Principles of Jurisprudence which widely uses reason to deduce Shariah Law.

However, since I referred earlier numerous times to the Sunni and Shia's dealings with the Quran and Sunnah, let us take a closer look to see what distinguishes these two major denominations within Islam. The fact that their history is almost as long as Islam itself, illustrates that there were many ways to potentially interpret Islam, in addition to the Quran's affirmation of positive and constructive diversity. While over time Sunni and Shia increased their differences, they still have many overlapping aspects, not only in intellectualism but also in their fundamental concepts.

Sunni and Shia

The title Sunni reflects the tradition of the majority and Shia reflects dedication and love. In an etymological context, *Sunnah* in Arabic means tradition, and "Sunni" those who follow the tradition. Shia means followers and partisans, i.e. those who follow Imam Ali ibn Abitalib. This etymology does not help to explain many things about Sunni-Islam. Particularly with respect to theology, the term Sunni did not include the first main school of theology in Islam, Mu'tazila, during its time. At that time, in the context of theology, Sunni was merely referring to the opposite of Mu'tazila side within Islam. They were following tradition and narration, *Ahl al-Sunnah*

wa al-Hadith, because those are the sources that define justice and wisdom to humanity, rather than reason and rationality which were the main source of knowledge for Mu'tazila, as we will discuss in detail in the Theology chapter. They have accused Mu'tazilas that they do not follow the community of Muslims (*al-Jama'a*) and the Prophet's narrations (*al-Sunnah*). Arguing about the true meaning of the Prophet's tradition and community of Muslims, Mu'tazila called themselves the people of justice and Oneness, *Ahl al-Adl wa al-Tawhid* and equaled *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamma'a* to *Ahl al-Hadith wa al-Mushabbihah* "the people of narration and anthropomorphism" (Abdul al-Jabbar, 185-187). Today, Mu'tazilas are considered without doubt as an initial part of Sunni Islam. Thus there is a very sophisticated journey involved in exploring the evolution of the two major denominations in the light of these terms, i.e. Sunni and Shia. This exploration includes historical, theological, and philosophical aspects. I will discuss the philosophical aspect in more detail because the central aim of this book is to explore the foundations for shaping intellectualism in Islam¹⁴. I will address several misconceptions as well.

Sunni and Shia are the major denominations of Islam. It is believed that about 85 percent of all Muslims are Sunnis and about 15 percent are Shia. The Sunni majority within Islam is the largest compared to any denomination in other religions, such as Catholicism in Christianity and Mahayana in Buddhism (Nasr, 2002, 65). The Shia population is located in the heartland of Islam countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, India and East Africa. Let us now explore the historical, theological, and philosophical dimensions of the division of Islam into both denominations.

¹⁴ To learn about historical division and overlap see: John McHugu, *A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is* (Georgetown University Press, 2017) and Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (Yale university Press, 1985).

The first is the historical background. When the Prophet died, while Ali ibn Abitalib (599-661), his son-in-law and first cousin, and the rest of the family were burying him, the rest of the community gathered in Medina and chose Abu Bakr (573-634) as the Prophet's successor, to rule the newly established Islamic community. He was thereby given the title of Khalifah (the vicegerent/successor) of the Prophet, from which comes the title caliph, although he was not a successor of the prophetic office¹⁵. So two features are very significant regarding this process of succession: first he was elected by the people rather than being ordained by the Prophet; second, he succeeded to political and military leadership of the Prophet but not to his religious authority. In contrast, Shia emphasizes the ordinance as well as the spiritual function. Accordingly, a number of Muslims thought that Ali should have become Muhammad's successor and rallied around him, forming the first nucleus of Shia. Ali himself refused to oppose Abu Bakr and worked closely with him and his two successors, Umar (579-644) and Uthman (577-656). Umar was appointed as the caliph by Abu Bakr's will and Uthman through a council was selected by Umar. Then people demanded that Ali accept the power and he thus became the fourth of the "rightly guided" caliphs of Sunni, and the first Imam of Shia-Islam (Esposito, 2005, 43; Nasr, 2002, 65-66).

It seems that this distinction between Sunni and Shia regarding the spiritual states of the caliph/Imam became sharp only gradually and over an extended period of time. We can see this especially in an examination of those who came after the four righteous caliphs. It is attributed to Ibn Jawzi (1115-1201), the Hanbali writer and scholar, who said that the founders of jurisprudence schools pledged allegiance to one Imam from the

¹⁵ This is the meaning of what Ibn Khaldun said, "In summary *Imamate* is related to the consensus of the public interest, not to theology" (Ibn Khaldun, 1984, 2:565), "*Imamate* is not part of religious foundations, as *Imamiyyah* [Shia] said, but it is the public interest left to people's opinion" (Ibid, 1:267).

Prophet's Household (al-Muai'yidi, 1997, 163)¹⁶. It illustrates how the earlier Sunnis also took into consideration the spirituality of caliphs though in this case it differed from the Shia understanding of several grades of existential accomplishments, and instead merely encapsulated a common understanding of piety.

In summary, various forms of Shia have emerged throughout history. Among them, Zaydi, Ismaili, and *Ithna Ashari* stand out as particularly distinct in terms of the number of Imams they accept. Zaydi is the most closely aligned to Sunni understanding of Islam and Imamate. Ismaili offers a highly esoteric interpretation of Islam, with the Imam holding an especially high status. It is of note that Ismaili led the Islamic world for a period of time, during the Fatimid Caliphate. In terms of current study, Twelver Shia (*Ithna Ashari*) (also called Jafari) make up the largest denomination, and is the main focus of this volume, aside from Ismaili originating philosophy. This research does not consider Alevis or Alawis, owing to their meager place in Islamic history and blend of faiths¹⁷.

Secondly, denominational formation. Providing a fixed definition of Sunni and Shia which covers the entire history of Islam is controversial because the definition depends on the answer given to three different questions: questions of political leadership, love, and theology. The different definitions refer to various populations with contradictory backgrounds.

¹⁶ There are many conjunctions of political views and love in terms of the household of the Prophet. They suggest how much Sunni and Shia were overlapped for various aspects. It is reported that Zayd ibn Ali (695-740), whose name is taken by Zaydi-Shia, studied before a Mu'tazila's master; also Abu Hanifah, the founder of the largest school of jurisprudence in Islam, pledged allegiance to Muhammad or Zayd and died in prison for his action; Ibn Ishaq (704-761/770), the first hagiographer of the Prophet, was called Shia for his positive reports of Ali ibn Abitalib's excellencies (Mahmoud, 1989, 76-79).

¹⁷ For a brief overview of Zaydi, Ismaili, and Twelver Shia see: Najam Haider, *Shi'i Islam, An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). The current study of Shia Islam includes discussion of Alevis and Alawis. Going into detail on these topics is outside the scope of this work. Furthermore, these groups were not involved in the central conflict of Muslim intellectuals concerning spirituality.

The first definition, which highlights political leadership, suggests the historical dispute between Sunni and Shia: the question of who should succeed the Prophet and if there was any clear statement from the Prophet regarding this issue. Shia answers positively to this latter question and Sunni negatively. This definition largely serves to distinguish current Sunni and Shia populations around the world.

The second definition, which stresses love, is concerned with the spiritual leadership of the Prophet's family, especially Ali ibn Abitalib, and calls for this family to be held in high esteem in the hearts of all. Whoever puts spiritual leadership of the Prophet's family in the center of his faith can be considered Shia, otherwise Sunni. Shia, therefore, considers Ali above the three other Caliphs in divine virtue. This definition covers more of the population including eminent Mu'tazila scholars and Sufi figures. Even the founder of the Shafi'i school of Jurisprudence, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris Shafi'i has very profound poems to confess this love. For example, he wrote, "The family of the Prophet is my instrument which connects me to the Prophet. Since they are worthy before God I hope that on Judgment Day I will receive the book of my life through my right hand [that is the sign of salvation]," (Shai'i, 2005, 38) or "I am Shia in my faith, from Mecca in terms of my origin, and from Ashkelon with regards to my house" (Ibid, 130, also see pages 19-20, 70, 72, 98)¹⁸. To better understand both the scope and shape of this definition I point out one example. Both Sunni and Shia agree

¹⁸ Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlawi (1746–1824), a celebrated South Asian Sunni scholar, composed a severe polemical critique of Twelver Shia, *Tuhfat Asna Ashariya* (The Gift of the Shiis) in 1789. Yet, there he also acknowledged Ali and his family's spiritual leadership through the phrase: "all Muslims regard Ali and his blessed family as their spiritual leaders and guides who are connected to divine orders of existence 'umur-i takviniya'. Reciting prayers and panegyrics, expending charity, making vows, and giving offerings of food in their name is common and widespread among people, just as these practices are common in relation to all revered friends of God" (Shah Abul Aziz, *Tuhfat Ithna Ashariya*, Lahore: Sohail Academy, 214, cited by Tareen, 2020, 279)

that the Prophet said to his people during his last pilgrimage at the pool of water "*Ghadir Khumm*", 'to whomever I am *Mawla*, after me Ali is *Mawla*.' The Sunnis believe that "*Mawla*" means "Friend", while the Shias argue that it means "Leader".

The third definition, namely the theological understanding, indeed is developed from a combination of the two previous aspects and subsequently changes the question of who should succeed the Prophet to what the qualifications of such a person should be. This definition is formed in a theological quest that responds to two trends in the current Shia: the ecumenical approach which puts the historical events in parentheses and focuses on the spiritual virtues of the family of the prophet, and the anti-ecumenical approach which emphasizes the historical events and spreads sectarian ideology. Although the latter group constitutes a small minority their voices are amplified through the modern media and new communication technology (Akhlq, 2023, 125-152). However, the theological reading of Shia interprets history and love within the sacred succession and authority of the Prophet as I mentioned above.

Thirdly, there is a philosophical exploration. There is one more doctrine that relates Shia with an esoteric interpretation of Islam and Sunni to an exoteric one. Two stories may better illustrate the subject: the story of a man and the story of a word. The man is Salman al-Farsi who became brother with Abu Darda (d. 652) in Sunni narrative (al-Bukhari, 2002, 967) and with Abu Dhar al-Ghifari (d. 652) in Shia (al-Kulayni, 8:162). While Shia considers Abu Darda an ordinary companion of the Prophet, Salman and Abu Dhar are considered to embody the highest and the second highest level of faith respectively, and to be greater companions of the Prophet. Shia argues the Prophet made brotherhood between any two faithful similar in their degree of faith (al-Ameli, 1410, 177-180). Abu Dhar also is much respected for his support of Imam Ali. His dedication to the virtue of justice, fighting against discrimination,

and spreading welfare among the public was so high that some considered him as the first Islamic socialist¹⁹. He protested against Uthman (d. 656), the third Caliph, when he saw that Uthman had favored the wealthy and neglected the poor, according to Shia reports (Madelung, 1997, 84). Thus Abu Dhar remained representative of a kind of revolutionary social Islam, just society which constantly criticizes the current Muslims' status in showing how far they are from their proper status and in motivating them to attain this ideal status. Salman and Abu Dhar also exemplify to the highest degree the role models for Shia-Muslims because both have experienced the soul of Islam, one in its social aspect and another in its spiritual and existential aspect. They also depict how deep and multiplied are the levels of faith.

The two main Islamic denominations, Sunni and Shia, have narrated that once when there was an argument between the *Muhajirs* (the first Muslims who immigrated from Mecca to Medina accompanying the Prophet) and the *Ansar* (the people of Medina who invited and supported the Prophet in living there and establishing new community) that each of the two parties claimed that Salman belonged to them. At this juncture, the Prophet put an end to the dispute with a decisive order and said: "Salman is neither *Muhajir* nor *Ansar*. He is one of us. He is a member of my household." It is said that the Prophet repeated this statement about Salman in different times and places (Mohajerani, 1387, 149-150). The Sunni view relates this attribute to a kind of common piety while Shia considers it as an existential degree toward the highest step of the spiritual journey. Indeed, Shia's perspective is based on this insight that recognizing the first Muslims as two groups (*Muhajir* and *Ansar*) originated from the Islamic practice to

¹⁹ Ali Shariati in Shia and Hassan Hanafi in Sunni greatly promoted this idea. See Hanafi, 2010, 4.

characterize people by their faith, rather than tribe²⁰. This new identity was a progression to recognize people's faith, knowledge, and free will. This is the stage of Islamic "Brotherhood." But in the discussion of Salman we reach a higher state of religion, higher than ordinary good Muslims. This is the stage of "household", the family of the Prophet in faith. The holy Quran narrates the prophet Abraham's saying that "Whoever follows me, he is surely of me" (14:36). It declares the connection in faith as the substantial bond that is more important than physical relatives regarding existential accomplishment and spiritual fulfillment. Salman's life and his endless struggle toward truth can be considered as a clear sign that he had been attempting to reach such a spiritual level.

Salman was born in Isfahan of Iran, in a Zoroastrian family. His father was very eager to have a son who was deeply religious in his faith. Salman became interested in Christianity when he accidentally encountered a church and met some Christians. He escaped from his house leaving all things to follow his heart's quest for the truth when he finally became aware of a caravan traveling to Damascus. Converting to Christianity, he started to experience his new faith under the teaching of a great bishop of Damascus. Then Salman traveled to Mosul in Iraq to follow another bishop. Once this bishop passed away, Salman moved to Nusaybin in Turkey to complete his spiritual journey under the supervision of the bishop there. The last bishop informed him about a prophet who was supposed to appear in the land of palms and dates in Yasrib, the first name of Medina, in Saudi Arabia. Salman was working for his master in Medina when he became aware of a person migrating from Mecca to Medina who called himself a prophet. He visited the Prophet several times, examining and evaluating him to know

²⁰ See: Sayed Hassan Akhlaaq, "Identity and Immigration: A Quranic Perspective," in *Building Community in a Mobile/Global Age: Migration and Hospitality*, John Hogan, Venus George and Corazon Toralba (eds.), Washington DC.: The Council for REsearch in Values and Philosophy, 2013, pp. 83-106

whether or not he was a true prophet. Finally he converted to Islam and became a loyal companion of the Prophet while he was a slave. Later he was freed by help of the Prophet and his companions who paid the ransom and established a grove for his master. He remained close to the Prophet and was accustomed to answer the people's question of his ancestry with "I am Salman, the son of Islam and the child of Adam." Salman proved to be an innovator when he suggested digging a defensive trench before the battle of *Khandaq* and using catapults in the battle of *Ta'if*. Salman lived as a close companion of the Prophet and his family especially Fatimah Zahra (? - 632) and Ali ibn Abitalib (Ibid, 83-136; Ibn abi al-Hadid, 18:204-208).

He acted as a religious supervisor in spreading Islam among Iranians. He was appointed as the governor of al-Mada'in (Ctesiphon) and presented a unique and unseen model of a pious governor, during his approximately two decades of government, who did not merely inhabit his castle as Persian Kings often did. It is narrated that he died also in a very unique way which was blessed with conversations with those who already had died. Salman actually lived as a journeyer inside and out. He always liked to make his current state more ideal. He fully distinguished between the current and desired situation by constantly moving from the first to the second. Salman's horizons involved new struggles and discoveries. In the outward world, he traveled from Persia to Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Saudi, and he finally returned back to Persia, the same land, but with a completely different identity. This new identity was a revision of the one that nature gifted him with. Not only was Ruzbih, his Persian name, changed to Salman, but also a true seeker had found his aim, and a restless individual had rested in eternity; the temporary joined eternity within Salman. He followed his special path without copying others. Salman tasted the faith in accordance with his taste, not a popular taste. He was not merely one among Zoroastrians, Christians, and Muslims like the others.

Salman's story for Shia illustrates who a true Shia is in faith. His history inspires Shias to not leave the search of truth in spite of facing many problems. He shows that for the sake of truth, it is worthwhile to leave the accustomed locations, relatives, and even ideas. Overcoming the limitations of space and time is one aspect of his journey. He tested the Prophet to be sure of his honesty (Ibn abi al-Hadid, 18:205 & 208). He left his hometown to seek out religious truth at its source; he was careful with whom he listened to. He was open to the "other" and at the same time he was cautious not to lose himself; faith was a self-realizing process for him. Salman has reached enlightenment, preached his faith, and has also married spirituality with socio-political affairs. Finally, Islam for Salman was not something merely external, but he also experienced it in his soul. There are several narratives reporting Salman's characteristic traits; Salman's in-depth faith in action.

Salman served for about two decades as the governor of *al-Mada'in* (Ctesiphon), a region that had recently converted to Islam and had experienced the strong Sasanian Empire²¹. He did not appear as an emperor or a king who lived in an ivory tower but rather went among the people. It is narrated that some people came to Salman at that point asking him if he was Salman al-Farsi? He replied that he was. They continued and asked him if he was the companion of the Holy Prophet? He answered that he did not know. On account of his humble and simple way of life, they doubted whether he was really Salman and decided to seek the true one. Salman told them, "I am who you are looking for. I saw the

²¹ Salman had a share in spreading Islam among non-Arabs especially in ancient Persia. Mostly Muslim is known as "*Musalman*" among Farsi, Turkish and Indian speakers instead of "Muslim," which is a popular Arabic term. It is said that "*Musalman*" is an Arabicized form of Salman through adding "Mim," which is a sign of the objective case (*Maf'uli*), to show their honor of Salman in contrast to "*Mawali*," the freed slaves who in times past were used by Arabs ["Mim" is the Arabic name for the letter "M". And "U" after "M" in "*Musalmaan*" is only written to aid in pronunciation].

Prophet and used to stay with him. But his true companion is he who will enter paradise with him. What can I do for you?" This story shows Salman's great ambition and goal to live in heaven with the Prophet. The fact that Salman reached the spiritual level that the sixth Imam of Shia Jafar Sadiq said: Do not call Salman of Pars, but call Salman of Muhammad (al-Ameli, 10-13; Reyahi, 53-89).

Once in Medina, the second Caliph asked Salman, "Do I look like a king or a caliph for the Prophet?" He answered: "If you spend even a penny of the Muslims' tax in an illegal way you are king; otherwise you are a caliph." (Reyahi, 1386, 77) This honest and true-to-self remark of Salman affected the caliph to the point that he cried. Imam Ghazzali (1058-1111) wrote that the caliph was encouraging Salman to tell him his deficiencies because of Salman's clear, passionate, and brave character (Ghazzali, 1380, 407 & 528). Salman usually paid his expenses through mat weaving. One day the Caliph sent him a letter denouncing five different matters: his lack of control of the previous governor of al-Mada'in, Huzaifa; his living like poor people; not spending his salary; dealing overly gently with people; and not showing people the might of the government. Salman replied using some verses of the Quran and traditions of the prophet, saying that a pious person is not allowed to be a pessimist, a spy, or be negative to others; living like a poor person is better than being greedy, stealing, or talking much about oneself. He continued that he spent his salary for his judgment day and did not care about the taste of food; being in service of his people—which was also the habit of the Prophet—is better than being proud while committing sins. He did not want to make a show of his power to the people, but rather to help them learn and practice better the Quran and al-Sunnah. Salman, however, wanted people to learn the meaning of ritual and the nature of religion, instead of limiting them to the superficial. This is why he translated part of the Quran into Persian, thus becoming the first person to translate the Quran into a foreign language. It is said that Salman

translated the first chapter of the Quran, *Surah al-Fatihah*, into Persian to help new converts to Islam to recite it in their praying (*Salat*) till they can read the original Arabic *Sura* (Mohajerani, 171 & 216-218).

Although the above-mentioned stories of Salman feature some aspects of Shia's understanding of Islam, the most noticeable point is believing in hierarchy in faith. There is a very clear and well-known Hadith in Shia. The Fourth Imam Ali Ibn al-Hussain said:

“By God, although the prophet made them brothers, if Abu Dhar had known what was in the heart of Salman he would have killed him. If this sort of opposition could exist between two men of high spirituality, then what do you think is the case with other people? The knowledge of [divine] scholars is very hard to reach except for one of these three: the transmitted prophet, the close angel, and the faithful whose heart has been tested for faith. Salman became one of these scholars because he was a person from our household; this is why he is accounted among the scholars.” (al-Kulayni, 1:401)

This insightful Hadith states clearly that the stages of faith are various even between two devoted and exemplary faithful. Salman had reached the highest level of faith and enjoyed the Prophet's spiritual findings. This level is very far from being comprehended by such faithful like Abu Dhar whose level in turn is still a huge distance from the ordinary faithful.

Therefore the story of Salman highlights the main nature of Shia believing in a hierarchy of Islamic faith which identifies faith with a spiritual and moving-forward journey rather than a fixed orthodoxy or orthopraxy²². In other words, Shia's high esteem of Abu Dhar reflects socio-political values of leadership with a strong

²² Shia comments that this spiritual accomplishment requires three qualifications in Imam: infallibility (*Ismat*), special knowledge, Miracle (*Kiramat*). Shia believes infallibility is the core of its doctrine otherwise its theory of Imamate is self-contradictory because Imam continues the office of the Prophet who came to perfect human reason (Yasrebi, pp. 90-93 & 157-161). This is why Shia sources relate many *Kiramat* to Salman as well.

commitment to applying justice as the soul of Shariah. So the Caliph is more than a secular leader who keeps the community safe and organized. Indeed, Shia's admiration for Salman depicts spiritual accomplishment relevant to the core of Islam, the love of the Prophet and his family which leads to love of God and neighbor. Moreover, Salman's long coworking with the second and third caliphs' office allows us to see that being a Shia does not require separation from non-Shia government. This way of thinking explicitly rejects the identification of Shia with a merely political understanding of *Walayat*. Also Ammar ibn Yasir (570-657), another pious companion of the Prophet, who worked with Umar to govern Kufa (Mohajerani, 1387, 216). Broadly speaking Shia places Ammar alongside Salam, Abu Dhar, and Miqdad ibn Aswad al-Kindi one of the four companions or the four Pillars of Sahabah who stayed loyal to Ali as the Prophet's successor. This spiritual feature of Shia's faith has inspired many scholars to link Shia with Sufism. There is also a trend which suggests a connection between Shia and philosophical study in Islam for believing in graded levels of knowledge. Also avoiding reducing the Shia doctrine of Imamate to a political theory causes us to question whether many scholars are Shia or Sunni, when they are non-jurists like Jalal al-Din Dawani (1426-1502). Another recent example is al-Afghani who is honored by both denominations as a fellow member.

The word *Imam*, which usually in the West refers to Muslims' clerics, in Shia the primary use is for the infallible Imams who bear the Muhammadian Light and the power of initiation. Twelver-Shia (*Ithna Ashari*) believes in twelve infallible Imams (in fact, its name comes from this belief). These Imams are masters of inner and outer aspects of Islam and therefore could not be elected by the people because people are not able to determine who has this privilege. The last Imam, Mahdi, disappeared and will come back to the world at the last period to bring peace and justice and happiness for humanity and to fulfill God's purpose of creation. Jesus who is alive

in Islam and represents the very substantial aspect of faith which is love, in contrast to Moses who represents mostly accidental values of faith like law, will accompany Mahdi in this mission. Thus the current use of Imam for religious authority (*Marja*) in Shia jurisprudence is under the influence of Sunni's implication. Shia uses this term in its root meaning "standing before or in front" generally for the person who leads the daily prayers or *Juma* (Friday) congregation. Sunni uses the word Imam widely for all clerics but particularly for those in the highest stages like one who is a Mufti and can issue a religious verdict.

Several Misconceptions

There are many stereotypes about Sunni and Shia which are worth mentioning. In contrast to a stereotype, however, it is very significant to bring out that "partisan," in Shia terminology does not refer to an entirely political meaning and it does not imply lack of respect or help for other pious caliphs. We discussed how Salman is recognized as the best example of a partisan of Ali. He contributed to the political leadership of the Muslim community for decades with Umar and Uthman. Moreover, there are some historical reports referring to the presence of Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain, sons of Ali, in some wars in support of the Islamic government's agenda during the reign of the righteous caliphs.

There is a common idea often repeated in Western sources that the division in Islam and the emergence of the two denominations, Sunni and Shia, happened after the historical battle between Shias and Sunnis in the time of Ali ibn Abitalib and his son, Hussain ibn Ali (626-680) (for instance see, Esposito, 2005, 43). This is a very unacceptable idea with regards to Islamic sources. This is my argument:

First of all, both figures, Ali and Hussain, are highly respected among both Sunnis and Shia. Loving the family of the Prophet is a

fundamental concept of Islam. Many Sunni scholars produced numerous books about the excellent features of the family of the Prophet including Ali and Hussain. The ritual particular to Shia, mourning for Imam Hussain during the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is called "*Rawdha*" which took its name from a book of a Sunni Scholar. The Quranic exegete and Sufi scholar Mulla Hussain Waez Kashifi (1436-1504) wrote *Rawdhat al-Shuhada* (the Garden of Martyrs) focusing on the sufferings that the family of the prophet experienced overtime. Many Sunni people contribute to this program and many Sunni scholars condemn Yazid ibn Muawiyah (647-683) for killing Hussain²³.

Second, this idea is reducing Shia to revolutionary and political Shia which reflects only one reading of Shia. There is major research claiming that Shia scholars for the four first centuries always were thinking Imam Hussain acted to defend his free will, rather than attacking the government for a religious or political agenda (see Salehi Najafabadi, 1382, 21-22).

Third, this idea forgets the most important part of Shia theology and its world view. For example, Shias at the same time consider both Hassan and Hussain as the infallible Imams. Hassan, the older brother of Hussain, made a peace contract with Muawiyah (602-680), the father of Yazid. They believe the Prophet said Hassan and Hussain are your leaders regardless of whether they commit to peace or war. Both Hassan and Hussain are highly venerated among Sunnis as well. Twelver-Shias also are associated with the names of Muhammad al-Baqir (676-743) and Jafar al-Sadiq (702-765) who refused to join pro-Abbasid rebellions against the Umayyad dynasty. These figures are also much esteemed among the Sunni founders of the schools of jurisprudence because of their scholarly activities and among Sufis for their spirituality. Twelver-Shias in

²³ There are religious scholars in Islam that both Sunnis and Shias claim as their members. To see some examples and many overlap see: Sayed Hassan Akhlaq, *The Making of Shia Ayatollahs*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2023, pp. 127-132

addition believe Imam al-Ridha (766-819) is the eighth infallible Imam and credit him with the same authority of Ali and Hussain, while al-Ridha acted as the vicegerent for al-Ma'mun (786-833), the Abbasid Caliph. Shia always was and is proud of multiple infallible Imams who provide for diverse roles regarding various socio-political circumstances.

Fourth, the idea connecting Shia with civil war among Muslims fails to consider that in both battles, of Ali and Hussain with their enemies, Sunnis were at both sides. Fighting Hussain against Yazid was not and has not been seen as the fight against the Sunni governor at all. After defeating Hussain, Yazid killed many Muslims in two big battles in Medina and Mecca and nobody claimed them as battles between Sunnis and non-Sunnis because Yazid, at least in Medina and Mecca, was viewed as an illegitimate and evil ruler, regardless of his being Sunni or Shia.

Given the various dimensions of the division of Islam into two denominations and overlapping subjects, one can understand how significant the ecumenical approach is within Islam. There is an idea among the main authorities of Sunni and Shia saying the Sunni who is not Shia is not true Sunni and the Shia who is not Sunni is not true Shia. In my homeland of Afghanistan, many Shia scholars are known for promoting this idea, like Sayed Ismail Balkhi (1918-1968). Recently in an official celebration of Ayatollah Shaykh Asif Muhseni, a Sunni scholar voiced his opinion that the Ayatollah is actually a Sunni. Perhaps he thought this because Ayatollah Muhseni was a true Shia who extols Sunni doctrine. The grand ayatollah Ali Sistani (1930-?), the most popular authority of Shia jurisprudence today, is well-known with this motto advising his followers: "Do not say our Sunni brothers, but say Sunni are part of our being." It implies Sunni love the family of the Prophet and Shia follow the Prophet's tradition as well. The only difference comes from their level of love or the way they interpret the tradition. The

rare historical civil war between Shia and Sunni (like some Abbasid against Shia and Safavid against Sunni), therefore, mostly was affected by a mostly political campaign and also was not supported by the majority of Muslims.

Last Glance

Islamic intellectualism in all its trends and schools, its birth, growth, and diversification cannot be understood comprehensively without considering its relation to the Quran and Sunnah. In the first part of each chapter, I briefly discuss how the intellectualism of that chapter is influenced by the study of the Quran and Sunnah. The various intellectual trends attempt to rectify and justify their scholarly achievements with the Quran and Sunnah so several examples can be viewed in all majors including philosophy and politics. This is a wonderful journey of exploration where religious intellectualism demonstrates how two different sacred texts, one of God and the other of the Prophet (and of Imams in Shia), come together to interpret each other. Each work suggests different things concerning authority: all Muslims agree the Quran comes from God but there is uncertainty as to which of the various parts of the Sunnah originated with the Prophet. However, as history is a leading source of guidance in Christianity, these two different texts work together in Islam to serve humanity. Of course, the impulse to harmonize these texts leads to the use of reason.

Despite the historical appearance of the different types of discipline and their various potentials, two major fields dominate Islamic societies: jurisprudence and Sufism. The former meets the daily needs of Muslims in practicing their faith and in being attached to God. The latter aids a deeper understanding of faith and the desire to fully experience spirituality and dedication to God. While the first suits more ordinary believers, elites are attracted to the second. Although these two approaches to Islam had many

controversies between themselves, there are clear examples exhibiting how each is a caricature of Islam when it stands alone. Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767-820), the founder of a main school of jurisprudence in Islam wrote,

“Swearing God I advise you to not be merely a *Faqih* (Muslim jurist) or merely a Sufi; the former promotes analogy and his heart does not touch the piety; the latter is illiterate and how can such a man reform [his heart]?” (Shafi'i, 2005, 42)

A similar important quotation is attributed to Imam Malik ibn Anas (711-795), another founder of a main school of jurisprudence: “whoever contributes in Sufism without exertion in jurisprudence leads to infidelity; and whoever gets proficiency in jurisprudence without practicing Sufism leads to corruption; and whoever gathers both aspects gets the truth.” In the Shia context, there are many narratives of infallible Imams inspiring Sufi and jurisprudential, as well as theological and philosophical, issues²⁴. For instance, Shia draw their name from Imam Jafar Sadiq because of his jurisprudential contribution. In accordance with the idea that jurisprudence must exist in tandem with Sufism, Imam Sadiq also took spirituality seriously and wrote a book on the subject, *Misbah al-Shariah* (The Lamp of Shariah). This book includes very profound Sufi points of view including the unity of being.

It is worth noting that the holy narratives of Sunnah are not limited to the ten above-mentioned authorized books in Sunni and Shia-Islam. There are so many Hadiths mentioned in ethical and Sufi works like Ghazzali's and Rumi's that do not mention their chain of narrators. In addition to their intuitional justification, Sufis argue that since the ordinary people have not been involved with these kinds of teachings and Sufis are concerned with the content, it

²⁴ For example see Sayed Muhammad Hussain Tabatabaii, *Ali and Divine Philosophy*. I used to use this book as a textbook for many Shia conservative seminarians, who disdain philosophy, in order to teach them philosophy through their high love for Imam Ali ibn Abitalib.

was not necessary to record the usual features of these *Hadiths*. Also, since Shariah law encourages intentionally doing good acts for God's reward, it was not necessary to include the narrators because such acts are intrinsically loved by God: the source of these Sufi *Hadiths* was not needed to justify doing what we already know God wants us to do. This idea created in Shia law the axiom that suggests to the faithful to be open to the narratives which suggest good deeds. So, since the Sufi and ethical *Hadiths* more or less inspire good deeds, scholars did not examine as closely as the *Hadiths* regarding Shariah Law which requires obligations.

Moreover, the Quran and Sunnah by themselves still occupy the minds of many Muslims who try to reach the core of pure Islam which is not integrated with non-Islamic systems of thought like philosophy and even theology. Nowadays no one in Shia claims to be an *Akhbari* (comes from *Khabar* in Arabic means narrative), but still there is a tendency called the school of *Tafkik* (separation). Criticizing the established philosophy and Sufism in Islam, they promote a kind of puritanism presenting an Islamic theology based on only the Quran and Sunnah. Yet they believe in the priority of the Quran over the Sunnah and call for the use of religious reason rather than philosophical reason. Unlike Shia, in the Sunni context so many Salafists and Wahhabists²⁵ promote the priority of *Hadiths* over the Quran and reason. Also, there are many intellectuals who are searching for the new meaning of the Quranic verses in light of modern scholarly achievements; this trend consists of very reactionary but popular attempts to interpret many Quranic verses

²⁵ Due to the radicalism of Wahhabism when it comes to excommunication and puritanism, it possesses a negative reputation so that even Wahhabis themselves would rather be called Salafists instead. Moreover, many of those who follow other Islamic schools often refer to their rivals as Wahhabis in order to discredit them. This can be seen in the Barelvi scholars from South Asia, who accused their rivals, the Deobandis, of being Wahhabis despite the fact that both schools of thought have their roots in the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. In fact, denouncing someone as a Wahhabi has become so commonplace that it is even seen in book titles that attempt to refute a movement. See Tareen, 202, pp. 244-249.

and *Hadiths* in accordance with new scientific developments (as if these texts foresee and predict these scientific accomplishments) and of a very sophisticated hermeneutic which reinterprets fundamental concepts of Islam.

Finally, though the Sunnah plays a big role in shaping Islamic identity and culture, the Quran remains more important because it is unanimously agreed to be from God. In the next chapters, I will discuss how the various modes of Islamic intellectualism emerge in this spectrum and make not only Muslim but all human culture more colorful and magnificent.

Suggested Resources

A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is, John McHugo, Georgetown University, 2017.

A Shiite Anthology, William Chittick, Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1980.

A Textbook of Hadith Studies: Authenticity, Compilation, Classification and Criticism of Hadith, Mohammad Hashim Kamali, The Islamic Foundation, 2009.

An Anthology of Quranic Commentaries, Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rezvi, and Farhana Mayer, Oxford University Press, 2008.

An Introduction to the Hadith, John Burton, Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

An Introduction to Shi'i Islam, Moojan Momen, Yale University, 1985.

And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety, Annemarie Schimmel, University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Approaching the Quran: The Early Revelations, Michael Sells, White Cloud Press, 2007.

Comparing the Quran and the Bible: What They Really Say about Jesus, Jihad, and More, Rick Richter, Baker Books, 2011.

Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran, Toshihiko Izutsu, McGill-Queens University Press, 2002.

Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features, Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, Islamic Texts Society, 1996.

- Hadith: Origins and Developments (The Formation of the Classical Islamic World)*, Harald Motzki, Routledge, 2004.
- Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusak (Ed.), Brill, 2021.
- Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, Karen Armstrong, Harper San Francisco, 1993.
- Muhammad: Man of God*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ABC International Group, Inc, 1995.
- Quran, Hadith, and Islam*, Rashad Khalifa, Universal Unity, 2000.
- Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, John Wansbrough and Rippin Andrew, Prometheus Books, 2004.
- Roman Catholics and Shi'i Muslims: Prayers, Passion, and Politics*, James A. Bill and John Alden Williams, University of North Carolina, 2003.
- Schools of Koranic Commentators*, Ignaz Gldziher, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.
- Shi'ite Islam*, Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (trans.), State University of New York Press, 1975.
- The Cambridge Companion to the Quran*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- The Divine Guide in Early Shiism: The Source of Esotericism in Islam*, Muhammad Ali Ami-Moezzi, David Streight (trans.), State University of New York Press, 1994.
- The Koran: A Very Short Introduction*, Michael Cook, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- The Quran: A Short Introduction*, Farid Esack, Oneworld Oxford, 2002.
- The Quran: An Introduction*, Abdullah Saeed, Routledge, 2008.
- The Quran's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islamic Scripture*, Princeton University Press, 2001.
- The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.), Harper One, 2015.
- The Routledge Companion to the Quran*, George Archer, Maria M. Dakake, and Daniel A. Madigan (Ed.), Routledge, 2022.
- Understanding 'Sectarianism' Sunni-Shi'a Relations in Modern Arab World*, Fanar Haddad, Oxford University, 2022.
- What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*, Prometheus Books, 2002.

CHAPTER 2.

Islamic Theology (Kalam)

Abstract. This chapter begins with the term of Kalam and then moves to external and internal motives which inspired Muslims to establish the intellectual system of theology in Islam. It studies the evolution of theology in Islam in its formation and thus compares the two major denominations in Islam called “people of justice” and “the rest.” This detailed examination probes the story of Islamic theology through various denominational theologies like Mu’tazila, Shia, the people of Hadith, Ash’arite, Maturidi, and Salafism in their position on the relation of reason to revelation. The chapter, in addition, distinguishes between two forms of Salafism: ritualist and non-ritualist; while the former is mostly involved with the purification of Islam based on tradition (Sunnah) and targets ritual issues (like pilgrimage), the latter is mostly involved with purification of Muslims with more of a focus on social and political subjects like colonialism and despotism. In a detailed discussion, the author also studies the new-theology (*al-kalam al-jadid*) in Islam which appears with al-Afghani. The theological ideas of al-Afghani, Iqbal, and Shariati are discussed to illustrate how new-theology in Islam is influenced by Western colonialism, modern science and technology, recent socio-political changes, and modern philosophies and ideologies. Exploring the original features of Islamic theology and the emergence of new-Mu’tazilism is also a consideration of this study as well. These approaches are also illustrated by two charts to briefly distinguish between many schools of theology in Islam as well as between Theology itself and other rational (non-faith-based) fields like philosophy and Sufism.

Terminology and Background

The term *Kalam* literally means “word” but is also used as a name for Islamic scholastic theology¹. In Islam, theology deals with the critical concepts of faith which include the oneness of God, the prophethood, and the judgment day. It does not address the practical aspects of faith which are part of the field of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Rather, theology aims to define, develop, and articulate the fundamental ideas of faith and answer any challenges or criticism raised. There are several opinions about the reason for its being used including that it comes from the Quran itself, which is the *Kalam Allah* (Word of God). There are plenty of verses in the Quran that encourage people to use their reasons, for example verse 22 chapter 8 says: “the worst beasts before God are those who are deaf, dumb, and do not reason.” Additionally, several narrations of the Prophet Muhammad support arguing as well. In practice, the nature of arguing before the Prophet and about the Prophet’s practices is one source of forming two major denominations, Sunni and Shia, in Islam. In spite of the above-mentioned facts, the presence of the Prophet and his availability to Muslims prevented them from seriously considering establishing a theology. Some scholars consider Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the son in law of the Prophet, as the first Muslim to build the foundations of Islamic theology (*Kalam*) because of his rational arguments for the defense of Islamic faith. Some of these arguments are still very relevant.

We can list the following points as background leading to Islamic *Kalam*:

- 1) Encouraging the Quranic verses and Islamic tradition to enrich faith in action and understanding;

¹ Although it was usual to call *Kalam* “*al-Fiqh al-Akbar*” (the greater understanding/Jurisprudence) as happened by Imam Abu Hanifah (699-767) and Imam al-Shafi’i (767-820), it is not common today. Other names were *Ilm al-Tawhid wa al-Sifat* (the science of the Oneness and His attributes) and *Ilm al-Usul al-Din* (the science of foundations of religion).

2) Islamic features of faith that include certain articles of arguments and several propositions; to be a Muslim means believing in these three special and basic propositions and statements: there is one God (*Tawhid*), there are several prophets from God to humankind (*Nabuwwat*) (the last and greatest of whom is the Prophet Muhammad), and there is a Judgment Day (*Ma'ad*).

It should be mentioned that the scholars of Islam portray Islamic faith as a threefold entity: First, doctrines (*Aqa'id*): these constitute the above-mentioned subjects of Islamic doctrines (*Usul al-Din*) which must be understood and believed in. They are the core of Islam and a Muslim has to at least understand and bear witness to them. The second facet of Islam is Morals (*Akhlaq*) which consider the teachings relating to the spiritual and moral characteristics of human beings, such as justice, reverence toward God (*Taqwa*), courage, self-esteem, chastity, charity, endurance, loyalty, love, honesty, benevolence, truthfulness, responsibility, etc. They lay a foundation to prescribe "how" a human being should live and behave. The third facet of Islamic faith is the Law (*Shariah*) that covers how to understand and practice Islamic rights and obligations in private and public such as prayers (*salat*), fasting (*sawm*), pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), *al-'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil), buying, renting, marriage, divorce, division of inheritance and so on. The science that deals with the first of the mentioned subjects is called *Ilm al-Kalam*. The study of the second subject is termed *Ilm al-Akhlaq* (ethics). The third one is referred to as *Ilm al-Fiqh* (the science of jurisprudence). The criterion behind this division is the relationship of Islamic teachings to the human being: those things which refer to human reason and intellect are called *aqa'id*; things which refer to human qualities are called *akhlaq*; and those things which relate to human action and practice are included in *fiqh*. Of course, those are connected together but historically the first Muslims were more involved with doctrines

and the later Muslims are more involved with Islamic laws; hence a shift from orthodoxy to orthopraxy. Currently, Islam mostly equals *Shariah* while only one-twelfth of the Quranic verses are about laws, the rest are about doctrines and morals. Regarding this, the Prophet Muhammad used to say: "I was sent as a prophet to accomplish the perfection of morals". However, the second reason shaping *Kalam* was the Islamic feature of faith that considers some propositions as the center of faith.

3) Confrontation with new faiths and religions because of the expansion of Islamic faith to new areas inhabited by Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, Hindus, and local religions. This encounter created two needs: first having a defensive approach and second developing a comprehensive system of faith that can be compared with older and already systematized religions. This situation urged Muslims to reread Islamic sources and rebuild their faith looking at new demands.

4) Raising new questions related to new Muslims, new circumstances, and lifestyles.

5) The movement of translation and facing the Western philosophical work (8th-10th centuries).

In these circumstances, the first disputes among the majority of Muslims consisted in questioning the essence of faith, human free will, divine predestination, and the nature of the sacred text as the Word of God. The subject of free will is twofold: a human side because it is related to the question of human freedom; and a divine side because it's related to God's predestination, called "*Qadha wa Qadar*" or *al-Taqdir* that explains God's omniscience and omnipotence in Islamic context.

Emergence of Two Major Islamic Denominations

This twofold issue, concerning the free will of humanity leads to a large Islamic controversy about God's justice. Thus were

formed two major different Islamic theological denominations (*Madhab*): *al-Adliyah Wa al-Ghayraham* or “people of justice and the rest.” Both theological schools of Islam relate, as we will see, to current denominations of *Sunni* and *Shia*. People of justice include *Mu’tazila*, part of the *Sunni* denominations, and the *Shia* which all Shias would be included in the denomination of the “people of justice.” “The Rest” mostly represents *Ash’ari* and can be traced to *Ahl al-Hadith* or Scripturalism (Literalism).

These two approaches suggested two different replies to the question of God’s justice in regards to human rationality and responsibility – concerning why God created, inspired the prophets, gave us obligations and other questions. Obviously, both sides, “the people of justice” and “the rest,” believe in God’s justice because of the clear Quranic statements but give such statements different interpretations.

The difference is based on the human ability to understand independently the meaning of God’s justice. The true problem is related to human reason and free will. *Mutakallimun* (theologians) explored the question by asking whether we are free beings who can listen to the prophets’ invitation to God, understand their invitation, evaluate their ideas, and freely make decisions.

The people of justice continue by asking if we are not free individuals who make decisions, then what is the point of divine rewards and punishments? How can God be just in rewarding or punishing people if He did not give them the choice to act freely? In other words, people of justice justified their beliefs based on the human independent understanding that was assumed applicable to God’s actions. Otherwise, there is no way to distinguish between right and wrong. The people of justice extended their rationalization to God’s actions as well. God is *al-Hakim* or Wise—meaning He follows an aim or objective in every single action. Therefore, justice in the eyes of the people of justice is connected with free will, the principle of *Husn wa Qubh-e Aqli wa Dhati*, or “that

goodness and badness have rational and self-sufficient foundations,” and God follows purpose through his actions that lead finally to the meaning of *Tawhid* or Oneness of God.

In contrast, the “rest” or “non-believers in justice” believed in the transcendental position of God regarding human reason and free will. We think we understand and create our actions, but as a matter of fact, they are ineffective without God’s action. They believed that justice is what He does. The “rest” believes wisdom is God’s actions because they are God’s, not because they are following wisdom.

However, the ideas of people of justice have dominated the scene for several centuries and produced such famous figures as Abu Ishaq al-Nazzam (d. 231/845), Abd al-Huzayf Allaf (d.226/840), Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar (935-1025), al-Shaykh al-Mufid (948-1022), and Sayyed al-Murtaza (966-1044) emphasizing the use of reason in evaluating the teachings of religion.

Although there are differences between *Shia* and *Mu’tazilas*, two parts of the people of justice, in their interpretation of free will, justice, God’s wisdom, and comprehensive oneness of God, both are common in the “Principle of rational and inherent goodness and badness.” This axiom developed more than the following ten theological issues in Islam: (1) the necessity of knowledge of God; (2) God’s purification of purposelessness; (3) the necessity of people’s religious duties; (4) the necessity of prophethood; (5) reasoning on doctrines concerning prophethood; (6) knowing how to distinguish the true from the false prophet; (7) termination of the period of prophecy alongside with continuing divine law; (8) stability of moral principles; (9) meaningfulness of tragic and catastrophic events; and (10) God does not punish before warning, nor require what is over people’s capacity, nor force people against their will.

Certainly the origin and growth of people of justice, particularly *Mu’tazilah* was not easy. This liberal, humanist and

rational school was dominant in Iraq, especially the cities of Basra, Baghdad and Kufa.

It contrasts the “school of *Hadith*” – *Ahl al-Hadith* – which focused on a series of texts by the Prophet Muhammad’s contemporaries regarding the Prophet’s life and teachings. This Islamic scripturalism, led by Imam Hanbal (780-855) and Imam al-Bukhari (810-870) rejected the critical role of reason both in Islamic doctrines and jurisprudence. This school of thought was dominant in Hijaz, west of present-day Saudi Arabia. Later they called themselves “*Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’a*”, the followers of the Islamic traditions and society, while Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar (935-1025), the great Mu’tazila theologian, called them “*Ahl al-Hadith wa al-Mushabbiha*”, the followers of the *Hadith* and anthropomorphism (Abd al-Jabbar, 185-187). Thus, in the context of previously mentioned theological branches, the denomination Sunni was referring to the “rest” who were following tradition and narration, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Hadith*, because those are the sources that define justice and wisdom etc.

However, we can summarize and consider two different aspects of the historical journey of Islamic Kalam: first, having the position of reason being logically prior to religion as a way to evaluate, interpret and rationalize it at least in the main doctrines and the part of Islamic law that deals with public affairs and interests. Whereas the opposite position treats reason as a restricted power which is allowed to operate within the confines of the dogmas and be used as a tool in the hand of faith. Whoever prioritizes reason at the expense of religion in the Islamic context belongs to the people of justice, while the opposite side consists of non-believers in justice who are interested only in the application of religion. The second aspect considers what the meaning of religious comprehensive leadership in Islam after the Prophet Muhammad is. By “comprehensive” I mean both the non-religious (worldly) and religious, secular, and sacred dimensions of life insofar as all

theologians define Caliphate or Imamate, respectively in Sunni and Shia context, as “the comprehensive leadership over worldly and otherworldly affairs of Muslims because of the succession of the Prophet.” (Yasrebi, 1387, 77). In the previous chapter, I said Sunni thought suggests the Prophet’s succession to political and military leadership and Shia thought adds also his religious authority, now I have to explain that the religious aspects of Sunni thought refer to applying external aspects of faith, for example, applying Shariah Law or preparing the office to answer questions and criticisms of the faith, but the religious aspects of Shia refer to spreading internal aspects of faith and to the Imam being able by himself to answer the questions or criticisms. Regarding faith, the Caliph is the agent while Imam is its spirit. Later in the section Shariah, I will discuss why Islamic rules cover all issues including those which are seen as non-religious ones. Also in the section politics I will relate why it is thought that the Prophet has such vast authority. Whoever accounts for it as a secular process which results in one who traditionally is called the Caliph or successor of the Prophet, is the same as the Sunni belief that the Caliph should attempt to apply Islamic practices. On the other hand, whoever considers it as a divine authority which results in one who is traditionally called *Imam*, is *Shia* who believes that the Imam should attempt to promote the understanding and practice of the Muslim community².

Which Islamic features of faith connect it to politics and provide a field for division into two denominations? I would like to refer here to at least two significant facts which connected Islam as a faith with politics and government (I will discuss in detail in the politics chapter):

Firstly, the historical events related to the Prophet Muhammad. He lived and acted as a ruler in the second part of his missionary times in Medina. He formed the first written constitution which is called

² This definition is related to classic understanding of Muslims, not necessarily current Muslims.

the Constitution of Medina and still inspires Muslims to establish a civil society (Akhlaq, 2013, 88-90). He built an administration, made treaties of peace, waged war, and judged among Muslims. All of them are recorded in Islamic documents in detail.

Secondly, the Islamic feature of faith consists of some socio-politico-economic obligations and advice that will be more discussed later in the last sections of this volume like *Zakat* (almsgiving), *Hudud* (class of punishments for serious crimes like theft), *Diyat* (financial compensation paid to the heirs of a victim), *Qisas* (the principle of an eye for an eye), and *al- 'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil) which last one can be understood—as far as I am concerned—as a platform for social societies and political parties.

Let us get back to theological divisions: those whom I call scripturalists who prioritized religion over reason, and the rationalists or the people of justice who prioritized reason over religion. Now, we are adding that each part per se covers different sects that have their own philosophy and construction. For example, Sunni-Mu'tazila completely differs from Sunni-Ash'ari, although there is a distinct difference between *Ahl al-Hadith* and Ash'ari as a restricted and tolerated form of the same idea. The latter recognizes classical logic and Kalam, but the former denounces them as *Haram* (not allowed through *Shariah*)³. It is the same situation among Twelver Shia between *Akhbaris* and the followers of the Transcendental Wisdom of Mulla Sadra. The first one focused on *Hadith*, denouncing the *Ijtihad* and the second encouraged uniting the mainstream of philosophy, mysticism and *Shariah*.

³ A newer version of Ahl al-Hadith is present in South Asian Islam, which rejects the authority of the four established schools of Sunni jurisprudence and instead relies solely on the Quran and Sunnah as sources of religious norms (Tareen, 2020, 172).

The Fundamental Doctrines of Mu'tazila. Let us look at an example to get a clear idea about the change of theological approach and its direction. Mu'tazila, the first theological school of thought defined itself with the five following points:

1) Unity of God; this principle was believed to rationally guard Divine Transcendence. It means God has no attributes otherwise it would be a kind of anthropomorphism because we as people are separate from our attributes and this kind of separation is prejudicial to the unity of God. This belief led Mu'tazila to deny what has been called the pre-eternal origin of the Quran as the Word of God.

2) Justice of God: this principle was supported with a humanistic approach that we discussed above.

3) The promise and the threat: this principle as the result of the second point concerns the relation between good and evil actions and the promise of reward and punishment in the next world.

4) An in-between position for Muslims who are sinful: It reflects Mu'tazila thought of being in an intermediate position between those who claimed that Muslims who commit major sins are condemned to hell and can no longer be members of the Islamic community, and those who asserted that Muslims with faith remain members of the community even if they commit a major sin.

5) Exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil: Muslims must not only follow the teachings of the religion themselves, but also seek to encourage others to perform good acts and prevent them from committing evil (Abd al-Jabbar, 1998).

The idea of Mu'tazila collapsed in Sunni-Islam by the appearance of Abd al-hassan al-Ash'ari (d. 330/941) who was originally a Mu'tazila but after a dream turned against them. However, he tried to find a way between scripturalism and Mu'tazila's rationalism. But the ideas of Mu'tazila survived among Shia people, adapted to their concerns.

Ash'arite. Abu al-Hassan Ash'ari (873-941) remained an anti-rationalist and scripturalist because of lack of belief in the basic principle that goodness and badness have rational and self-sufficient foundations, but he sought to confirm the practice of reason in articles of faith through the two following points:

1) He did not oppose the use of reason completely in religious matters as had been advocated by *Ahl al-Hadith* like Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

2) He endeavored to follow a path between Divine Justice and Divine Mercy believing in Divine attributes, the eternity of the Quran's nature, the possibility of God's forgiveness of human sins and the possibility of the Prophet interceding for the sinner in the other world with the permission of God (see, Nasr, 2007, 124-126).

Al-Ash'ari's thought gained acceptance rapidly and also spread over much of the Islamic world garnering the support of the caliphate and the Seljuq sultanate. Later scholars played a big role in flourishing and extending it. Al-Baqilani made it well known in Baghdad, Imam Ghazzali flavored it with the taste of Sufism, Fakhr al-Din a-Razi strengthened its philosophical color, and al-Jurjani, Iji, and Sad al-Din Taftazani developed it. The works of these men are still taught in Sunni-Islamic *Madrassahs*, Islamic seminaries, along with later commentaries and summaries. It also has come to be known in the West as that of orthodox theology.

Ibn Taymiyyah And Salafism. Indeed, the collapse of rationalism is not limited to the growth and dominance of Ash'arite. That bitter step was taken by Ibn Taymiyyah (661/1263-728/1328) who advocated a return to the orthodox ways of the ancestors and the predecessors (*al-Salaf*) and renewed Ibn Hanbal's scripturalism⁴. He

⁴ Shaykh Abdel-Halim Mahmoud, the grand Imam of al Azhar also states that all Islamic denominations can be categorized in terms of their position to rationality. He believed Mu'tazila and Mushabbiha (anthropomorphism) are two opposing extremes. The first relies fully on reason and the second on the literal meaning of the scripture. Mahoud puts the Ash'ari theology closer to Mu'tazila and Ibn Taymiyyah closer to Mushabbiha (Mahmoud, *al-Tafkir al-Falsafi*, p. 81).

was determined to abolish centuries of religious discoveries of logic, philosophy, and Sufism—all of which have a human origin and which he viewed as troubling and misleading. He radically restricted the source of all religious truth to the literal meaning of the holy Quran and the *al-Sunna* (the traditions) as interpreted by the Companions of the prophet, who are called *al-Sahabah* (the Companions) in Islam, or their two immediate Successors, who are called *al-Tabiun* (Successors of the *Sahabah*) and *Tabi al-Tabi'un* (the successors of the *Tabiun*). Therefore, all human discoveries in the field of faith through theology, philosophy, theosophy (*Hikmat*), and Sufism are considered as heresy and their believers including *Shia*, *Mu'tazila*, *Ash'arite*, Muslim philosophers like Avicenna and Averroes, Muslim Sufis like Ibn Arabi, are being accused of heresy "*Bid'ah*" and of being sinful. So their schools of thought and their followers have to be removed from Islamic culture. He felt a mission to purify Islam from the recently adulterated human culture including even logic and every rational reading (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1408, 2:32-35; Ibn Taymiyyah, 2005; Al-Ghamedi, 2003, 589-594; al-Mahmoud, 1995, 2:1384-1386), although he himself made use of logical discourse. As a result of this purification, he described God in very material characteristics. Ibn Taymiyyah thought Islam was mixed with Christian theology in respecting saints and visiting shrines. Thus he accused *Shia* and doctrinal Sufism of being influenced by polytheism⁵ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1986, 1:474-486).

⁵ Although Ibn Taymiyyah wrote a commentary on Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's mystical book "*Futuh al-Ghaib*", his work *Sharh Futuh al-Ghaib* seems reducing Sufism to Shariah's act of worship, without any Sufi fundamental concepts of the world, beings, manifestation, and God. In exemplifying who is attached to a Sufi order but opposed openly the doctrine, Nasr mentions that Ibn Taymiyyah was a Qadiriyyah Sufi yet strongly opposed Ibn Arabi's formulations (Nasr, 2007, 76). However, Ibn Taymiyyah's well known disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also wrote a detailed commentary on Khwaja Abudllah Ansari's *The Stages of Wayfarers*. It is called *Madarij al-Salikin*. As I understand, both commentaries prove that a great scholar of Islam, even among people of Hadith and scripturalists, cannot ignore the essential position of Sufism in Islam.

Ibn Taymiyyah calls *Mutakallimun* (theologians) heretics because they applied rational arguments to the Prophet's revelations. Considering the relationship between reason and *Wahy* (revelation) he believes in the four following principles:

- 1) Reason does not contradict the Quran and *al-Sunnah*;
- 2) Reason agrees with the Quran and *al-Sunnah*;
- 3) The contradictory reasoning of Philosophers and Theologians about traditions is false;
- 4) A correct, pure, and clear reason rejects Philosophy and Theology.

As a result, he does not accept rational arguments not based on the Quran and *al-Sunnah*. To prove the principles of faith (*Usul al-Din*), we must begin from the Quran and *al-Sunnah*.

Ibn Taymiyyah was imprisoned several times and died there because of his so-called unorthodox Islamic views and doctrines. In spite of his anti-rational doctrines, which were in opposition to the Islamic journey of thought and that are in contrast to major Islamic theologies, he appeared pious by his deeds, as an expert advocator of *al-Hadith* and Islamic law (*Fiqh*), as a brave scholar in battle with the Mongol invasion of Islamic regions, and as a determined researcher in his innovational ideas and Islamic deductions (*Fatwas*). The socio-political situations in the Islamic world and Ibn Taymiyyah's unique character, later caused him to have a wide reputation among Sunni-Muslims, especially in Arab communities around the Middle East, such that he and his famous student Ibn Qayyem (1292-1350) are called two *Shaykh al-Islam* (two great leaders of Islam) among *Salafists*.

Two Forms of Salafism

Facing different socio-political problems always motivated many Muslims to examine their situations vis-a-vis the earlier time of Islam; if we have the best book and comprehensive religion then

why are there many tensions, corruptions and weaknesses among Muslims. Although the main call for return to an earlier Islam by Ibn Taymiyyah was related to theoretical contemplation, the further call was more related to practical and social issues within Muslim societies. While the spirit of Salafism is nothing but a calling back to the earliest Muslims, in Sunni, and Islam in Shia, the current use of Salafism refers to different forms.

Indeed “Salaf” is an Arabic term meaning “the precedent,” and refers to examples for Islamic practices in Islamic context. It is used two times in the Quran; the first as the previous sinful time of life (8:38) and the second for previous people as examples of punished ones (43:46). The more positive use comes from a quotation of the Prophet Muhammad, as described by Imam al-Bukhari (810-870). He said that his companions, his generation and two later generations were the most exemplary Muslims. From this origin was born the concept of *al-Salaf al-Salih*, “the pious predecessors” as the best examples of understanding and practicing Islam. Salafism has diversified into a number of different variants; the two most prominent being ritualism and the form espoused by some political Islamists. Contrasting the current Islam to the pristine Islam is at the core of Salafism; hence a heavy discussion of utopian versus dystopian society. While both groups look at the past, the tradition, and the pristine form of Islam, and there are many overlaps, they differ in two directions. The first is looking at a glorious past as a tradition to be fully repeated or a moment for flourishing humanities through combining the main message and new developments. The second, is either focusing on rituals and religious acts of worship, or on socio-political aspects of the umma⁶.

⁶ I take issue with the traditional view of Salafism being split into three classes—quietist, activist, and jihadist. This ignores the theological and intellectual frameworks these groups subscribe to. Moreover, the lines between the distinctive subsections of Salafism aren’t set in stone and often blur together. Acknowledging these complexities, I do think this division of Salafism does provide an essential starting point for examining these groups.

Although the first form of Salafism can be traced to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's scripturalism, its main theorist was Ibn Taymiyyah, and its practical leader Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) appeared five centuries later. Ibn Taymiyyah claimed he was trying to purify Islamic monotheism of later adulterations. This school was institutionalized in the public domain by his devotee, Abd al-Wahhab, who established the sect commonly called Wahhabism, though followers prefer to call themselves Salafists because of al-Wahhab's personal and ideological unpopularity. The Wahhabists aimed to purify Islam, not only from adulterations such as national customs and regional cultures, but from all effects of human intellect, and even from human interpretations of the holy Quran. This sect focused on fighting against grave deviations in Islam. They call it polytheism /idolatry (*Shirk*) and heretical innovation (*Bid'ah*). Many shrines among Muslim communities particularly Shia and Sufi ones were observed as polytheistic phenomena because they suggest power beyond one God. Also, many new cultural and social traditions like birthday celebrations, even the Prophet's one, were recognized as *Bid'ah* because they were not common during three exemplary generations. Even the pilgrimage of Muslims to Medina, the shrine of the Prophet, was per se considered a polytheistic expedition. This idea of purifying Islam from all adulterations or polytheism fed much radicalism to destroy many historical and cultural artifacts in Islamic lands. I will come back to some more aspects of Wahhabism later in the politics section but want to stress that this form of Salafism was and is mostly relevant to an intrafaith conflict rather than one between Muslims and non-Muslims. This form also is more involved with ritual issues rather than socio-political issues.

Salafism evolved a new form when it was reincarnated by al-Afghani's quest to revive Islam. This flavor of Salafism was followed by the Egypt-based Syrian scholar Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and spawned present-day Islamist movements, including the

Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood and, to some extent, Iranian Islamic Revolution⁷. Here Salafism returned to Islam's earliest era, the golden age of Islamic civilization, rather than focusing on the first three generations of Islam, to explore the potential for modern Muslims' life. In this school of thought, Salaf and the past are not sources for imitation, but for motivation and guidance. They aimed for the purification of thought and practice as well, but also aimed to apply Salafism to as-of-yet unimagined future possibilities. They began to integrate practical reason and the spirit of revelation, prioritizing reason over previous interpretations of Shariah when the two conflicted. This form consists of two aspects: theological to reinterpret Islam in terms of new demands, concerns and human achievements, as well as a socio-political aspect to adjust Islamic law with modern life. Though they admired some aspects of Western civilization like modern science and technology, al-Afghani's followers modified them to integrate Islamic values (see, Akhlaq, 2003). For example, they exhibit great concern for institutionalizing Islamic Humanities; it means while they have no problem with modern technology they are suspicious of modern humanities including sociology, psychology, economics, and philosophy. These sciences suffer from a secular bias and also weaken Islamic doctrines or morals, according to them. This sophisticated form of Salafism has more variety within and wishes to reflect and meditate on the question of the relation between current Islam on the basis of the past and possible revival in the public sphere. I will discuss some of the speculative outcomes of this insight soon regarding new-theology.

⁷ In this paper, Ira M. Lapidus distinguishes between two distinct "golden ages" of Islamic political ideals. He then contends that modern Islamic nation-states adhere to neither of these ideals: "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam," in *524 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1992, pp. 13-25.

While Wahhabism emphasized the *Hadiths* and defined themselves in opposition to different denominations within the Islamic world, these new Salafists interacted with Western Modernity. The internal state of Muslims in terms of purified belief is the main concern of the former and the external status of Muslims in terms of solidarity and progress is the main concern of the latter. Influenced by 18th-century Enlightenment thinkers, the latter attempted to bring Islamic thought face to face with the Western world. Subsequently, there is an emerging tendency to extend Islamic doctrines into socio-political and economic affairs. As Wahhabi-Salafism promotes its purifying campaign even at the cost of having a sectarian agenda, the other form respects ecumenism between Sunni and Shia. Moreover, while the Wahhabi-Salafists consist more of elder and traditional *Ulamas*, the other one consists of modern-minded and younger scholars, with many of them having no experience studying in Islamic seminaries. However, there are also some amalgamations of both Salafi trends in recent Islamist movements including Afghani Taliban, Tehrik-i Taliban Pakistan, Al-Qaida, Al-Nusra Front, and ISIS.

As a conclusion, both Salafi forms are looking back for an inspiring source to either purify Islam or move Muslims further in terms of modern religious life. Their common return to *Salaf-e Salih* can be understood when we examine their view with regard to non-Salafi scholars. This opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah, the leader of the largest school of jurisprudence in Islam, illustrates the true nature of the non-Salafi approach. He went on to assert, "We accepted what is narrated from the Prophet fully from the bottom of the heart. We accepted some and rejected others of what is reported from *Sahabah*. Regarding what is said by *Tabi'un*, we have to know that they were authorities for their own and we are for our own"⁸

⁸ Mu'tazila went a step further considering *Sahaba* as ordinary people who possessed positive and negative features. Some even criticized the righteous caliphs and disrespected several companions (Amarraji, Ahmad Shawki

(See, ibn Abd al-Birr al-Andulisi, 1997, 265-267; al-Baihaqi, 1999, 1:46). Consequently, non-Salafi Islam is characterized by both self-confidence and an appreciation of both human accomplishments throughout history as well as open-mindedness to future prospects. In contrast, Salafi Islam contributes in restricted faith which regards human explorations in history, which is *Bid'ah* or deviation from the spirit of Islam. It replaces the future with the past and sanctifies the predecessors because they were closer to revelation time! Although there are different references, the Salaf serves as the best example of Islam for both. Furthermore, there are two features very appealing to Salafism: imagining a lost pure and unified monotheism (in case of Wahhabism) or golden age (in case of pan-al-Afghanis) as well as an immature self-sufficiency that denies already institutionalized Islam. Ironically, Salafism simultaneously rejects and accepts the same thing under the name of disrespecting imitation (*taqlid*) or promoting *Ijtihad* (exertion to deduce new Islamic ideas): rejects following institutionalized schools of theology and accepts to follow only very old patterns of thought⁹. In addition, the simplicity of Wahhabism and the pragmatism of pan-al-Afghani Salafism exhibited to them a down-to-earth Islam attracting young generations. A form of Salafism and puritanism which is Shi'a-oriented can be observed in the strict adherence to traditional costumes and values promoted by the Basis and IRGC, political entities in Iran, as well as in anti-Sufi and anti-philosophy ideals which are upheld by some religious authorities (*maraji*) in Iran and Iraq.

Ibraheem, *El-Moutazela in Bagdad and their influence on intellectual and political life from the reign of Kaliph El-Mamoun until the death of El-Moutawkel Ala-Allah*, Cairo: Madbouli, 2000: pp. 98-100).

⁹ There is a very detailed treatise written by fourteen Afghani Sunni scholars in November 13, 1888, as quest of King Abd al-Rahman Khan (1840/1844-1901), to show how Wahhabism's idea of *Ijtihad* suffers from a lack of self-consistency (see, Taqwin al-Din, 1888). I believe this criticism can apply to another form of Salafism as well.

Maturidi Theology. We turn now to explore the journey of theology among non-Arabic Muslims as well as Shia-Muslim theology. As we will discuss in the last chapter on Islamic law, there are four Schools of law among Sunni-Muslims. Ibn Taymiyyah was a Hanbali Jurist regarding the Islamic school of law. Most non-Middle Eastern Arabic Sunni-Muslims, including central Asia, Afghanistan, Turkey, and the Indian subcontinent, are followers of Abu Hanifah in law which is associated with Maturidi in theology. Abu Mansur Maturidi (853-944) from central Asia established a rational school of theology between Mu'tazila and Ash'arite. He acknowledged the principle of *Husn wa Qubh-e Aqli wa Dhati* or "goodness and badness having rational and self-sufficient foundations", and approved of knowing God and faith through reason. Therefore he is part of *Adliyyah* or the people of justice who believe that God has a purpose in His actions and humans have free will and so are completely responsible for their faith and behaviors (Akhlāq, 1389, 38-44).

Shia Theology

Shia-Muslims as an initial part of the people of justice believe in the critical principle of "rational and inherent goodness and badness" but because of the unique characteristics of Shi'a thought, the theology developed so that it is connected with philosophy through al-Tusi. The Prophet Muhammad used to acknowledge the knowledge of his son in law, Imam Ali, by saying, "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its door." Imam Ali, the first Imam of Shia and the fourth Caliph of all Muslims, used to interpret the Quranic teachings in both scholastic and public ways for thirty years after the Prophet's death among Muslims and used to answer new questions and criticism from newly developed areas of Islam. According to both *Sunni* and *Shia*, there are several sermons and documents originating from Imam Ali that form the foundations of

Shia' Kalam. *Twelver-Shia*, as the majority group of Shia-Muslims, believe in the twelve infallible Imams who developed the understanding of Islam in the light of the Quran and the Prophet's Tradition (al-Sunnah). This special belief gave them more sources to develop their theology and changed the theological rationality of *Mu'tazila* to philosophical rationality. The first is limited to the defense of religion based on common sentiments, but the second aims to discover the truth through purely rational propositions¹⁰. There are some quotations from the Shia's infallible Imams that recognize reason as the inner prophet in contrast to the prophets themselves who are the external manifestations of reason. Thus Shia theology has always continued to have a philosophical flavor. However, it received its first systematic formulation at the hands of Khwaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 1273), whose *Kitab Tajrid al-Itiqad* (The Book of the Catharsis of Doctrine) is both the first and the most major systematic work of Shia Kalam. This book with its commentary, written by Allamah Jamal al-Din al-Hilli (1250-1325) is still taught in Shia Madrasahs in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and elsewhere. Also, recent Shia theology is influenced by Mulla Sadra's Transcendental Theosophy (*al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyyah*).

However, as a member of the people of justice, Shia-Islam believes in the critical principle that goodness and badness have rational and self-sufficient foundations. It categorizes God's oneness into four divisions: the oneness in nature, the oneness in attributes (meaning the unity between God's nature and qualities); Oneness in actions (meaning God gives efficient agents active

¹⁰ For an insightful look into the philosophical aspects of Shia Islam. One should read the book: *Shi'ite Islam* by Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (translated into ENGLISH by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, State University of New York Press, 1977). This book provides an insider view of the formation of Shia, as well as the fundamental impact of Shia Imams have had on Islamic civilization.

powers and gives humans free will and includes humans in His vertical power); and Oneness in worship (meaning only God deserves worship). Shia-Islam popularly considers justice as one of the foundations of faith. By justice, they imply that God distributes His grace, trial, and punishments considering a special system and method understandable to human intellect.

The Historical Significance of the People of justice. The relationship between people of justice and the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) and the early period of the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) caliphs was far from uniform, even though the Mu'tazilas were not widely accepted. In contrast, many hadiths and transcriptual arguments were often used to legitimize their rule by attributing it to God's grace, claiming that He had placed them in such high roles due to His will. However Mu'tazila had gotten the strong support of three Caliphs namely al-Ma'mun (813-833), al-Mu'tasim (833-842), and al-Wathiq (842-847) who called themselves Mu'tazila. Although there was some opportunity to promote free speech and discussion, they created a tragic inquisition, called the age of trial (*Mihna*), to punish those who did not believe the same ideas about the Quran and God's speech including Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) the father of Islamic scripturalism. After this period, they never were able to gain power again.

The Classical Kalam in a Glance

It is worth mentioning that Kalam, including Mu'tazila and Ash'arite, is not the same as what is called theology in Christianity, mainly because it does not include all issues which can be called theological, like exegesis of the Quran and scholarship related to *Fiqh* (Islamic law). Also, we have some Muslim religious thinkers who have been completely opposed to Kalam. Despite this, the significance of Muslim theologians—namely *Mutakallimun*, an

Arabic term referring to those who have expertise in Kalam—cannot be underestimated. They are involved in a major part of Islam—the theoretical doctrines—and they had a big role in the golden age of Islam (from the Prophet’s emergence in 610 until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258). In the contemporary era, modernity has changed the mentality of people and the world has become smaller. It is thus obvious that the reestablishment of Kalam seems more necessary now than ever. As a major theological approach, Kalam is mostly faced with three missions:

(1) Clarifying the articles of faith and determining the essential and accidental part of faith (systematization of religion). For example, the holy Quran as a religious book, like others, does not follow an educational style. The verses and chapters are sent down to the Prophet over a span of 23 years taking into account the “circumstances of descending” meaning the particular context, time, place, and events.

(2) Justification of the Islamic doctrines based on scripture or reason. It was supposed that Muslims after the Prophet could truly learn articles of faith proved by reason in order to provide the possibility of salvation. Executing this mission seems contrary to simply receiving the faith from the Prophet, and instead involves proving doctrines that shape the faith.

(3) Answering the objections and opposing points that rise through non-Muslims including the people of the book (a term used to refer to Christians and Jews, and sometimes Zoroastrians and Buddhists), and non-believers.

These are the expected benefits of theology in the Islamic context. Islamic Kalam was shaped historically to capture and manifest these benefits. After this long discussion we can summarize. The *Table 1* exhibits the main ideas in Islamic context of theology.

Table 1. The main ideas of various schools of Islamic Theology

The principle	The rest (Ash'arite)	The people of justice (Mu'tazila)	The people of justice (Twelver-Shia)
The position of reason	After the faith	Before the faith	Before the faith
The goodness and evil have their rational and inherent foundations	Divine based	Reason based	Reason based
Oneness of God (Tawhid)	Oneness in nature Oneness in actions Oneness in worship	Oneness in nature Oneness in attributes Oneness in worship	Oneness in nature Oneness in attributes Oneness in actions Oneness in worship
Justice	Based on Divine Will	Based on Reason	Based on Reason
Human's free will	Human only acquires his actions	Human has a free will	God appointed the free will for humans
The successor of the Prophet	Is established through a secular decision-making process and has not to be infallible	Is established through a secular decision-making process	Is appointed by God and has to be infallible
An in-between position for Muslims who are sinful	The doer of major sin is dissolute faithful	The doer of major sin is dissolute, no faithful and no non-faithful	The doer of major sin is dissolute faithful
God's promise and the threat	God should forgive without sinner's repentance	God should not forgive without sinner's repentance	Sinner finally goes to paradise without repentance
Exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil	Only revelations can declare to us what is good and what is evil. This exhortation and prohibition is revelation-based	Reason also can state what is good and what is evil. This exhortation and prohibition is also reason-based	Reason also can state what is good and what is evil. This exhortation and prohibition is also reason-based

Although the scripturalists and Salafists are co-rooted with “the rest”, I don't mention them in this table because they reject

“Kalam” (Islamic Theology) and do not represent clear, common, and systematic ideas about these issues.

However, in Islamic scholarship, gradually *Kalam* is recognized as one path of rational searching for the truth in accordance with religion. The *Table 2* portrays four big Islamic schools of thought comparing their relevance to reason, religion, and intuition. I used intentionally the word religion instead of revelation because firstly, the revelation does not reflect completely the Islamic concept of *Wahy*—sending down the message—and secondly, all major Islamic schools tried to make their teachings consistent with *Wahy* so thus the conflict was more apparent in the mainstream reading of *Wahy* which is Islamic religion.

Table 2. Position of reason, religion and intuition in schools of Islamic thought

	Reason	Intuition	Religion
Kalam (Islamic Theology)	*		*
Peripatetic Islamic Philosophy	*		
Illuminative Islamic philosophy		*	
Transcendental Wisdom	*	*	*
Sufism		*	*

Therefore this table clearly shows the Islamic contribution to intellectual and spiritual debates and human search of the truth in regards to three different sources of knowledge. Also, it manifests how *Mutakallimun* attempted to make a balance between religion and reason, sacred and secular, human capacity and divine guidance.

This journey of thought has, in a positive fashion, encouraged Islamic civilization to join secular and sacred affairs together and link ongoing life with spiritual perspectives. *Mutakallimun* were the first scholars in Islamic context who discussed the atom, the natures of body and soul, the nature of free will, the visibility of God, gaining power through revolution or rebellion, distinguishing between what has happened in Islamic political history and what

was expected to happen, comparing the four Caliphs together, criticizing the companions of the Prophet and evaluating their authority. So their attempt can be conceived as an asset to human civilization to enrich the human search of the truth with the following means:

First of all, theology as a school of thought has tried to humanize revealed truth and sanctify the human truth. The vital question of reason's position toward the Book (the Quran), faith, and practice demonstrates a critical moment in the human mind that looks for a transcendental meaning to life. This twofold entity respects daily life, values and demands. If, in practice, we cannot leave sublime values in favor of daily needs as well as daily needs in favor of sublime values, the case is the same in regards to the theory and faith. Islamic theology has tried to make faith reasonable. This discourse provides a ground for discussion among various faiths to help each other to approach better toward the truth, instead of two common and negative alternatives: fighting each other with the result that people become disgusted with the transcendence of religion; emptying faith of doctrinal content so that faith becomes nothing more than myth.

Second, Islam's classifying of faith's substance into doctrines, morals, and religious law, its focus on some special doctrines, and its divisions based on human reason, qualities, and practices acknowledge a variety of capacities within human nature. It entails at least two points: that we cannot make judgments about faith based only on some practices and speeches. This point teaches Muslims tolerance in the community and inspires them to develop their faith approaching other faiths. And that faith has to be analyzed and discussed in so far as human demands and capacities are concerned; faith has to serve and save humans, rather than humans being unjustly sacrificed on account of an anti-rational understanding of faith.

Third, Islamic theology received benefits through confrontation with ancient philosophy and offered new subjects to philosophical investigations in regards to God's existence, attributes, relationship with the World, people, and salvation that will be discussed later in the philosophy section. It shows that Islamic theology is open to others and that it belongs to a positive paradigm in dealing with various branches of knowledge. It shows that faith does not look for its victory in an isolated spot and separated from reality. The impacts of these questions can be traced through medieval philosophy through examining al-Farabi, Avicenna, Ghazzali, Averroes, Maimonides, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Latin Averroism.

Fourth, the journey of theology in the Islamic civilization portrays a unique form of religious discussion that reflects some critical features of human searching for the truth. Then, it offers more chances to discover human demands in relation to faith and the truth.

Fifth, the falls and rises in the Islamic journey of theology echo the power of the theological method that plays a role between two opposite sides: on one side the scripturalism and literalism that kills human reason at the feet of the holy text, and spiritualism that belittles rational discoveries and systematic attempts.

Finally, the division of earlier Muslims into "the people of justice" and "the rest," on one hand and the spirit of the Sunni and Shia denominations on the other hand, exhibit how Islam is subject to various and dynamic interpretations. Regarding the Sunni and Shia, it is worth mentioning that they reflect two initial parts of Islam. Islamic faith cannot be reduced, as it appears in mainstream Sunni discourse, to one level of understanding which connects daily life miraculously, and non-hierarchically, to God and the unseen (*Ghayb*) world. Likewise, the hierarchy of faith and spirituality is not permitted to be taken so seriously, as in mainstream Shia thought, so as to harm the simple faithful who are not ready to accept such

sophisticated theology. The comprehensiveness of Islam can be seen through both faces, Sunni and Shia. As the collapse of theology hurt both “the people of justice” and “the rest,” the lack of mutual comprehension and ecumenism between Sunni and Shia can harm the diversity of Islamic faith.

Current Status. What is the case in reality nowadays? Obviously, we can see for example the argumentative approach of Mu’tazila that has tried to distinguish itself from other approaches and establish a field for more discoveries, nowadays is changed to a scriptural approach that presents narrow foundations for Islam as in the well known Five Pillars of Islam:

- 1) Declaring two initial doctrines (*al-Shahadah*): no God but God, and the Prophet Muhammad is God’s messenger:
- 2) Praying (*Salat*): daily five times
- 3) Fasting (*Sawm*) during the blessed month of Ramadan
- 4) Almsgiving (*Zakat*)
- 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*) at least once in a lifetime provided one is able.

This example, like the current situation among Muslims, presents the collapse of Kalam’s aims and dominance that led to a lack of comparably eminent figures in recent centuries. Sadly, Islamic theology over its fourteen-century history has not produced as significant figures during the second half as it did during its first because of the dominance of scripturalism. What do contemporary Muslim scholars think? Currently, there is a sort of renaissance and self-realization among Muslims that is associated with the emergence of new theologians; it can be understood as a reaction to modernity. The following points are among the reasons for this emergence:

- 1) Western colonialism which harmed independence, dignity, and the honor of the Muslims, creating anger and commotion;

2) Distribution of new science and technology that stimulates the curiosity of Muslims;

3) New socio-political changes like the creation of new geographical borders, that caused the rise of national or ideological movements, increased awareness of human rights, and created new social affairs;

4) Facing modern philosophies that presented new fundamental criticism about faith and religion.

All of these reasons had a hand in shaping the new-Islamic theology (Kalam-i Jadid) which moves back and forth between the classical and modern subjects. Although it seems that Shibli Nomani (1857-1914) of India, was the first who used the term Kalam-i Jadid (new-theology of Islam), often Sayed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897) is widely known as the pathfinder of this movement.

Al-Afghani, his Followers, and New-Theology

Although al-Afghani's call was more related to socio-political phenomenon in Islam, he originally motivated Muslim intellectuals to renew their understandings of faith. I will discuss his socio-political campaign in the last section on politics, now I would like to highlight his inspiring position for new-theology in Islam. Al-Afghani reinterpreted main Islamic concepts in order to encourage Muslims to change themselves. Change was the heart of his philosophy. As I understand, his main message appears in his lecture, November 8, 1872, at Albert Hall City of Kolkata, India on education. He argues the deficiencies of Islamic world originate from lacking sciences. Of course several Islamic countries, like the Ottoman Empire and Egypt for sixty years attempted to develop branches of sciences and modern education in their lands but they were not successful because development of sciences also needs a common ground to nourish them as well as keep them in harmony.

Otherwise the various branches of knowledge contradict each other, for instance, I can say, the conflict between social sciences and exact sciences or between traditional study and the modern one depicts a lack of common ground. They indeed do not understand each other and so spread misunderstanding about each other; for example social sciences examine a society in terms of a natural body fitting a fieldwork while the traditional methods examine it based on religious theories.

However, al-Afghani holds that this is the philosophy which reaches the branches of sciences, nourishes and keeps them growing in harmony. He believed that if there were a lack of the philosophical spirit, then sciences would be incapable of moving a nation further, whereas if this philosophical spirit were embraced, people would be inspired toward sciences. "The earlier Muslims" al-Afghani argues, "had no knowledge; but Islam brought them a philosophical spirit. This spirit caused them to study and learn the world and humanity in all aspects and translate references of all branches of science from Syriac, Persian and Greek to the Arabic language during al-Mansur's (714-775) period of time. Philosophy allows people to learn about humanity, people's dignity, and the proper way to live. The collapse among all nations started when they began to tolerate their philosophical spirit. This led to a deficiency in their sciences, traditions, and styles of life" (al-Afghani, 1358, as cited in Akhlaq, p. 257). Al-Afghani looks at philosophy as the ground for humanity, civilization, and welfare.

Sayed is clearly influenced with Descartes' idea of the tree of knowledge. In the preface to the French edition of the Principles, Descartes wrote, "all philosophy is like a tree, whose roots are metaphysics, whose trunk is physics, and whose branches, which grow from this trunk, are all other sciences, namely medicine, mechanics, and morals." These three branches respond to all three demands of humanity regarding his body, welfare, and mind. The interconnected body of knowledge constitutes a hierarchical

organization. Knowledge, for Descartes begins in metaphysics, and metaphysics begins with the self.

This self is a religious self for al-Afghani which is covered with much historical dust. There is a call for domestic development in philosophy; to revive Islamic community through examining the entirety of Islam. Al-Afghani's philosophy shifts between "self" and "the other;" the first concept proposes his followers to look at Islamic potential for change as well as a self-realization; the second concept puts forward a sense of resistance to "other" whether in terms of culture, tradition, values, politics, and the like, as well as to criticize self regarding the other. It means both self and other are intrinsically dynamic: In returning to self, he personally tried to present a new meaning of Islamic fundamental concept in order to give Muslims self-confidence. For instance, he believed the idea of predetermination (*Taqdir*) is said in the Quran to suggest nobody is allowed to leave his work in promoting social or personal change with the idea that he would reach what God wanted regardless of his own work; no one knows what God wished for him so every socio-economic-political class and position is not divine and predetermined. Sayed suggests how daily life affects our knowledge; leaving daily affairs and meditating on abstract issues only distort the path of moving forward. This call to empirical and practical thought is what Sayed sees as being in harmony with the nature of Islam. He shifted the philosophical question of the first cause, the possible and necessary beings, and four causes to a question of the first step to reform Islam, the possibility and necessity of reform, the causes for collapse of Islamic civilization; otherwise it means wasting our time (Akhlāq, 1389, 259-261).

Al-Afghani in his masterpiece *Risalah-i Nicharia* (Treatise about Naturalism/Materialism) directly delivers his view about religion including Islam and indirectly the relation between Islam and the West. There are two groups of views and values opposing in human history, regardless of particular time and space: the divine

view and natural or material view (He equates natural and material views in this treatise). We have to be very careful because both groups can function under various titles: philosopher, wise, mystic, intellectual, pro-labor, prophet, and humanitarian activist. Three views and three values distinguish these two groups. These views are: human is the best creature (so he has to acquire moral and intellectual value be fitting his position); my own faithful community (*Ummah*) is the best one (to cause a intellectual competition to learn from others and pass beyond their degree of material and intellectual capital); and people are not created purposelessly (so people must actualize their potential and help each other in accordance with social justice and individual dignity). Al-Afghani continues that this vision institutionalizes three values among the people: modesty (which leads to self-esteem and avoiding evil actions); trust (which lays the foundation for community); and honesty (which eases the interaction among people). The divine group promotes these six visions and values while the material group disregards them. Sayed showed his interest in history by writing "Continued the statement in the history of Afghani," highlights some historical phenomena among Muslims and Westerns, while materialistic trends attacked these visions and values and harmed humanity like Sufism in Islam and Nihilism in the West. So those who do not respect human dignity, real competition between people to further humanity, meaningfulness of human life as well as do not establish social values are materialistic, no matter what they call themselves. He looks at this issue as an ideal type which in practice shifts between various peoples and nations. For example, he emphasizes that both Muslims and Christians are experiencing what their leaders reached: while Christianity, as he thought, promotes peace and submission to attackers and devalues worldly affairs, Christian leaders learned from previous religious experiences, adjusted with modern demands and focused on practical issues which led to

Western progress. In contrast, Islam emphasizes honor, superiority and not giving up before oppressors, but Muslim leaders caused a regression due to fake *Hadiths*, materialistic ideas and belief in pre-determinism.

Al-Afghani distinguishes between Muslims and Islam; condemning the first and praising the second. Among all divine groups, Islam is the best because it consists of the four following principles: unity of God (*Tawhid*) which means all are equal in creation, honor, property, power, and esteem; dignity and potential of an individual which inspires furthering in their human achievements (only the position of the prophethood is not available for the public); individual rationality (which confesses that unexamined or imitated opinions are not valid); and exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil. He concludes that contemporary Muslims do not follow these principles and thus they separate themselves from Islam suffering from retrogression. However, al-Afghani states that Western civilization has divine roots through philosophies of wisemen like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and recently Martin Luther. God's traditions are the same for all peoples and so whoever fails to follow these traditions is guaranteed to not only not make progress but also to go backwards (Akhlq, 1389, 240-250).

Philosophy and religion are tools for al-Afghani to promote humanity. If they are transformed from tool to end, the crisis in humanity begins. Sayed does not pretend to hide that Islam in his view is merely a device for humanity. He criticized the famous philosopher Ernest Renan who thought there is no consistency between Islam's spirit and science. Islam even if it is not in harmony with science, Sayed thinks, we have to reinterpret it that way. Religion including polytheism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam moves people forward toward rationality through discussion of transcendental beings. He appeared so progressive that Renan wished they would both eventually experience a time when

humans reach such a level of progress that there is no need for religion any longer. Al-Afghani in addition supported Mahdi's rebellion in Sudan against British colonialism. Mahdi claimed that he is the promised figure by the Prophet to save humanity. According to the Prophet's Hadith, Sunni and Shia hold this idea that on the last day one of his descendants will come and bring peace and justice to humanity and his name is Mahdi. The Sudanian figure claimed that he is the one and al-Afghani gave the voice to him through his journal, "*al-Urwa al-Wuthqa*." "[Muslim] Indians have to believe that he is Mahdi," al-Afghani wrote, "although he is not Mahid, because this opinion helps them in order to get unity against slavery of the British." (Ibid, 268) The pragmatic approach of al-Afghani appears more when we examine his criticism of Sayed Ahmad Khan of India. The latter was against superstition and emphasized educating the people, in support of the British. Al-Afghani thought living in a colony is the main source of all problems, regardless of what education you have. There is an explicit conflict between political and cultural approaches toward modernization and domestic development. Political change or cultural and educational reform, which is the first priority? This is the nature of new-Islamic theology which shifts between liberation theology and new-Mu'tazila theology¹¹.

Al-Afghani who was popular among both Sunni and Shia religious reformists encouraged Muslims to attain new science and technology, to renew their understanding of Islam regarding current conditions, to emphasize commonalities among all Islamic denominations, and to fight against local corrupt governments and

¹¹ The New Mu'tazila represents a broad perspective in contemporary Islamic theology that prioritizes logical reasoning (*aql*) over revelation (*naq*). It comes in many different forms, sometimes viewed favorably as a way of modernizing an old tradition, other times used to scrutinize theologies, and yet other times used to disparage rivals. A notable example of the latter occurred when South Asian Deobandis accused their opponents, the Barelvis, of adhering to modern Mu'tazila principles (Tareen 2020, 316).

international western colonialism. All Afghani's features of approaching Islam called Muslim intellectuals to reshape their comprehension of Islam. What is the true nature of Islam? What alienated Muslims from their religious "self?" How did the positive energy of Islam change to negative energy? How can Muslims renew that positive and constructive energy currently? What is the relation between Islam and the current situation of Muslims? What is the position of faith on colonialism, despotism, nationalism and modernism? How is harmony between Islam, philosophy and science possible? What is the prophetic experience? What does the culmination of religion through Islam mean? What is the proper relation of Islam to other faiths? This kind of questioning constitutes new-Theology in Islam which is Islamic self-awareness. This directed al-Afghani's heirs to two opposite sides with many versions: socio-political and cultural-philosophical sides. Regarding Westerners and non-Muslims, he also institutionalized a very selective approach for his heirs. The West, in his thought, is a collection of good and bad aspects; Muslims are encouraged to learn from the first aspects and avoid the second.

However, his dream of the golden age of Islam paved a way for Salafism as well. Al-Afghani's inheritance was like his own character: thoughtful and passionate. As much as his thought encouraged Muslim intellectuals to study the potential of Islam for reform, western achievements in development, human values, and dialogue with "other" to know better "self," nevertheless his passion supported the polarization of Islam and fed Islamism. In sum, it awakened Muslims from a long historical slumber without providing a clear way to promote humanity. Of course it was a revolutionary movement in its time but had more of a socio-political than a cultural and philosophical impact. He for sure renewed the more or less forgotten marriage between Islam and politics in earlier history. Even for his heirs who brought out innovative contemporary ideas, the political aspects remained strongly.

Afghani's progressive movement was continued by Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) in Egypt, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) of Lahore in the Indian subcontinent, and Ali Shariati (1933-1977) and Murtaza Mutahhari (1919-1979) in Iran. All of these figures were involved with political Islam as well. I refer to some theological aspects of two extremely significant figures who are considered adherents of al-Afghani; their political aspects will be discussed in the politics section.

Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore (1877-1938). He was a philosopher, politician, and religious reformist who encouraged Indian Muslims to have a separate country, the idea that created Pakistan finally. He was not only engaged in thinking of the current and proper status of Muslims, in World War I he was a member of the Khalifa Movement, a movement against British colonialism. During his political activities Iqbal developed his philosophical doctrine. Iqbal is a very important thinker among scholars of philosophy and literature especially among Muslim reformists. Some scholars compare his philosophical ideas with well known European philosophers such as Bergson, Nietzsche, and Hegel. Some compare his rhetoric with Dante, John Milton, and Goethe. Religious reformists like Jawarharlal Nehru and Murtaza Mutahhari admired him highly and Ali Shariati accounted him as a higher step of al-Afghani's movement.

In fact, Iqbal was a poet by nature. His first and last literary work was a poem, and poetry reflects his ideas and mirrors his personality. His writings originated from and are full of deep and rich intuition and imagination. He dreamed of a status for Muslims completely distinct from its current state; for him, institutionalized Islam was not helpful anymore so, he claimed, the intellectuals must reread Islam in terms of the modern world. This poem reflects his aim in radical criticism of the already established schools of Islam. He targets Jurisprudence and Sufism because these two represent the dominant schools in Islamic culture: "Send my Salam to Sufi and

Mulla who have delivered God's message to us. But also let them know that their interpretations of Islam (*Ta'wil*) made God, Muhammad and Gabriel confused." (Iqbal, 1366, 535)

In his masterpiece "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" Iqbal describes his understanding of Islam, the dialogue between Islamic and Western philosophies, how to face modern forms of government, and so forth. This work includes three fundamental concepts of new-theology: the meaning of finality of the Prophethood in Islam; the dynamic of new interpretation of faith within Islam; and the harmony between Islam and modern issues like experimental science or democracy. The Prophethood is "a mystic consciousness of unitary experience" in the deepest and richest degree. It shares the light from the inner depths of life to others in order to suggest to them a deeper meaning of life. The birth of empirical reason and critical faculty proves the self-sufficiency of humanity since they can discover that deep and rich unitary experience through it. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad is on a boundary that separates two epochs: the previous one in which people relied on Prophetic intuition and the next one in which people can find their way through natural and inductive intellect; this is why inductive intellect and experimental science are greatly promoted by Islam. The Prophetic consciousness was a mode of economizing individual thought and choice by providing ready-made judgments which no longer suit the critical faculty in its exploratory method (Iqbal, 1989, 100).

Considering the current era, Iqbal believed humanity missed the chance for his unity by dividing the sacred and the secular while religion tries to unite them. This union happens through a conjoining of inner and outer experiences, the first through intuition and mystical experiences and the second through empiricist knowledge. The three following sources of knowledge recognized by the Quran are in harmony: history, nature, and the unity of inner experience. This union targets three needs: a spiritual interpretation

of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Although inductive intellect and empirical science are necessary, it is not enough because pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation alone can bring. This is the reason why pure thought has so little influence on men, while religion has always elevated individuals, and transformed whole societies. The Muslim of today must reconstruct his social life in the light of ultimate principles, and evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam (Ibid, 142). The problems with Muslims originate through dominance of classical speculative and Greek philosophy and ascetic Sufism which distance them from the empirical and pragmatic method of the Quran. Iqbal clearly interprets teachings of Islam in the light of modern knowledge without fearing to offend the previous understanding of Islam. Highlighting the objectives of Shariah, he suggests wider meanings of rituals; if physical sciences acquire knowledge of nature which is God's behavior then they are another form of worship. The Islamic order to direct worshipers at the same place (Mecca) is to secure the unity of feeling in the congregation, inspiring social equality and significance of community. The essence of oneness (*Tawhid*) as the soul of Islam consists of equality, solidarity and freedom (Iqbal, p. 122). Examining this position inspires us with a new meaning of *Ijtihad* (deducing new Ideas of Islam) which refers more to organization than individual and to radical renovation than a particular concept. Thus the new *Ijtihad* must focus on the Quran, and be like Abu Hanifah, who did not value the Hadith and Sunnah at the same level as the Quran (Ibid, p. 137).

Iqbal suggests that a Muslim legislative assembly be taken as the modern form of *Ijma* (consensus) as the one pillar of Islamic jurisprudence. This is the only option for Muslims who wish to survive with their faith today because "Neither in the foundational

principles nor in the structure of our systems, as we find them today, is there anything to justify the present attitude." Thus Iqbal's work appears more serious than only an adjustment to modern conditions of life. The reconstruction of Islam leads the author to seek a "spiritual democracy" rather than current western "mutually intolerant democracies." (Ibid, p. 142) It means since Islam serves for human values like equality, solidarity and freedom it is secular and since it consists, in its nature, of religious content it is sacred. Also since democracy serves the above purposes of *Tawhid*, it is sacred and since it serves humanity it is secular.

Ali Shariati (1933-1977), born in Sabzevar of Iran and graduated from Sorbonne University with focus on sociology of religion, is probably the most inspiring and popular religious intellectual in the Shia context with countless influences on Sunni as well. He developed a completely novel approach to Shia and interpreted Islam as something social and even revolutionary comparable with Catholic Liberation Theology. This position caused him to be called the ideologue of the Iranian Islamic Revolution as well as transferring Islam from a faith to an ideology (Soroush, 1384). Like al-Afghani and Iqbal he was very devoted to a new interpretation of Islam which weaponizes the public against western colonialism and local despotism. Unity of God, as the central concept of Islam, declares that each person is equally God's vicegerent and therefore must obey only God and fight against idolism. The current status of Shia, Shariati thought, merely reflects the Safavid form of the denomination. This form promotes patience with injustice, superstitions, uncritical thought, and social determinism. It also transforms the infallible Imams from sources of inspiration motivating change for the better to instead mere references of holy respects and holiness (Shariati, Vol. 9). He promoted the idea of Islamic socialism which introduces true socialism: classless society is possible only when people reach such an ethical accomplishment through religion which causes them to

forget themselves on behalf of others; otherwise the capital individualism kills people for money and replaces them with machines (Shariati, Vol. 22).

Imam is the ruler and governor of the true Muslim community (*Ummah*) to guide them from “what it is” to “what should be” in accordance to Islamic ideology, not his own interest or desire (Shariati, Vol. 26). Shia is recognized with the principle of anticipation (*Intizar*) for disclosure of the twelfth Imam, as Shariati suggests, meaning the current situation is not the desired state and they have to be unsatisfied with that attempting to improve the situation in terms of social justice (Shariati, Vol. 19). Most of his works represent Shariati’s enthusiastic lectures on Islam, Shia, self-consciousness, and radical criticism of traditional Islam to Ideologize Islam as a guide for social values. Today many followers of Shariati, including contemporary scholars like Abdul al-Karim Soroush, Mustafa Malikeian, and Muhammad Mujtahid Shabestari, attempt to continue his path of criticism of traditional Islam, although they distance themselves from Shariati because of his ideological approach to Islam. They focus on spiritual aspects of Islam more, proclaiming holy experiences as the main content of religion.

The reformists like al-Afghani, Iqbal and Shariati functioned like a double edge sword: on one side they have shaken institutionalized Islam by forcing them to meet modern ideologies, concerns and worldviews. On the other side, they have broken the institutionalized authorities in Islam, like theological schools, and paved the path for any newly emerged trends to raise their voices under name of Islam. As we will discuss in the last two chapters, Shariah and politics, since there is great potential in Islam to interpret it harshly with a narrow-mind, the Islamist, Jihadist and totalitarian approaches got the chance to come up to surface. This is one reason why we constantly face the appearance of new Islamic militias across the world. Regarding the philosophical foundation

there is no major difference between al-Afghani and Muslim Brotherhood, Iqbal and Maududi, and Shariati and Islamic Revolution of Iran; in all these approaches Islam is reduced to socio-political campaigns. One more backward step can link them to the sectarian approach of Wahhabism, the scripturalism of Salafism, and the militance of Jihadists as I discussed earlier on forms of Salafism.

Indeed, mostly on account of the three following reasons the new-Islamic theology has a socio-political color rather than a theological one: the confrontation with the West through colonialism; the corrupt local governments among Muslims' districts; and the dominance of Shariah in Islamic civilization. Commonly it is thought that the lack of practice of Shariah is the main problem which has led to the collapse of Islamic civilizations. This issue still is a controversial topic between socio-political activists on one side and scholarship activists from the other side who exhibits these two extreme poles:

- 1) Using the historical journey of theology in Islam in dealing with philosophy, mysticism, and other human efforts to promote human seeking of knowledge, beauty, kindness, and peace to enrich human lives.

- 2) Neglecting the historical journey of theology, jumping back to Salaf al-Salih (the pious ancestors), focusing on the literal meaning of the Quran and al-Sunnah and trying to make restricted Shariah dominant. They have a far-reaching voice, on account of to Western media and politics, but no support of the majority of Muslims. Since they do not believe in theology at all, there is no need to talk about them in discussion of Kalam. In addition, there is a variety of Salafism in their negative approach toward other Muslims and Islamic culture, but all call for a return to the pious ancestors.

However, after one century of struggling to find resolutions through theology, nowadays new-Mu'tazilism is growing up

among new generations of Muslim scholars. By new-Mu'tazilism I mean an intellectual and broad stream that applies rationality to revelation, priority of reason over limited scripturalism, and adapts Islam's doctrines, morals, and law to modern demands. It appeared around the Islamic world from Malaysia in the East to Morocco in the West in different forms including national Islam, enlightened Islam, and socialist Islam as called by Hassan Hanafi (Hanafi, 2010). This trend concentrates on recently raised issues like the different understandings of religion, religious pluralism, religion and worldly affairs, Islam and nationalism, the benefits of religions, the meaning of faith, the position of Shariah, the place of ethics, the nature of spirituality and its relationship with Sufism in Islam, the similarities and differences between religious and mystical experiences, the meaningfulness of religious language, the relationship between science and religion, the nature of religious knowledge, rationalism and fideism, philosophy and revelation, the position, definition and application of justice, political Islam, and Islamic responses to recent criticism and questions from newly developed branches of science like psychology, sociology, archaeology, linguistic sciences, anthropology, and others¹².

However, the word "new" in the new-Islamic theology includes renewal of scientific foundations regarding fresh findings in the humanities and natural sciences, in methods of research and response, in subjects that are significant for the modern mind, in language because it faces the public who are always changing, and in its identity to deliver the living content of faith to contemporary audiences. Mu'tazilism, referred to as "New-Mu'tazilism," is a philosophical position that holds good and evil to be both essential

¹² Without ample English writing on New-Mu'tazilism, these two sources provide helpful guidance: Detlev Khalid, "Some aspects of neo-Mu'tazilism," in *Islamic Studies*, International Islamic University, Islamabad (1969); Marco Demichelis, "New-Mu'tazila theology in the contemporary age, the relationship between reason, history and tradition," in *Oriente Moderno*, Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino, 2010.

and rational, not conventional or arbitrary. To better understand these beliefs, reason must be employed to interpret both revelation and nature. We discussed the Islamic feature of faith that is related to socio-political issues. Also, there are existing problematic conditions in Islamic countries—in contrast to relatively less-problematic conditions in Western countries—especially since Muslims felt the loss of the golden age of Islamic history. All of this orients new-technology and new-Mu'tazilism toward causing socio-political movements like what happened in Iran and Egypt. Although these socio-political trends create some obstacles between Muslims and non-Muslims, these trends seem more open to modern ideas and more suitable for dialogue among civilizations helping the current human global civilization to enrich human lives. Because they recognize people's interests, capacities, reason, arguments and wills while the Scripturalists subject people to the Islamic text and to an old, literal, and static law.

Suggested Resources

Al-Ghazali and the Asharite School, Richard M. Frank, Duke University Press, 1994.

Concept of Belief in Islamic Theology, Toshihiko Izutsu, Ayer Co. Pub., 1980.

Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism From Medieval School to Modern Symbol, Richard C. Martin, Mark R. Woodward, and Dwi S. Atmaja, Oneworld Oxford, 1997.

Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law, Ignaz Goldziher, Princeton University Press, 1981.

Islam and Christianity: Theological Themes in Comparative Perspective, John Renard, University of California Press, 2011.

Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition, Fazlur Rahman, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Islamic Philosophy and Theology: An Extended Survey, William Montgomery Watt, Edinburgh University Press, 1985.

Islamic Theological Themes: A Primary Source Reader, John Renard, University of Californian Press, 2014.

Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism, Binyamin Abrahamov, Edinburgh University Press, 1998.

Progressive Muslims: On Gender, Justice, and Pluralism, Omid Safi (Ed.), Oneworld Oxford, 2003.

Shi'i Islam, An Introduction, Najam Haider, Cambridge University, 2014

The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought, Mohammed Arkoun, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002.

The Norton Anthology of World Religions, Islam, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, W. W. Norton, 2015.

Western Muslims and the Future of Islam, Tariq Ramadan, Oxford University Press, 2003.

CHAPTER 3.

Islamic Ethics (Akhlaq) and Practical Wisdom

Abstract: Promoting ethical virtues is at the core of Islamic sacred sources: the Quran and Sunnah. This chapter first illustrates how these sources inspired Muslims to constitute the study of Islamic morals and to harmonize sacred and secular morals. After some terminological points, it relates ethics to Islamic piety (*Taqwa*) as well as Shariah aspects of morals. This section in an original elaboration suggests five models of ethical study in classical Islam: theological, with a focus on free will, divine obligation, and predestination; philosophical, with a combination of ancient Greek ethics and Islam; mystical, with a concentration on substantial change in humanity; scriptural, with the deliberation of the relation between the servant and the lord; and rhetorical, with advice manuals related to secular ethical values. Throughout all these models, this chapter highlights their originality and how they combine in Islam. Finally, reference is made to current approaches to ethics in Islam which criticize these models for lack of consistency with many features of Islamic virtue. While some of them take ethics as a criterion to look at Shariah or theology, some others consider the potential in Islamic ethics for modernization and building community in a global age. This chapter also presents a detailed chart considering both modern and pre-modern models with regard to main concerns, principles, examples of issues, and some examples of each model. It concludes with several points which relate Islamic ethics to humanity's search for benevolence: and how the points can learn from each other.

Background and Terminology

Although the Islamic faith started with a strong belief in God, it was not complete without moral features. The Prophet Muhammad for Muslims appeared not merely as a messenger of salvation through belief in God, but also as the best role model in morals found in the Quran (33:21). Additionally, verse 2 chapter 67 clearly joins the emphasis on morals to God's purpose of giving life by saying "He who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and he is the mighty, the forgiving." The Prophet Muhammad used to promote ethical values by mixing secular values and sacred values. When he was a young man, 20 years before his prophethood time, the Prophet joined a pact called "*Hilf al-Fudul*" (League of the Virtuous) to defend justice and the oppressed. Later, at the time of his Prophethood, Muhammad acknowledged that saying, I did a good thing and I would do the same thing in the time of Islam again if I had the chance (Mahmoud, 1989, 28-30). This implies that the Prophet acknowledged the righteousness of non-Muslims and showed openness to universal principles of values. These things served to encourage Muslims to learn from other ethical systems and to acquire secular education, for example, a Greek one. The Quran appointed one chapter to a sage called *Luqman* and frequently reminded us of God's granting to the Major Prophets The Book and the wisdom, the second of which can be considered in my judgment, the acknowledgment of unrevealed truths.

The ideal state of the faithful is *Taqwa* (piety and God-fearing) with both positive and negative aspects: positively it promotes self-esteem, human dignity, and equal responsibility. Negatively it removes all distinctions based on money, family, race, and socio-politico-economic status (49:13). *Taqwa* is an Arabic term rooted in *Wiqaya* meaning protecting and preventing. It is mentioned in the Quran more than 200 times in different forms of speech. It is related to our heart and soul, our characteristic traits, our family, our

society, our faith, our daily lives and the promotion of worldly affairs. Accordingly, a Muslim learns Islamic morals through the Quranic verses and the Prophet's traditions. Islamic morals appeared as an inspiring body not merely to Arabs but also non-Arabs who later became familiar with Islam. There were more elements that shaped and extended Islamic morals like family-oriented morals associated with patience in catastrophic situations, stability and not giving into wrong ideas or commands, forgiveness with justice, having a realistic and pragmatic approach, and respecting simultaneously worldly and otherworldly affairs as in the saying, "live in regards to this world as if you lived forever and live in regards to the hereafter as if you would pass away in a moment." (al-Hor al-Ameli, 1372, 17:76)

Also, there are several verses of the Quran and traditions of the Prophet suggesting to Muslims a middle path in morals and thus avoiding extremes, "and so we have made you a middle nation, in order that you might be a witness above the people, and that the Messenger might be a witness above you" (2:143). It clearly inspires the Kantian axiom that "behave in the way in which you wish everyone to behave" adding two more points: you have a role model and God is supporting you. So Muslims mostly tried to find a middle state between two extreme poles in the discussion of personal, family, social, and even professional morals. As a result, all the above-mentioned factors had a hand in shaping Islamic ethics. These factors we can summarize as follows:

First, the Quranic description of God in ethical terms like compassionate and merciful that repeatedly we hear from Muslims in saying *Bismillah al-Rahman ar-Rahim* and the Quranic distribution to moral values like the dignity of girls, limitation of wives, helping the poor, supporting the oppressed, fighting for our rights ...

Secondly, the position of human free will vis-a-vis God's will which was a very long controversial debate history in Islamic theology as discussed in the previous chapter;

Thirdly, the human potentiality to learn and practice morals. For instance, the Quran says when God made a decision to create people, He asked for the angels' comments. They reminded God of human deficiencies that lead to corruption. God made them aware of the potentiality of people to learn and reform themselves (2:30-37).

Also, the significant role of the Prophet in establishing a new community called *Ummah* with unique morals.

Finally, the Prophet's moral character gave Muslims a practical example of ethical life. The Prophet had lived among people during 23 years of prophethood while facing different circumstances. These confrontations and events provided Muslims with a valuable asset of morals that covers the Prophet's life in detail including how he treats his wives, family, companions, people, critics, and enemies in normal and unusual situations. These narrations created some major books called *al-Sira al-Nabawiyah* (prophetic journey of life) started by the Medina school of thought, *Ahl al-Hadith* at the last part of the first Islamic century.

Islamic ethics generally are referred to as *Ilm al-Akhlaq* (science of morals) and professionally called practical wisdom in a philosophical context. The Arabic term *Akhlaq* (singular *Kuluq*) equals ethics, and appears in the Quran two times. The first literature in the Islamic context about ethics appeared as a part of collections of *al-Hadiths*, the religious authorized narrations to describe all actions that are characterized as *Amal al-Salih* (virtuous deeds) in the terminology of the Quran and *al-Sunnah*. The Islamic traditions and above-mentioned factors shape together two fields of discussion of ethics exploring Islamic concepts of ethical values, their relationship with others, their causes and effects, and their significance and order. The first field is *Shariah* or Islamic law. In regards to morals, it focuses on voluntary behavior and actions that are external like some well-known evils including adultery, theft, abuse, accusation, and so on. The second source is Islamic ethics

which focuses on voluntary behavior and feelings which are internal traits such as modesty, humility, courage, *Taqwa* (veneration of God), self-esteem, and confidence. Therefore Shariah/Islamic law pays attention to outward character and Islamic ethics pays attention to inward character. Let us begin our discussion with the latter and another section will cover issues related to Shariah.

Islamic Schools of Ethics

Regarding Islamic approaches to ethics we can refer to the following five models:

Theological Ethics. This approach first of all deals with the question of the relationship between moral values and religion, and between reason and Islamic revelation about ethics. This concern is more about the nature of religious ethical values and their position relative to human reason. In this framework, theologians began their debates on the nature of God's predestination (*Taqdir*) relating to human free will (*Ikhtiyar*), religious obligation (*Taklif*), the human capacity to fulfill divine commands (*Istita'at*), and the unjust actions of some leaders including caliphs.

The people of justice including *Mu'tazila* and *Shia* started their ethical surveys before the movement toward translation and then applied their basic belief in rational and intrinsic goodness and badness to moral values. Qadhi abd al-Jabbar clearly rejected the role of emotional and subjective issues in recognizing moral values while limiting them to rational choice. Goodness is what reason recognizes as good, and badness is what is recognized as bad through reason. He discussed what is in the nature of goodness that makes it good and also about badness and evil. Qadhi enumerated some of these grounds and aspects like oppression, purposelessness, lies, disrespecting nature's gifts, ignorance, vicious will, forcing people to commit vice, and asking an individual to do what is beyond his

capacity, all of which relate to badness; besides these, with regard to goodness, we have justice, benefits, good will, and speaking the truth (Javadi and Atrak, 1383, 53-95).

In addition, the Mu'tazila School defines reason in a very pragmatic and responsible way in that reason keeps its owner from several things that are allowed for non-rational people. Maybe this is a point worth noting that the Arabic word for reason "*Aql*" is co-rooted with *Iqal* (which refers to the rope used to fasten and bind an insubordinate camel), so in the Islamic context reason is called reason because it fastens the rebellious inner desires. Reason is a graded entity that reaches accomplishment through education in order to understand and practice divine duties at the time of religious maturity called *Taklif*. Accordingly, Shia theology elaborated the meaning of goodness in "perfection and deficiency", "consistency and inconsistency in interests", and "rational beauty and non-beauty" equaling goodness with "consistency to the supreme self" and badness with inconsistency with the supreme self.

On the opposite side, Ash'arites, as the main representative of "the rest", denied the critical position of reason saying that good behavior is the one by which its doer is praised through *Shariah* and the bad behavior and vice is the one by which its doer is condemned through *Shariah*. Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni (1028-1085) stated, "Goodness and badness are meaningless without referring to divine order or interdict". However the Ash'ari school was forced to interpret the Quranic references to free will, and thus they developed the concept of acquisition (*Kasb* or *Iktisab*), a great moment of intellectual effort to provide human beings with responsibility in a manner that fundamentally denied human free will through the distinction between the actual free will and imagined free will.

Recent explorations differentiate three different levels to discuss the relationship between reason and revelation in regards to ethical values: (1) determination of general rules of ethics like

justice is good and oppression is bad; (2) definition and description of general rules of morals like the definition of justice and oppression; (3) determining the concrete and particular extensions of the general rule such as whether an economic rent is an extension of justice or oppression? Mostly, Mutazilite are considered rational in all three areas but Shia traditionally are considered completely rational in the first area and move to a kind of non-rational position regarding the last one. However, there are some movements in new-Islamic theology that develop these issues in the fields of ontology and epistemology separately as well as considering them together in order to offer a synthetic solution. In conclusion, as much as a Muslim theologian is close to the people of justice he recognizes more secular ethical values by trying to make an association between secular and sacred ethics to enrich human life and ease communication among various cultures.

Philosophical Ethics. This approach mostly considers the centrality of ethical virtues in humanity. Alongside formation of philosophical thoughts, the first Islamic systematic books on ethics written by Yahya ibn Adi (893-974), Abu al-Hassan al-Amiri (d 992) and found its climax in *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq* (The Refinement of Morals) by Abu Ali Miskawayh (932-1030). However, the first Muslim philosophical ethicists like al-Kindi (801-873) were affected by Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope and like Zakariya Razi (854-925) by Plato. But the great figures established a system using Plato, Aristotle, and the Islamic concept of moral philosophy. Both al-Farabi at the first step of Muslim systematic peripatetic philosophy and Averroes at the last step wrote commentaries on *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle to show their respect for secular ethics. However, this is Ibn Miskawayh (932-1030), author of *Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*, who is recognized as creating the first Islamic school of ethics based on a clear mixture of three elements: Plato, Aristotle, and Islamic doctrines.

Plato believed that the human soul consists of three powers: the intellectual, concupiscible, and irascible. If they do their jobs correctly they will produce four virtues respectively: wisdom, moderation, courage and justice. The last virtue is the result of subordinating the concupiscible and irascible powers to the intellectual one from one side and the emergence of harmony of the three powers from the other side. Aristotle developed the doctrine of the mean according to which every virtue lies between two correlative faults or vices. These two consist of the excess and the deficiency of something of which the virtue represents the right amount. For example, courage is the mean of rashness and cowardice, patience between irascibility and lack of spirit, truthfulness between boastfulness and understatement, modesty between shyness and shamelessness, envy between righteous indignation and malicious enjoyment, and magnanimity between vanity and pusillanimity.

Islam concentrated on justice among the goals of the Prophet and as the quality of a true Muslim. Also it related ethics to *Taqwa* (God fearing) that links morals to belief in Oneness of God and the Judgment Day. This school attempted to collect all these aspects so it expanded the idea of personal justice by proposing the just man as a moderate man who follows the rule of reason. Ibn Miskawayh applied the desired harmony to our three relationships: to God, to deceased people, and to present-day people. He related two aspects of Aristotelian justice namely the distributive and rectificatory (corrective) to Shariah and responsibility of a just Imam or Caliph. Its Farsi version is *Akhlaq-i Naseri* written by Khawaja Nasir al-Din Tusi (1201-1274). While the former discusses only personal morals the latter also covers Economics (management of family issues) and Politics which are considered other parts of practical wisdom in Islamic philosophy. Furthermore, this school was developed later by Muslim ethicists like Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088), Mahdi Narraqi

(1716-1795), and Ahmad Narraqi (1771-1829). At the advanced apex of this exploration, Ahmad Narraqi expanded the implications of the just state (*Malakah-i Adalat*) within a moral personality reflected in the areas of character, deeds, money, properties, dealing with people, and political and governmental issues.

Unfortunately, often philosophical ethicists in Islam were considered a copy of Ancient Greek, far from the Islamic spirituality. To clarify this mistake I want to provide the scheme of one significant ethical book of Nasir al-Din Tusi, the greatest commentator of Avicenna's philosophy, titled *Awsaf al-Ashraf* (the Attributes of the Illustrious). He began his book simply by saying, everybody in self-introspection feels himself insufficient. Awareness of this deficiency motivates one to pursue his perfection and accomplishment. He needs to move toward accomplishment a process called *Suluk* (spiritual venture). He has to deal with six issues each of which is treated in a section of his book:

A) The departure point that demands six features: faith (*Iman*), stability (*Thabat*), intention (*Niyyat*), honesty, return to God (*Inabat*), and devotion (*Ikhlās*).

B) Removing the obstacles that need repentance (*Tawbah*), asceticism, poverty, austerity, self-control and self-accounting (*Muhasibat va Muraqibat*), and *Taqwa* (God-fearing)

C) The feature of movement that requires aloneness (*Khalwat*), meditation, fear, hope, patience, and gratefulness.

D) The states found on the path are motivation (*Iradat*), enthusiasm (*Shawq*), love, knowledge, certainty, and peacefulness (*Sukun*).

E) The achievement states found in truthfulness to God, satisfaction (*Ridha*), submission, oneness (*Tawhid*), unification (*Ittihad*), and union (*Wahdat*).

F) Destination point is annihilation (*Fana*: losing humanity) in God (Tusi, 1373).

This example clarifies how Muslim ethicists changed purely secular ethics to a religious one related to the human journey toward perfection. This spirit is dominant in all Islamic ethical books that grow in a philosophical context. Also, this is a ground that gives Islamic ethics a mystical tone called Sufism. However, the philosophical approach emphasizes three crucial foundations: first, a human being is a changeable entity with the capacity to understand, analyze, evaluate, and make decisions. Regarding both revealed and rational arguments he has to follow virtues and avoid vices. Secondly, the ideal virtue is associated with balance. It means a Muslim has to balance between his worldly and otherworldly, private and public affairs as well as his several inner desires and powers. Thirdly, an ethical being has to consider the great value of intention (*Niyyah*). It means that virtue is not solely based on a moral "action," but also on the agent and their moral "character." As a conclusion, this approach meticulously classifies ethics into two sections: theoretical and practical ethics. The former section explores the good qualities of the soul, good and bad voluntary behavior, causes and background for good or bad behavior, and the fruits and outcomes of them. The latter section prescribes the methods of requiring the good qualities and behavior as well as how to avoid or cure the bad qualities and behavior.

Mystical Ethics. Islamic mysticism, often called Sufism, as we will discuss in a separate chapter, aims to change our being completely from an ordinary individual into a transcendental entity through annihilation in one truth. On the other hand, Islamic ethics attempts to merely change our quality from a lay person to a good servant of God. Sufism approaches each person through his unique being to discover his special identity through a particular spiritual journey while ethics addresses all people in their common qualities through a general recipe of morals. Also, Sufism is more dynamic and Ethics more static. The Islamic mystical ethic discloses a

mixture of a mystical aim with ethical general principles. It also serves as an interface between philosophical and Sufi approaches. It mostly uses philosophical ideas of the soul and human qualities but with a mystical flavor to encourage people toward a mystical life, namely annihilation (*Fana*) in God and an absolute oneness. This ethical school attempts to unite the path to moral perfection to the path of quest for God and reaching an existential completion.

There are two eminent figures in Islamic mystical school Imam al-Ghazzali (1058-1111) and Fayz Kashani (1599-1680), the former from a Sunni context and the latter from a Shia one. They both categorize the ethics as *Ilm Muamilah* (a lower knowledge which concerns dealing with people) which in turn helps us to *reach Ilm Mukashifah* (a higher knowledge of illumination) and inner knowledge. Ghazzali was affected by Sufi's texts, especially Ibu Talib Makki (d. 996)¹. He thought true religious knowledge is forgotten because of dominance of the following three superficial systems of knowledge which claim to be true religious knowledge: *Shariah* or Islamic law, *Kalam* or theology, and sophistical preaching. Then, Ghazzali named his significant ethical book *Ihya al-Ulum al-Din (the Revival of the Religious Knowledge)* to exhibit the core of Islam through mystical ethics. Ghazzali divided the subject of science into external behavior and internal states. The external actions include secular and sacred ones. Accordingly, the internal states entail good ones that save the people and bad ones that kill their souls. So, Ghazzali's book consists of the four following parts to cover all fundamental issues:

(1) Worship related to sacred actions including these ten books: knowledge, foundations of belief, the secrets of cleanliness, the secrets of praying (*Salat*), the secrets of almsgiving (*Zakat*), the

¹ His book was *Qut al-qulub fi mu'amalat al-mahbub wa wasf tariq al-murid ila maqam al-tawhid* (The nourishment of hearts in dealing with the Beloved and the description of the seeker's way to the state of oneness).

secrets of fasting (*Sawm*), the secrets of pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*), the etiquette of recitation of the Quran, the invocations and supplications (*Zikr*), the arrangement of litanies (*Awrad*) and divisions of the night vigil.

(2) Daily habits related to human life, including these ten books: the etiquette of eating, the etiquette of marriage, the etiquette of business, *Halal* and *Haram* (the lawful and prohibited), the etiquette of friendship and companionship, the etiquette of seclusion, the etiquette of traveling, the etiquette of *Sama* (Sufi dance) and *Wajd* (ecstasy), *al-amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (Enjoining good and forbidding evil), the etiquette of living and the morals of the Prophet.

(3) Destructive evils, including these ten books: exploration of marvels of the heart, the ascetic way of life (*Riyadhat*), the problems associated with eating and sexuality, the vices of the tongue, condemnation of anger, hatred, and envy, condemnation of the World, condemnation of wealth and miserliness, evils of power and show, evils of pride and self-praise, evils of self-delusion

(4) Constructive virtues: including repentance, patience and thankfulness, fear and hope, poverty and abstinence, oneness of God and trust in His providence, love, longing, intimacy and contentment, intention, sincerity and devotion, self-control and self-accounting, meditation, and the last book is the remembrance of death and the hereafter (Ghazzali, 1993).

Six centuries later the great Shia scholar and exegete Fayz Kashani felt dissatisfaction with the dominance of superficiality in the Islamic world and a need to revive attention to ethical issues as the central aim of religion. He took Ghazzali's book, forming a Shia's style of thought. Fayz named his book: *Muhijata al-Beydha fi Tahdhib wa Ihya al-Ihya* (the Clear Way to Purify and Revive the Revival). This purification keeps three-fourths of the original text, removing laws based on Sunni deductions, anti-rational aspects of

the book, and exchanging Sunni *al-Hadiths* and Sufi's exaggerated quotations with Shia's *al-Hadiths*. Finally, Fayz's ethics is the same as Ghazzali's but in Shia format. However, Fayz moderates and rationalizes more. For example, Ghazzali believes, among other obstacles ahead for the spiritual traveler, having wealth and social position must be totally avoided. Fayz does not recognize Ghazzali's ideas of wealth and position arguing they are opposed to self-esteem and usual human feelings (Fayz Kashani, 1376; Soroush, 1368).

It is worth mentioning that both figures summarized their books in the Persian language; the former named it *Kimiya-yi S'adat* (the Alchemy of Happiness) and latter *al-Haqayeq* (the Truths) to distribute among non-Arabs as well. As a result, this school of ethics reflects a mystically toned Islamic ethics that invites people to pay attention to the inner side of Islam and its profound definition and expectation of humanity.

Scriptural Ethics. The scriptural school of ethics believed that there are plenty of holy texts that can provide the best materials for ethics. Here Islam appears as the best reliable source to learn ethics from. Taking a glance at the Arabic root of ethics and divine creation can ease understanding of this argument. We learned before that the term *Akhlaq* originated from *Khulq* (*Kh-l-q*). It is co-rooted with Arabic words related to creation, creator, and creature. Arabs use the term "Khaliq" for a creator, "Makhluq" for a creature, and "Khalq" and "Khilqat" for the creation. Production is laid in all these terms implying that the best guide for our *khulq* (morals) is the same *khaliq* (creator) who is fully aware of our needs, weaknesses and abilities. He can reveal to us the best ethical concepts and the path to achieve them without any misunderstanding or taking a side. Therefore this school of ethics tried to explore ethical issues in Islamic holy texts namely the Quran and al-Sunnah.

The major collections of *Hadith* include lots of narrations, concerning both the morals of the Prophet and his family and encouraging the faithful to pursue ethical values. A person once approached the Prophet Muhammad and asked, "What is the religion?" The Prophet replied, "Good conduct and morality." He asked again and again, and the Prophet gave the same response each time (Ghazzali, 1993, 3:47). In this context Ammar Yasir the great companion of the Prophet said: There are three attributes; whoever keeps them has completed the whole faith: one's own personal justice, peace to the world, and giving to the needy even if you are poor² (al-Bukhari, 2002, 17). Then, on the one hand, *Hadiths* and stories like these motivated the first Muslims to pay high attention to the good conduct such as the eminent earlier exegete of the Quran Ibn Abbas (618-689) said: "any institution has a foundation and the foundation of Islam is good conducts and morals." On the other hand, it seemed that philosophical and mystical schools of ethics did not reflect the Islamic fundamental morals related to building a new community such as justice, humbleness, patience, stability, forgiveness, veneration of God, almsgiving, sympathy with the oppressed, and brotherhood in faith.

Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi authored one more ethical book *Akhlaq-i Muhtashami*. This one is an example of the scriptural school of ethics. It begins each subject with some Quranic verses on the issue, then brings some *Hadiths*, and then narrates some quotations of wise and spiritual (Ismaili) leaders. More recent versions of this school of ethics can be found in the books *al-Akhlaq* authored by *Sayed Abdullah Shubbar* (Shubbar, 1427) in a Shia and *Ma'wasuat al-Akhlaq* by Khalid al-Kharraz (al-Kharraz, 2009) in a Sunni context.

² The translation from Arabic is my own.

This method of exploring ethics is also associated with Islamic practical advice to stabilize the moral state so that a person can perform ethical actions without hesitation because it became a habit, a second nature. Another Arabic term which is usual in Islamic civilization and parallels *Akhlaq* is *Adab* which means manner, attitude, behavior, and mostly the etiquette of putting things in their right place. Although these two terms are interchangeable in some places, *Akhlaq* (ethics) indicates the moral philosophy addressing the theoretical background of human conduct and its cause and effect in relation to human ethical identity. On the other hand *Adab* (which translates to morality) signifies the particular form and concrete shape of practices of morals addressing how to perform some actions to make an individual ethical. Scriptural ethics is more involved in *Adab* than *Akhlaq* which is expanded in the Quranic verses and Islamic al-Sunnah titled *Amal al-Salih* (good conducts).

Ethical Literature. In Islamic civilization, there is one more form of professional writing about Ethics. It is mostly based on Persian ancient ethical writings known as *Andarznamah* (Advice Manual) flavored with Islamic ethics. It included self-instructional ethical texts intending to safeguard traditional values having numerous instructions and moral codes of behavior. It addressed various audiences from the layman to the king or political leader teaching them, regardless of their socio-political status, to be pious, to behave rationally and to be moderate by avoiding extremism and fanaticism. Practical wisdom or ethics consists of three parts in Islamic philosophy: morals, management of family issues, and politics. These advice manuals were more involved in politics and social affairs rather than focusing only on personal characteristic traits. Al-Taj, meaning 'the crown' in Arabic, refers to this type of book. It has been widely accepted by Arab writers who have referred to all books related to the manners of non-Arab kings as al-Tijan or al-Aklil (crown).

I would like to mention only two examples of this kind of ethics. The first one is *Gulistan* (the Rose Garden) written by Shaykh Muslih al-Din Sadi (1210-1291). This book includes an introduction and eight divisions which consist of stories and poetry and are the following: on the manners of kings, on the morals of dervishes, on the excellence of contentment, on the advantages of silence, on love and youth, on weakness and old age, on the effects on education, and on the etiquette of companionship. This verse of this great book is very well-known and is displayed in the entrance of the United Nations, Hall of Nations: "All Human beings are members of one body, since all, at first, from the same essence came; When time afflicts a limb with pain, the other limbs cannot at rest remain; If thou feel not for other's misery, a human being is no name for thee."³

The second figure also belongs to Persian culture named Mulla Hussain Waez Kashifi (1436-1504). He wrote *Akhlaq-i Muhsini* (Morals for Muhsin, the son of Merv government) that focuses on humanity and general rules of morals among humankind. The writer uses many stories which came from ancient Persia, ancient Greece and only five Islamic ones. Kashifi uses the literal meaning of *Siyasah* (politics), namely controlling and organizing, to make a connection between morals and politics because both try to control and organize –controlling and organizing ourselves or others. The former attempts to remove evil habits and gain good habits. The latter deals with aristocrats and lay people in different ways. Kashifi tries to give moral advice through lots of stories and also reminds us of the old custom of advice manuals. Moreover, this school of ethics provided more practical instructions to enhance Muslim lives with general human values using rhetoric and writing.

³. This example illustrates how the position of *Gulistan* in Islamic culture was. Polish-Lithuanian in its vigorous cultural life translated *Gulistan* alongside the Quran in 1640 to learn about Islamic culture (Stone, 2001, 218).

Last Glance

Overall, these are the significant schools of ethics in Islamic civilization which contributed to enriching human life. The *Table 3* summarizes these schools of ethics briefly.

Table 3. Features of Islamic schools of Ethics

Name	Main concern	Principles	Examples of issues	Some figures
Theological Ethics	Relation between ethics and revelation	The good and evil have their inherent and rational foundations	Morals values and God's Nature of goodness and badness	Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi
Philosophical Ethics	Relation between ethics and human reason	Mixture of philosophical and Islamic concepts	Plato's three parts of soul Aristotle's doctrines of mean Islamic concepts of justice and piety	Ibn Miskawayh Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi
Mystical Ethics	Relation between reason and intuition	Mixture of Shariah, philosophical and Sufi concepts	Inspiring people toward an existential accomplishment Idea of salvation	Ghazzali Fayz Kashani
Scriptural Ethics	Ethics based on revelation	The creator (<i>Khaliq</i>) is the best instructor of ethics (<i>Akhlāq</i>)	<i>Adab</i> (etiquette) Mixture of religious duties and ethical obligations	<i>Suhah-i Sittah</i> (the six authentic Ahadith-Sunni) <i>Kutub-i Arba'a</i> (the four books of Hadiths-Shia) <i>Akhlāq-i Shubbar</i>
Ethical Rhetoric	Self-instructional codes of behaviors	Mixture of sacred and secular morals	Advice Manual	Sadi Waez Kashifi
New Trends	Criticizing the above-mentioned schools Comparative Study	Building community (Ummah) Adjusting with Modern requirements	Sister/brotherhood Stability and braveness Inter-cultural ethics Professional Ethics	

As we have seen, each school has different foundations and methods, but with the same basis for exploration, namely Islam, they demonstrate the potential of Islam and its devotion to ethical values.

Currently ethical investigation in the Islamic world is trying to reconstruct Islamic morals through different methods like the following:

Redefining Islamic ethical terminology to motivate current Muslims toward a global era. This approach concentrates on issues such as hopefulness, devotion, trust in God (*Tawakkul*), and submission to predestination (*Taqdir*). It opposes two dominant sides: the purely otherworldly approach, and the submissive approach. The first one ignores the worldly aspect of values by reducing them to a kind of asceticism and Sufism. It thus contradicts Islamic emphasis on contributing to the betterment of society and creating civilization with social values. For instance, verse 61 chapter 11 of the Quran states that God created people on the earth to establish worldly affairs. The second one reduces ethical values to ones that are mentioned or adopted in Shariah/Islamic law for worshiping God. It thus leads to a separation between ethical values and self-consciousness. Through introspection as well as by observing people with various backgrounds one discovers that ethical values in oneself are greater than merely following Shariah's instructions. So, reducing Ethical virtues to Shariah's ones causes conflict between religious belief and self-consciousness. This separation also appears in two dangerous forms: in increasing the gap between the global and Muslim community because the former concentrate on universal and the latter on particular values, and in the abuse of Shariah by political interests because alienating Shariah from universal Ethics provide a chance to change faith into a political ideology since there are no more universal criteria to judge about Shariah and distinguish between right and wrong interpretations.

There are some attempts to use the Islamic ethical potential for the furthering of domestic social development in several regions. They focus on worldly and social ethics like solidarity, peace-making, hospitality, tolerance, otherness, family-oriented, environment, organization, and supporting needy people. Because of the Islamic feature of faith and its tight connection with socio-political affairs, it is worth mentioning here that in Islam there is much work to do in this area. This approach can provide the groundwork for a fruitful relationship between religious and secular ethics as well.

The modern criticism of Islamic schools of thought in regards to ethics inspired some scholars to reevaluate the established systems of morals among Muslims. They try to discover the effect of non-Muslim systems on Islamic schools of ethics. For example, some modern scholars claim the four main virtues in Islamic philosophical ethics do not reflect the main virtues of Islamic holy texts. Then they look for building a new system of ethics in Islam that covers the main Islamic virtues like patience, gratitude to God, God-awareness, and the different parts of the soul: concupiscence, conscience, resignation to divine will, and the quality by which God is satisfied with one's soul.

Moreover, there is a big trend among new religious intellectuals eager to examine the position of ethics in the Islamic faith and its relationship with doctrines and private and public law. They are upset with the ignorance of the vital position of humanity in the dominant readings of Islam which limit faith to outward Islamic law or Shariah. They hold morals as the center of faith and are concerned regarding the absence the morality in most approaches among current Muslims. Islam's vast domain of ethical issues as well as discussion of different *Adab* (etiquette) provides a huge asset for moral concepts in regard to recently developed issues in professional ethics like counseling, medicine, scholarship, education, immigration, and the variety of cultures and faiths.

These are the interests among new experts in Islamic ethics. There are tendencies for rereading Islamic sources i.e. the Quran and al-Sunnah in the light of new explorations in knowledge like psychology or existential philosophy and phenomenology especially in Shia-Islam concerning the extensive texts of Imam Ali ibn Abitalib, Imam Hussain ibn Ali, Imam Ali ibn Hussain Sajjad, and Imam Jafar Sadiq. For example, the sermon of *The Piouses*, the prayer of *Arafah*, the treatise of prayers, and the ethical treatise of *Misbah al-Shariah* (each example refers respectively to the figures mentioned just above) reflect extremely sophisticated existential and ethical analysis.

As a result, I can say that these new explorations are at their first step but are attracting the eyes of a new generation of intellectuals.

Lastly, I would like to refer to some outcomes of Islamic ethics for human civilization in the following points:

First, the Islamic belief in the objectivity of moral values can make a bridge among people of the world regardless of their color, culture, race, language, and religion. It provides a platform for dialogue among different civilizations to join their efforts toward the same objectives. The ethical values are not subjective in the sense that each nation has its own ethical values because of their particular environment or culture. The various traditions are viewed as relevant to universal values connected to daily life like justice, free will, equality, solidarity, patience, and compassion. In other words, it does not allow morals to be reduced to merely local and domestic virtues and cultures which leave a gap among people because every nation is happy with their own system of morals without the ability to understand others.

Second, at the time of development of professional ethics, the Islamic morals can help in sharing its perspective in professional fields like medicine, environment, government, scholarship,

business, citizenship and other applied ethics to enrich human discovery of morals.

Third, Islamic ethics can enrich the human struggle toward ethical virtues by posing new questions like whether faith can guarantee ethics and improve it, what is the relationship between *Taqwa* (God-consciousness) and morals especially in regard to masses, what is the role and position of *Niyyat* (intention) and character of actions, and what is the relationship between sacred and secular ethics. Islamic ethics also can both remind us of and renew itself in its dealing with good attitudes using the term *Hassan*. All Islamic models of ethics use the term *Hassan* to refer to good conduct and behavior. *Hassan* means good, and *Husn*, means beautiful, and they both come from the same Arabic word, "H-S-N," and inspires in Muslims the association between benevolence and beauty.

Fourth, the variety of approaches in Islamic ethics motivates ethicists to look for more sources and practical instruments. For instance, while the theological and philosophical approaches are based on rationalism, the mystical approach offers intuition and the literary approach suggests ancient references. Also the concept of mental maturity and significance of education to reach moral character inspire new ideas in the field.

Last but not least, the Islamic distinction between the moral status quo and the ideal. Islamic ethics, in different forms, encourages people to move from their present state to a desired state. Indeed Islamic ethics performs two jobs at the same time: teaching people how to deal with their daily lives as well as inspiring them to look further for a better life because it focuses on the voluntary aspect of virtue. One problem of the contemporary era is that people are satisfied with their existing circumstances, habits, desires, and wishes. They think less of ideal situations. Also, another problem originated from this matter that everybody expects a change of others instead of himself. Islamic ethics presents

us to ourselves as the first subject of change toward an ideal situation.

In my opinion, there is a great need to focus on the effects of Islamic ethics on the history of the human struggle toward attaining ethical virtues and on its present-day inspiration. I hope experts will pay attention to these neglected issues. This will have to suffice and bring to a close our discussion on Islamic ethics as we move forward to Islamic mysticism.

Suggested Resources

The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism, Cyrus Ali Zargar, Oneworld Academic, 2017

Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought, Michael Cook, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Contingency in a Sacred law: Legal and Ethical Norms in Muslim Fiqh, Baber Johansen, Brill, 1999.

Ethical Theories in Islam, Majid Fakhry, Brill, 1991.

Ethical Theories in Islam, S. M. Hassan, MD Publications PVT LTD, 2010.

Islam and War: The Gulf War and Beyond – A Study in Comparative Ethics, John Kelsay, Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia, Jonathan E. Brockopp, University of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Islamic Rationalism: The Ethics of Abd al-Jabbar, George F. Hourani, Oxford University Press, 1971.

Moral Rationalism and Sharia: Independent Rationality in Modern Shii Usul al-Fiqh (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East), Ali-Reza Bhojani, Routledge, 2015.

Moral Teachings of Islam: Prophetic Traditions from al-Adab al-Mufrad by Imam al-Bukhari, Abdul Ali Hamid, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics, George Hourani, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Sweeter than Hope: Complaint and Hope in Medieval Islam, Franz Rosenthal, Brill, 1997.

CHAPTER 4.

Islamic Spirituality and Gnosticism (Sufism)

Abstract. This chapter illustrates the originality of Sufism in Islam. Sufism suggests two different features: on the one hand it provides us with a very sophisticated and metaphysical system of thought, close to what is called Islamic Gnosticism (*Irfan*). On the other hand, it proposes detailed practical instructions in order to unite people to God; mostly the term “Sufism” refers to this more well-known aspect. A definition of Sufism which includes both aspects can be said to provide humanity with doctrines and instructions to reach its proper goal in the realization of (not conceiving) the truth – union with God –, through intuition and an existential traveling from a current fantasy situation to a properly ideal situation. This chapter consists also of a study of terminology and how Sufism relates three aspects of faith with three aspects of human accomplishment on a spiritual journey. It also illustrates the historical and conceptual development of Sufism. Then briefly it discusses practical Sufism in three phases: the origins of wayfaring, the path of wayfaring, and the final achievements; through each it suggests many existential states in the spiritual journey like repentance, austerity, existential contraction and expansion, consternation, moment, and ecstasy. I elaborate doctrinal Sufism with the study of the relation of God to the world, manifestation, love, the parallel between inner and outer worlds, annihilation, and establishment in God. The chapter also examines the relationship between Shariah, Shia, and Sufism. After referring to services Sufism has provided to humanity, this chapter proposes a current approach toward Sufism among both traditional and modern-minded scholars of Islam in Islam.

Terminology and Background

We turn now to Islamic Gnosticism and mysticism which is mostly known in Western literature as Sufism. Mysticism is closely related to the core virtue of religious piety. Both attempt to keep people far from losing themselves in worldly affairs, leading people to the transcendental world and helping them to experience God's supernatural mercy. While the usual teachings of Islam inspire its followers to pursue moderate values for a safe, happy, hopeful, faithful, and good life regarding this world and hereafter, there are several concepts and virtues inspiring us toward a higher level of understanding and accomplishment. Sufism sees an in-depth inner connection between knowledge and the knower's level of existence; the intuitional knowledge illuminates the whole being of the knower, not only the mental plane. However, there are two trends toward religious spirituality in Islam: equating spirituality with outward and objective virtues of Islamic doctrine and practices, and equating spirituality with inward and mystical virtues in Islam. The first appears in dividing Islam into three sections namely doctrines, ethics, and religious law. The doctrines are related to our mind and intellect, ethics to our habits and soul, and law to external observances. The second, namely Sufism, does not believe in this division, instead stating that we have to consider the human as a whole, not divided into three parts like brain, soul, and body, but rather that the doctrines are higher than rational ones, morals are more complicated and dynamic, and Shariah must be considered as a path not an objective. Therefore, we now discuss Islamic spirituality in its internal form, Sufism, rather than in its external form because Sufism appears as a systematic branch of knowledge having foundations, growth, principles, subdivisions, method, norms, and structure.

Before anything else, let us look at the title "Sufism." In Islamic civilization, this is the Sufi group that has two characteristics: an intellectual one and a visible social one. First,

Sufis are like philosophers, theologians, exegetes, poets, and jurists involved in the promotion of knowledge. Second, Sufism, in addition, provided some social habits, manners, and shape, like having *Khaniqah* or *Zawiyah* (a special place to worship), *Khirqah* (a special cloth for the master), *Pir/Shaykh* (special position to spiritual master), *Sama* (sing and particular dance) and so forth. These two aspects create two names for the same entity: when we look at Sufism as a intellectual trend Sufis are called *Arif* (Gnostic) and when we look at Sufism as the social body and institution followers are called Sufis (Motahheri, 1382, 2:75-76). It should be noted that Western peoples are more familiar with Sufi aspects rather than Gnostic aspects. It means the worldview and spirit is less-known. So I focus in this section on their intellectual aspects.

It is said that the term Sufi originated from "*Suffah*" (porch), the living place of some companions of the Prophet Muhammad like Bilal, Salman al-Farsi, and Ibn Masud. They, as the people and companions of the "porch" (*Ahl wa Ashab al-Suffah*), were known for their piety, their devotion to worshipping God, their struggle to better understand and preach Islam, and their avoidance of worldly luxuries. Accordingly, Sufis call themselves Sufi to demonstrate their commitment to the same idea and style of life. But most scholars including some Sufi masters say that the term Sufi comes from the word *Sawf*, meaning wool, so "Sufi" means "one who wears wool." One of the earlier Sufi masters Ibn Sarraj Tusi (d. 378/988) pointed out that we do not call Sufis by titles similar to those of scholastic philosophers, theologians, historians of the Prophet's speeches (*Hadith*), and even ascetics, because Sufis are not limited to a profession, position and emotional state. They have in-depth knowledge of philosophy, theology and history and they enact the virtues that each of these disciplines teach. Sufis transcend the fixed limitations of these fields and are constantly progressing in their spiritual attainment. Therefore, we call them Sufi because of their physical appearance because this is what they share in common (al-Sarraj al-Tusi, 1960, 40).

Tusi's elaboration confirms the idea that Sufism refers mostly to the outward appearance of this school of thought. It also reminds us of the complexity of defining Sufism and Islamic Gnosticism (*Irfan*). Sufis presented more than one thousand definitions for Sufism that are related to the spiritual state of the master, the spiritual position of the audience, and the historical point of Sufism. For example at the first step, Sufism is mostly defined by virtues like *Zuhd* (asceticism) and *Tawakkul* (complete trust in God) and virtue ethics—a complete dedication to morals—and then at the last step by intuitional knowledge of God and union with Him. Also, the spiritual state of the master and the spiritual demands of the disciple are included in the definition; being in the state of awareness or ecstasy causes a different definition to come from the master. Therefore the audience's desire for money, for reputation, and for power, or living in a fantasy world often caused the Sufis to define Sufism in a way opposed to those things (Yasrebi, 1384, 25-28).

Moreover, searching for a high and comprehensive degree of spirituality is consistent with Islam and created Sufism/Islamic Gnosticism. Here, I will list the reasons for shaping Sufism among Muslims:

The first is Islamic doctrine and practice. There are clear verses of the Quran that inspire contemplations close to Sufism like the presence of God everywhere, glorifying God throughout creation, mutual love between God and people, the Prophet's miracle of ascension, different grades of the human soul, God's inspiration from within, God's association with human's struggling toward Him, the inferiority of this world to the otherworld, complete devotion to God, and so on.¹

Secondly, the Prophet and his companions' style of life. The Prophet's life is a supreme role model for Muslims as the Quran

¹ There are few examples: "Whichever way you turn, there is the face of God (2:115)"; "And we are nearer to him (human) than (his) jugular vein" (50:16); and "He is the first and the last, and the outward and the inward" (3:57).

states. There are also some verses about the Prophet's family and companions' simple and pious life, and others devoted to religious intimacy. Most Sufi orders refer their spiritual genealogy and roots to Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet as the first Sufi. It is narrated by the Prophet as well as by Ali Ibn Abitalib that they worship God not looking for reward or to avoid punishment, but because He deserves it. The contemporaries of the Prophet are highly recognized as *Sahabah* (companion) and their successors as *Tabi'un* (follower) among Muslims. The people of the porch and the first class of Islamic ascetics (*Zuhhad*) appeared among them like Ibn Abbas, Abdullah Ibn Umar, Huzaifa, and later Uwais al-Qarani, Hassan Basri, Ibrahim Adham, Sufyan al-Thawri and This *Zuhhad* (ascetics) and *Ubbad* (worshippers) lay the ground for Sufism changing the simple and voluntary asceticism to Sufi and willingly embraced poverty.

Thirdly, the human quest of spirituality in religion. Wrongly, it's believed that Sufism appeared in Islam to remove philosophy and rationalism while it appeared to help people upgrade to the higher level of their being. The same case is true with regard to the popular level of religion. Sufism sees itself in a horizontal position to religion and philosophy rather than a vertical opposite. Sufis admire the Shariah's domain for ordinary people and pure rational arguments for intellectual elites but encourage talents to transcend to the inner assets of religion. They criticize theologians, philosophers, Muslim jurists, and religious scholars as long as they limit Islam to those outward aspects and are proud of this limitation. Therefore, they fight against the anti-Sufism trend for more inner aspects of religion or its existential objectives that are widely neglected. This limitation distracts both religion and the people's potential. For example, there are several poems of Rumi denouncing formal religious scholars (*Ulama*) especially the Muslim jurists (*fuqaha*) saying, you are trying to know the principles of religion but no foundation of your own inner desires and intentions,

the religious law about every little thing but no heart-felt achievement of them, the Islamic law but not the objectives behind them, evaluating others' behavior but not your own character, and confusion between the inner and unlimited wealth and the outer and limited one (Rumi, 2002, 3:3650-3656). Thus the quest for a higher and inner level of Islam was among the reasons inspiring the establishment of Sufism.

Fourthly, there are non-Islamic effects. Although the seeds for Sufism come from Islamic context, its accomplishment as a fruitful school of thought is affected by intercultural confrontation (see, Hillenbrand, 2015, 191-192. Sufism in its historical journey from people of the porch to its perfection in doctrines and instructions in Ibn Arabi and Rumi has faced ancient and large systems of mysticism like Christianity, Hinduism, Neoplatonism, and Persian mysticism. Although each of them had a hand in shaping Islamic Sufism, we cannot reject its authenticity in regards to the Islamic holy texts and worldly concepts like Jihad (struggling toward the truth), journey, and Shariah.

The fifth is the social and political situations. This element used two methods in promoting Sufism. First, in contrast to the simple and pious lives of the first major Islamic caliphs especially Abu Bakr, Umar, and Ali ibn Abitalib, the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates followed a luxurious style of life. Then some pious and earlier Muslims proposed against this kind of life advocating asceticism that laid a foundation for later Sufism. Later, the foreign invasion of the Mongols caused the full collapse of Islamic glory and made intellectuals to concentrate on the instability of the world, counting it as a sign of God's punishment, renewing the concept of full submission to God, and looking for a deeper meaning of religion and salvation, all of them impacted the growth of Sufism among Muslims. In addition, although there are some protests and resistances against corrupt governments or foreign invasions within Muslim Sufi, Sufism acted more passively to political and social

circumstances in Islamic civilization because of its nature, namely it was involved with otherworldly affairs rather than the unstable present situations.

All the above-mentioned points have an impact on the formation of Islamic Gnosticism (Irfan). As a result, first, Sufism started with a focus on asceticism by the pious companions of the Prophet. Then, in the second Islamic century, several new concepts appeared, for example, the lady Rabia al-Adawiya (714-801) reached from devotion to God (*Ikhlas*) to mystical love (*Ishq*) and worshiping based on love². Others suggested issues like austerity, Gnosis, and mystery. At the third step, Sufism found a kind of popularity and Sufis began to state *Shathyyat* (paradox) expressing passion, devotion, and enthusiasm for their path like Bayazid (d. 875), Mansoor Hallaj (857-922). They strongly promoted ideas of annihilation, intuition, and different levels of traveling toward God. Finally, Sufis suggested a methodic system of knowledge to reject the criticism which comes from opposing schools of thought like philosophy, theology, and Muslim jurisprudence as well as to fit the demand of their followers. This step starts with Haris Muhasibi (781-857) and is completed by figures like Ibn Arabi and Rumi in the seventh century of the Islamic calendar. After that, we have only commentaries and expositions to clarify more Sufi ideas and institutionalize its doctrines and practices. I will focus on some work in this last step to gain more familiarity with Sufism. But before that, let me add a note about the Sufi's understanding of Islam.

Sufism and the Three Layers of Islam. The Sufi foundations, relations with other cultures and faiths, particular practices, and special concepts created two extreme positions among Muslim scholars. On one side are scripturalists who accuse Sufism of adulteration of Islam, on the other side its advocates who consider

² Rabia is highly celebrated as the first genuine Sufi to speak boldly about divine-human love moving beyond simple asceticism (Renard, 2009, 195).

it as the heart of Islam. Far from taking a side, I want to explain Sufi's understanding of Islam and its relation to other studies like theology, practical wisdom, philosophy, and Shariah. We learned earlier that Islam consists of three parts: doctrines, morals, and laws. Sufis use a quotation of the Prophet saying: "*al-Shariah* (Islamic law) is my speech, *al-Tariqah* (Islamic path) is my behavior, and *al-Haqiqah* (the truth) is my state." (Nasafi, 1998) This reflects for Sufis the mixture of unity in plurality, namely the unity of humans' powers and aspects comparing the unity of religious parts. A human is one person with three dimensions of mind, heart, and soul. Something similar can be said about faith which also consists of three layers. Accordingly, they explore three layers of Islam: law, path, and the truth, like outer, inner, and innermost. Shariah, the external layer, consists of instructions on how to approach God; *Tariqah*, the inner layer, is the art of visiting God, and *Haqiqah*, the innermost layer, is living with God. These three layers are closely interwoven so that the first (*Shariah*) brings us to the second (*Tariqah*) which in turn brings us to the third layer (*Haqiqah*). Also, the last layer reforms our understanding of morals which itself reforms the laws. However, the main concern of Sufism is experiencing the most internal aspect of religion as Rumi begins his internationally known book, *Mathnawi Manawi* as following:

"This is the book of the Mathnawí, which is the roots of the roots of the roots of the religion in order to unveil the mysteries of reaching (the Truth) and the certainty; and which is the greatest contemplation (Fiqh al-Akbar) of God, the clearest path (Shar'a) of God and the most manifest proof for God."³(Rumi, 2002, 4)

Sufis emphasize a holistic approach to religion, aiming to foster unity between a person's mind, heart, and body. They believe that Muslim theologians, jurists, and ethicists make the mistake of separating these interconnected elements and confining themselves

³ The translation from Farsi/Dari is my own.

to certain areas. This limits their ability to reach the innermost aspect of religion. For example, Islamic law (Shariah) notifies us about God's will leading to otherworldly salvation. This is the basis for asceticism while Sufism views Shariah as a path to the inner depths of our essence in order to apprehend the truth at the present moment. Islamic theology considers the oneness of God as a unique designer who designed the world and must be solely worshiped while Sufism considers God as the merely true being and we must be annihilated in Him. The theist philosophers recognize two kinds of being: necessary one that is God, and possible one that is others, while Sufi believes only in One Being, others are merely imaginary. While the ethical school is trying to offer a general recipe for the universal morals treating the human soul like a house that is supposed to be painted no matter from where it begins, Sufism looks at the human as a child to be cultivated so they have to follow a narrow instruction particular for everybody regarding their own potential (*Istiadad*) and ambition (*Himmah*). Sufism also discusses plenty of emotional and internal states that only appear in the path of God.

Regarding their emotions due to the manifestation of God's attributes to Sufis during their existential journey, Sufis divide into two groups: prayers (*Munajati*) and dancers (*Kharabati* originates from *Kharabat* which means literally "ruined structures" of mind, because of being drunk)". The first group mostly is associated with being God-fearing (*Khawf*) which leads them to more praying and staying alone. The second group often focuses on God-hoping (*Rija*) inspiring to point out God's love to the public and share it with everyone. While for example, Khwaja Abudllah Ansari from the first group is renowned for many beautiful prayers, Rumi from the other group is well known for his lovely poems. Ansari's *The Stages of Wayfarers* starts with a chapter on "Repentance" (*Tawbah*), the *Mathnaw* of Rumi begins with "the song of the Reed" and the story of a bondwoman's love. The Prayers pay big attention to the

Prophet Muhammad and Muslim saints while the Dancers look more for living *Pirs* and Masters. The first group highlights more religious statements particularly the Quranic verses and several *Hadiths* while the second uses many poems and Shaykhs' quotations. While Rumi begins his masterbook *Mathnaw* without *Bismillah* (in the name of God), the common initiator among Muslims, and calls his master, Shams, nearly an infinite number of times, Ibn Arabi claims his masterpiece *Fusus al-Hikam* was gifted by the Prophet Muhammad to him. Ibn Arabi also forms his book in twenty-seven chapters; each is named with the name of a prophet, like the Seal of Adam, the Seal of Moses, the Seal of Jesus, and the Seal of Muhammad.

Two Dimensions of Sufism

I would like to summarize the definition of *Irfan* (Islamic Gnosticism) as follows: helping humanity to reach its proper goal in realization of (not conceiving) the truth – union with God –, through intuition and an existential journey from current fantasy situation to a proper ideal situation. As a consequence, *Irfan*/Sufism includes two parts: (1) Practical Sufism states the duties of humanity toward the truth. It is called *Sayr wa Suluk* (journeying and wayfaring) covering all steps toward annihilation in God and reestablishment by Him through states coming into the heart of the wayfarer; (2) Doctrinal and speculative Sufism provides a view about God, the world, and humans. In this, Sufism is like a philosophical system except that it is based on intuition instead of reasoning, toward realization instead of conceptualization, and most importantly with a rhetorical and heartening language instead of clear and unbiased language (Akhlāq, 1386, 64-75). All these features of Sufism require a kind of sympathy. Exploring the Sufi's doctrines and achievements is a paradox because of the very large gap between who is attempting to experience without making

concepts, namely Sufi, and who is attempting to conceptualize without having those experiences, namely ordinary people. For example, it is hardly meaningful for a person already in love to talk of love to someone else who has no experience of love because the first person is experiencing it fully and is mostly unable to explain it, and the second wants to have a clear idea of it. The lover is surrounded by love and also he has to rise above his particular situation in order to have a universal image that transcends these particulars. Only then can he give a true and comprehensive meaning to the word for this thing. But is not this an attempt to limit the unlimited? The same is also true about the stranger to love, wanting to conceive an inconceivable thing. Rumi explains this paradox clearly saying: "I am a dumb man who had a dream and the entire world is deaf; I cannot tell them and they cannot hear it". Now, I am trying to propose some significant concepts of both parts of Sufism.

Practical Sufism

Since Sufism deals with existential accomplishment through accurate and very delicate practices, the literature is full of information related to practical Sufism. Abu Talib al-Makki (d. 996)'s book *Qut al-Qulub* (the nourishment of hearts)⁴ and Qushayri (984-1074)'s book *al-Risala al-Qushayriyyah* (al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism) are among the earlier and more detailed treatments that constructed the foundation of Imam Ghazzali's book "Ihya." It is said that the climax of practical Sufism is the "Manazil al-Sa'erin" (the Stages of Wayfarers) written by Khwaja Abudllah Ansari (1006-1088) from Herat. He was the seventh grandson of Abu Ayyub

⁴ Its full name is "*Qut al-qulub fi mu'amalat al-mahbub wa wasf tariq al-murid ila maqam al-tawhid*" meaning (The nourishment of hearts in dealing with the Beloved and the description of the seeker's way to the station of declaring oneness).

Ansari (576-674) who was the first host for the Prophet when he emigrated from Mecca to Medina. Also, Abu Ayyub Ansari was among the people of porch. However, his Afghani descendant wrote the best book on the practical Sufism in Arabic after two decades from his Persian book "Sad Maydan" (The Hundred Grounds). There are written more than ten commentaries on *Manazil as-Sa'erin* through later centuries. The work begins with saying there are one thousand steps between the servant and the truth (The Truth "*al-Haq*" is one name for God in the Quran) from darkness to light. He then summarizes them in these ten categories with each one including ten subcategories: the origins, the gates, the transactions, the morals, the principles, the valleys, the conditions, the dominions, the truths, and the endings. Using the elaboration of my master, the contemporary well known expert of Sufism, Sayed Yahya Yasrebi, in his book "The Fire of Shams and the Tongue of Rumi," I would like to give you a very brief overview of practical Sufism in the three following parts:

(1) *The Origins of Wayfaring*. The spiritual journey starts with awareness (*Yaqdha*) or transcending from everyday life toward the inner meaning of the being. It happens through the inspiring events, naturally or supernaturally, or by calling those who are on the path. As a result, the person falls deeply into questioning who I am, what it means to be, what is the meaning of life, where we are from, what the final goal is and so forth. If the wayfarer takes his awareness seriously, without returning to previous everydayness, he will face new features like in dream and awake, the meaninglessness of the ordinary goals of life, and supernatural signs. The successful awareness leads to Sufi's repentance (*Tawbah*). This stage is associated with states like lack of fulfillment about his earlier efforts, relying on God's grace, enjoying new conditions, and a kind of self-confidence to move forward. This leads to meditation, contemplation (*Inabah wa Tafakkur*) and remembrance (*Tadhakkur*). Slowly through attaining some other Sufi virtues like full trust in

God (*Tawakkul*) and patience (*Sabr*), the wayfarer reaches the stage of satisfaction (*Rida*) which transcends from the knowledge to the state (*Hal*), from multiplicity to unity, finding spiritual and joyful sentiments in his heart. This is the place to perform Sufi's austerity (*Riyadat*) that has to deal with strong happiness and sadness coming into his heart. Using self-evaluation (*Muraqibah*) helps him to overcome these conditions by looking to gaze on the true beloved one. New signs like feeling a lack of need for worldly and otherworldly affairs, lack of fear, radical independence of ordinary food, and new supernatural phenomena appear here.

(2) *On the Path*. From satisfaction to annihilation in God consist of stages very hard to understand by those who are not spiritual wayfarers. At previous stages, the wayfarer had to face his moral qualities and his humanity, but at these stages, he has to face God, the beloved's "teasing" which leads the lover constantly from refusal to approval and vice versa. First, he falls in a complete satisfaction with God's will leaving his will and his wishes regarding his closeness to or farness from God. Second, he becomes thankful for all surrounding things including his people's behaviors even his enemies so he cannot imagine them lower than himself. Transcending ordinary life, they are not equal, he looks at himself to serve and love all without any discrimination. This leads them to a spiritual contraction and expansion (*Qabd wa Bast*) that reflects the manifestations of God's names and attributes in him. The wayfarer must deal with God's glory and beauty within, while each attribute includes the other one. If the Sufi's heart prefers glory to beauty, he can reach God's wisdom which makes him peaceful. This status gives him the ambition (*Himmah*) to depart from God's names and attributes to His essence (*Dhat*), the stage of unity (*Ahadiyyat*), and fall in love with God. This love is recognizable through, for example, these features: high enjoyment of austerity, looking at nothing but God, and permanent remembrance. Concerning the merit of the wayfarer he prefers a full isolation from others or

joining some other wayfarers. Then, he finds a restless quality called "*Wajd*" preparing him for especial domination by God (*Wilayat-e Khas*) and the first level of annihilation.

(3) *The Final Achievements*. After attaining several more qualities in the realm of dominion, by receiving God's mercy, the wayfarer reaches closeness to God (*Qurb*) which gives him new consciousness and awareness. Then a special consternation (*Hayrat*) brings him to some degree of annihilation that joins his inner (soul) to the inner side of the being in a unique "moment" (*Waqt*); it is extremely sharp and fast, like throwing them quickly into a completely new and true world, more radical than birth. With respect to the potential of the wayfarer, the moment appears, stands, repeats, and performs. Having these moments prepares the Sufi to experience annihilation into God, rebirth, and the vital meaning of life. He now understands that what he had yet was not life but a death; life is what he experiences right now. He explores new knowledge and power so that sometimes he feels the position of lordship (*Rebubiyyat*) so that he is likely to state *Shath* and *Tamat* (apparently in paradox with religious ideas). The quality of waking up (*Sahw*) following this ecstasy (*Sukr*) makes him ready for re-establishment. Although it is so difficult to pass all the spiritual steps and there is a chance of falling down in every step, there is the most dangerous stage; several wayfarers fall down from this because of an unexpected play of the beloved, some others cannot retain their common sense, and a few could reach a divine existence to live at the same time in outer and inner side of the world, the peak of Sufi's quest.

However, this is merely a brief introduction to the practical Sufism that shows what they are discussing and how they explore the inner mysteries of the human's heart and attempt to connect us from our own inside (soul) to the inner side of the world. This is not only unifying the humans, also the people and the world.

Doctrinal Sufism

Often Sufism explains its theory about the world, being, God, religion, and humanity alongside with its practical instructions because they believe in the unity of theory and practice as well as knowledge and being. In other words, as much as a wayfarer attempts to gain new vision and insight, he actualizes his spiritual potential, in the sense that the way toward perfection is not limited to morals but is associated with existential achievements. Sufis continue in the lack of an accompanying knowledge and existential accomplishment, the knowledge per se, even the knowledge of Sufi ideas and supernatural beings, is but a greater veil (*Hijab al-Akbar*) because this kind of knowledge gives a fake satisfaction regarding the truth. Using some well-known narrations of the Prophet, they conclude that the true knowledge originates from the purified heart through God's gift. Therefore, they first emphasize the practical side of Sufism and secondly put the doctrines among the features of achievements in the path of the truth. Two more reasons, additionally, lead Sufim to not take the system of thought seriously; first it is more concerned with inspiration toward existential perfection than providing a system of thought; second their audience is not necessarily the educated people, probably an honest illiterate is more fit to Sufism than an intellectual full of hesitations and self-pride. These factors caused Sufi focus on a different literature than an educational system. Rumi's works and popularity are good examples of this.

However, having developed the fundamental concepts, and having faced the demands of its followers and criticism of the component schools of thought including philosophy, theology, and ethics, Sufism shaped a system of thought. Its metaphysical and cosmological doctrines were formulated in the sixth and seventh centuries AH (12th and 13th AD) on the basis of some Quranic verses, *Hadiths*, and writings of the early Sufis. A very clear and exact presentation of the Sufi worldview can be found in the work of Aziz

al-Din Nasafi (d. 1282), a great master of Sufism from Transoxania (Central Asia) (see, Nasafi, 2002)⁵. The most scholastic and systematic book on doctrinal Sufism is that of Muhyi al-Din Ibn Arabi (1165-1230) who raised Sufism to its theoretical peak. His masterpiece *Fusus al-Hikam* has gained more than 110 commentaries during several centuries by masters of Sufism that show its high position among Sufi advocates. I would like to mention some basic doctrines of Sufism below:

- *God and the World.* In the common idea of Abrahamic religions including Islam, God is the supreme and transcendental creator and the world is his creature. Sufism clearly changes the idea of creation into the idea of God's manifestation; God is manifested, all others are His manifestations. It means that there is merely one existence that is God; others are merely His reflections like the sun's rays compared to the sun. While traditional religion posits a clear distinction between God and creatures, Sufism blurs this distinction by the example of the sun and its rays, and the ocean and its waves. These reflections are in a sense a veil of ignorance which causes people to think they have independent existence and thus to seek a proof for God's being. The reflection merely needs to open its eyes and explore itself.

- *Manifestation and Love.* God's manifestation happened because God is love and love must be manifested in the sense that the beautiful cannot remain hidden. With great love, God wished to see his beauty and glory in detail so He manifested to the world. Each part of the world demonstrates a name and attribute of God. Sufism tries to explain two more points; this manifestation happened in a special order in five stages. These five stages include "the merciful breath, the world of intellects, the world of

⁵ In this paper, I explore the concept of the perfect man as put forth by Nasafi in Sufism: "When Sufism Meets Politics (the Pluses and Minuses of Nasafi's Perspective)", in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Villanova University, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2020, pp. 74-89.

intermediate beings, the world of materials, and the world of humanity.” This journey from the first to the last level is called “the arc of descent.” Second, the journey of manifestation continues by “the arc to ascent” from the human to God (Yasrebi, 1384, 311-341 & 421-449).

- *Inner and outer sides.* In investigating true being, we have to distinguish between the inner and outer sides of being. The outer side reflects multiplicity and plurality while it is temporary and imaginary. On the contrary, the inner side is the true one that reflects unity. Humans cannot conceive the inner aspect because they limit themselves to experimental and rational knowledge which cannot go further and touch the inner aspect.

- *The path.* There is a way toward the inner side of being through instruction of a master (*Pir/Shaykh*) who helps the wayfarer to discover the truth from within. This knowledge comes by intuition after a severe and narrowly focused struggle toward the truth. The instruction is discussed in the practical Sufism.

- *Parallel between the world and humanity.* All creatures are manifestations of God’s being in a special organization of God’s names. The principal manifestation of God in the world is the human. So, because both the world and humanity reflect the same being, they are parallels, mirrors of God. Sufi calls the world “a macro human” and humanity “the micro-cosmos.” On the other hand, the world consists of many parts while humanity is a whole. Regarding the potential, each part of the world mirrors one name or mixture of several names of God but the human per se mirrors the comprehensive name of God (Allah) so he is the comprehensive being. Humanity is the result of the arc of descent and from him, the arc of ascent begins. This ascending arc happens within the human and it shows his unique opportunity. Everything is inside the limitation of a name except the human because he reflects an unlimited name. The nature of humans is not matter, as materialist philosophers may think, or mind, as some rationalistic theists might

think. Rather it is the comprehensive name of God that cannot be understood but has to be realized. This existential extension and comprehensive entity make humanity the highest level of existence in the world, even over the angels, so he is the only one who truly bears love toward God. Whoever actualizes this potential is “the perfect human.” This idea developed in Islamic Sufism in order to make a connection between the concept of prophecy (*Nabuwwat*) and friendship with God (*Walayat*).

- *Love*. The love that caused the manifestation is also the motive of life and movement throughout all beings. God is the beloved one, beloved for Himself, and the beloved for all creatures. The wish to be manifested is permanent and everywhere. Since God manifests himself constantly, Sufis believe in continual creation (*Khalq-i Mudam*). Also, Sufis use the Quranic verse (5:54) to declare the mutual love between God and His manifestations. God is not merely in the existence of all beings; He is the love of all manifestations. Like the hierarchy of beings there is a hierarchy of love. Sufism attempts to expand the concept of love not only to God but also to all people, creatures, every single being, and every religion and faith. Namely if there were only God, every single thing is a manifestation of God, so there is no reason for conflict. However, such love is not conceivable; rather it has to be experienced. Ibn Arabi says the following kinds of people did not understand the love: whoever defines the love, whoever does not drink a drop of the glass of love, and whoever says I am full of the love because the love is such a wine which does not fill a person. And Rumi says: whatsoever I explain and describe of love, when I come to love itself, I am ashamed of that explanation. Although the commentary speech makes all clear, yet speechless love is clearer (see Rumi, 2002, 1:110-115).

- *Positive Aspects of Annihilation*. Humans can intuit when they move beyond themselves and become annihilated in God. This annihilation constantly leads to a re-establishment that is called re-

birth. The wayfarer merely passes a stage reaching another one, losing limitation of the first identity and getting the feature of the next one. So it is a continual renewing and refreshing with a greater and higher one. This is why Rumi says, I do not fear death because I do not miss anything. So these are the limitations and boundaries that are removed. As a result, the intuitional knowledge is the outcome of annihilation from the lower level of self and the reestablishing by the higher level. These fundamental concepts provide great assets for Sufism to develop their ontology, cosmology, human science, their understanding of Islam in particular and religion in general, sanctity, Prophethood (*Nubuwwat*), special friendship with God (*Walayat*), sociability and authenticity, and environments.

The unconventional manner of education from one side and the complexity of the ideas, that make a parallel between God, the world, and humanity, from the other side, make Sufism hard to understand. As a result, some scholars thought there was a distinction between the Gnostics who advocate the unity of being and those Gnostics who advocate the unity of intuition, however, in reality they are two levels of unity and they are not contradictory. Some others distinguished between Ibn Arabi and Rumi's Sufism, whereas they belong to different orders but are not different schools of thought⁶. Another group differentiates between the Worshipping Gnosticism and the Loving Gnosticism, whereas there is no path in Sufism without love, and worshipping is an initial requirement for both the development of Sufism and the growth of the Sufi.

⁶ In this chapter, I examine the views of Rumi and Ibn Arabi on humanity, God, religious pluralism, and Jesus: "Looking Inside the Heart: The Universal Appeal of God and HUmanity as Reflected in Ibn al-Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam* and Maulana Rumi's *Mathnawi Manawi*," in *Sufism, Pluralism, and Democracy*, Clinton Bennett and Sarawar Alam (eds.) Equinox, 2017, pp. 201-222. Also see, Sayed Hassan Akhlaq, "The Theoretical Foundations of Tolerance in Rumi," in *Philosophy, Culture, & Traditions, A Journal of the World Union of Catholic Philosophical Societies*, Vol. 8, 2012. pp.165-188.

However, all achievements in knowledge, concepts, conditions, stages, and personality come from the exact practice, especially under the guidance of a shaykh/master, so Sufism is a practical discipline. There is a very insightful verse of Farid al-Din Attar (1145-1221) saying, put your step on the path and do not ask anything; this is the path that tells you how you have to walk.

Additionally, the spiritual ambition of the master and the potential of the wayfarer play a role in determining the level of understanding, practice, transcendence, and accomplishment of the wayfarer. All the above-mentioned factors, plus the denominational background, had a hand in shaping various orders in Sufism that make the sky of Sufism very colorful. Often, the subjective aspect of Sufism has caused the Sufi orders to become well-known under the names of eminent masters like Mevlevi, Shadhili, Nimatullahi, Qadiriyyah, Suhrawardiyya, and Naqshbandi. Historically, regarding doctrinal Sufism, some intellectuals appeared in the Shia context like Sayed Haydar Amuli (1319-1385), Mulla Sadra (1572-1640), Fayz Kashani (d. 1680), and Qadhi Said Qumi (1633-1692) who did not belong to any Sufi orders but developed Sufi's basic ideas. Some recent Shia Sufis were from among great Muslim jurists and also promoted practical Sufism's literature like Sayed Mahdi Bahr al-Ulum (d. 1798), Mirza Jawad Maliki Tabrizi (d. 1922), and recently Sayed Muhammad Hussain Tabataba'ii (1904-1981).

Shia, Sunni, and Sufism. There is an idea that believing in a firm connection between Sufism and Twelver-Shia is important. The notion, like *Walayat* (close friendship with God), and its relations with the nature of religion enrich this concept (e.g. see, Amir-Moezzi, 1994; Yasrebi, 1384). Although most Sufi orders practice in accordance with Sunni's rules of worship and communications (*Shariah*), they see themselves as transcending the boundaries of Sunni and Shia as Sham al-Din Muhammad Hafiz wrote, "Establish an excuse for all the conflicts among the seventy-two sects [of Islam]; when they do not see the truth, they will beat on the door of

fiction". Furthermore, there are both affirmative and negative sides among both Shia and Sunni Shariah scholars about the fundamental concepts of Sufism (e.g. see, Yasrebi, 1384, 40-62). However, a researcher cannot ignore the linkage between both Shariah and Sufism's fundamental concept of asceticism; the first observe it as a religious value, especially for leadership, and the second for furthering the spiritual journey. Avicenna, the great Muslim philosopher, clarifies the connection between ascetic (*Zahid*), worshiper (*Abid*), and Gnostic (*Arif*) in this way: Ascetic is a person who tries to avoid worldly luxuries and commodities. The worshiper is one who does his best in regards to praying, fasting, and all forms of worship. *Arif* (Gnostic) is one who disregards rewards and punishments and looks at God alone expecting His manifestations inside. Avicenna adds that sometimes some of the above-mentioned qualities mix together like being a worshiper-ascetic or an ascetic-Gnostic. Other experts express them as different steps in spiritual accomplishments as Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi says, whoever loves something tries to avoid what makes him far from the goal, then tries to reach what makes him near to the goal, and then he reaches the goal. In the case we are discussing, a Gnostic first avoids luxuries and worldly affairs, like the ascetic, second, he practices worship like a worshiper, and lastly, he explores the truth, reaching for knowledge to a realization of who is a real Gnostic (Ibn Sina, 1968, 4:57-58).

In conclusion, it is not possible to cut the connection between *Shariah* and Sufism (Gnosticism) as the most significant Salafi scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350) attempted; although they harshly rejected several ideas of distinguished Sufis like Ibn Arabi, both cannot make a sharp separation between Sufism and Shariah. Surprisingly both have commentaries of Sufi's books; The first – the master teacher –, namely Ibn Taymiyyah wrote *Sharh Futuh al-Ghaib* (The Commentary on Revelations of the Unseen) of Abd al-Qadir al-

Jilani (1078-1166), and the second and disciple commentated "*Manazil al-Sa'erin*" of Khwaja Abudllah Ansari titled *Madaarij Salikeen* (The Stations of the Wayfarers). In contrast to those who think there is no connection between Islamic *Shariah* and Sufism, the above-mentioned proves a tight connection; close to what is believed by Imam Malik, one of the great founders of the Islamic schools of jurisprudence, used to say, "Whoever becomes a Muslim expert in jurisprudence without becoming a Sufi is unfaithful; whoever goes into Sufism without knowing Islamic jurisprudence becomes an infidel, and whoever gathers both perspectives is a true Muslim scholar." Now, let us look at the services that Sufism provides for humanity.

Last Glance

As a journey of intellectual exploration, of course, Sufism helped and enriched humanity's life, including religious and non-religious cultures. This journey involves various paths including the following:

1) Enriching human life through focusing on intuition and passion. A human is an imaginative being as much as a rational one. Even though the modern mind is often limited to experimental data and rational analyses, it does not apply these to the gathering of information and making a theory. Experimental data and rational analyses are only in the position of evaluating and concluding. Ignoring the imagination means leaving out great areas of knowledge. In comparing rational theology and Sufism within Islam, William Chittick is correct in saying, the former "abstracts God from the world, but the imaginal rhetoric of the Sufis portrays the world as the unveilings of God's merciful face." He continues that "Reason knows absence, but imagination tastes presence" (Chittick, 2008, 152). Thus, Sufism admires intuition and offers us more sources of knowledge, experience, and analysis. In addition, Sufism's discussion of human feelings and passions (both positive

and negative) in the context of approaching the truth, its discussion of the dynamic and shifting circumstances of morality, and its discussion of harmony between stable nature and its changeable qualities – each of these opens new spheres of humanity to be explored. As I understand it, the foundation for a strong spiritual humanism is laid both by Sufism’s endeavor to reach God by taking the initial step of recognizing human potential and by its belief that a Sufi cannot transcend human boundaries even in the highest explorations.

2) Inspiring people toward human values. Sufism, by spreading high values like empathy, tolerance, respecting all things as different manifestations of God, love, compassion, and openness encourage world community to more peace, local societies to more respect, the family to more warmth, an individual to more self-esteem, the nature to more safety, and the life to more meaningful. For example, this idea which came from the bottom of the heart of Shibli (861-945) inspires highly: Sufi is not a true Sufi except he considers all people as his family and that he has to love them and take upon himself their burdens. Also, focusing on these sublime values motivates fields of study like ethics, social sciences, and arts to explore new areas- this motivation caused discussions in the past between Islamic philosophy and Sufism for example in the historical meeting between Avicenna and Abu Sa’id Abu al-Khayr (967-1049), Averroes and Ibn Arabi, or in written debates in *Tawhid-i Ilmi wa Ayni* (The Theoretical and Practical Oneness of God) between Muhammad H. Gharawi Isfahani (1879-1942) and Sayed Ahmad Karbalaii, respectively the philosopher (*Hakim*) and the Muslim Gnostic (Sufi)⁷.

3) Enhancing human literature through Islamic Gnosticism. There are plenty of transcripts in a variety of languages among

⁷ Take a look at my book to gain an insight into this written debate in English: *The Making of Shia Ayatollahs* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023). By reading this book, you will gain an understanding into the opposing opinions among Shi’a jurists on Sufism as well as its relationship to Shi’a Islam.

Muslims, including but not limited to Arabic and Farsi which were created by Sufis so that I cannot imagine the current status of Farsi literature without them. For instance, the beauty and richness of Farsi literature cannot be tasted without reading the poems of Bidel from India, Jami and Rumi from Afghanistan, and Hafiz and Sa'di from Iran who were influenced by Sufism. Lots of them inspired great writers of other nationalities like Goethe, Montesquieu, and Nietzsche.

4) Enriching human knowledge about humanity and the world. We referred to doctrinal Sufism which attempts to grant a system of knowledge about the world, God, and humanity. It explains five stages of God's manifestations from the hidden unity to the demonstrated plurality. There is a profound speculation attempting to depict the nature of the world, its origin from the divine source, the process of formation, its commonality with human potential, its harmony with nature, and more. This system per se presents the human endeavor for the truth and his ability to discover and find harmony. Furthermore, since Sufism is dedicated to spiritual accomplishment and a journey in the heart, it provides its unique style of education which connects directly the ambition of the master to the ambition of the student. Detailing this style thus makes available new perspectives and instruments for education to ease the connection between teacher and students and increase the capability of both. This approach I saw in some professors in the USA who are benefiting from al-Ghazzali's ideas of education.

5) The dynamic relationship between humanity and God. Although Sufism is devoted to God, it looks at God in order to bring Him into human life. In other words, God is not merely a Lord or Master, far from our daily life, who must be followed and worshiped, rather He is the beloved one who is immanent, exchanging the roles of lover and the beloved⁸. He appears as a

⁸ Chittick rightly writes that few Muslims would recognize Pope John Paul II's depiction of Quranic God as an "ultimately a God outside of the world, a God who is *only Majesty, never Emmanuel, God-with-us.*" This portrayal only reflects the theological account of God in Islam which had had little effect on the vast

dearly loved one who trains the wayfarer through various emotions and behaviors to deepen his potential and enlarge his spiritual quests to reach a higher degree of existence that is qualified with more beauty, benevolence, and knowledge. So Sufi's idea of God orients people toward a perfect truth that is within as much as without, near as much as far, and available as much as unavailable. It means everybody can actualize his share of the divine and take a walk toward a more colorful and beautiful world. So this viewpoint recognizes the individuality and personal meaning of life in harmony with God and the world. Most Sufi poems face God's qualities in a human love like *Divan-i Kabir* of Rumi or *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* of Ibn Arabi. Although this caused some to accuse Sufis, they are trying to reflect the dynamic relationship between God's manifestation and the wayfarer's passions, the way that encourages people to feel God in their daily life, emotions and ambition.

6) Presenting an outstanding form of spirituality. Sufism tries to satisfy the human quest of truth, peace, and knowledge at the same time. As we discussed before, it neither considers human's forces separately nor do they consider him separate from God and the world. Based on these features, Islamic Gnosticism presented a system of doctrines reflecting the harmony of beauty, glory and intellect within and of God, the world and humanity without. So this spirituality is not limited to a person who does not care about the environment or others, an inner peace which does not relate to knowledge, a scholarly truth which does not connect daily suffering and demands, a religious vision that kills human passions, and a myth that does not provide instructions to feel it. Thus it invites us constantly to look for harmony and balance within and without.

7) Better understanding of the objectives of the religion. There are plenty of Sufis' quotations and even practices that are out of Islamic orthodoxy like Mansour Hallaj's saying, "I am the truth"

majority of Muslims. "In contrast, Sufism has affected all levels of Islamic society, not only scholars." (Chittick, 2008, 152)

and practicing "*Sama*" (Dervish Dance) among some Sufi orders. All of them try to open new horizons about the religious experiences and to approach the holy experiences of the religious founders. Sufis are upset with reducing both Islam to several laws or even doctrines, and the experience to the scientific labs. Also, they are challenging the religious superficiality and formalism asking the faithful to move forward. So the philosophy of religion is gifted with many examples of holy experiences that also advance disciplines such as phenomenology, archeology and genealogy. Sufism also helps in understanding religious books better. Although Sufis often refer to the Quranic verses, Sufism produced some exegetes for the Quran like Khwaja Abdullah Ansari, Abd al-Karim Qushayri (986-1072), Ibn Arabi, and Sayed Haydar Amuli (1319-1385). Their works reveal the inner aspects of the Quran and Islamic civilization by encouraging people toward Sufi values and the peaceful face of Islam. However, although some Sufis were involved with political issues sometimes, without doubt, there are rich seeds to promote tolerance, religious pluralism, respect and understanding of others, and to avoid extremism not only in misusing Islam, but in religion in general. There are several historical stories that show that great Sufis were respected among non-Muslims as well. For instance, many non-Muslims took part in the funeral of Rumi. This poem of Ibn Arabi encourages religious pluralism in the highest possible way in the following words of this great religious master:

"My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Torah and The Book of the Quran.
I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith." (Ibn Arabi, 1911, 67)

Now, as this discussion comes to an end, let us briefly glance at the current situation of Sufism in Muslim intellectualism. It can be traced through three general trends as follows:

1) Among scholastic traditions: although restrictive schools of thoughts like Salafism-Wahhabism in Sunni context and some Shariah-Scholars in Shia context reject Sufism completely, the main streams of current traditional Islam namely Sunni of Egypt (al-Azhar) and of India (Deobandi) and Shia of Iran (Qum) do not reject Sufism but respect some modified forms of it. For example, annotating *Fusus al-Hikam*, Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran suggested to Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, that he read Ibn Arabi's book to comprehend Islam better. Also the current Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar Ahmed al-Tayeb in Egypt is proud of his attachment to some Sufi path. Therefore, these traditional schools admire Sufism as an achievement of Islamic civilization associated with human efforts.

2) Among modernized religious intellectuals (who advocate concepts of modernity like rationalism and humanism): there are two opposing trends: positive and negative ones. The first trend looks at the potential of Sufism for tolerance, flexibility, pluralism, kind of individualism, religious essentialism, and direct and sincere relationship with God to spread Sufi ideas in modern forms and concepts⁹. The second trend looks at problematic issues related to Sufism like anti-rationalism, submissive morals, otherworldly-oriented values, anti-sociability, ability to be interpreted in contradictory ways, and its minority (that leads to a lack of impact on the majority of Muslims). These things do not foster the spread of Sufism (e.g. see, Sirriyeh, 2003).

3) Comparative study among Sufis and non-Islamic mystics. There are also scholarly attempts to discover the commonalities and differences among Sufis and non-Muslim Gnostics to discover the value of the human attempt toward spirituality, the impacts of backgrounds on holy experiences, and its benefits to human

⁹ *The Hizmat or Gulen Movement* in the current Turkey is the latest socio-cultural example who fully flourished with Rumi's idea of love, service to humanity, and tolerance.

knowledge. There is research about figures like Ibn Arabi and Master Elkhart, Qushayri and Kierkegaard, Rumi and Kierkegaard, and schools and orders like Sufism and Taoism, Hindu and Islamic mysticism, Islamic and Zoroastrian Mysticism, neo-spiritualism and classic Sufism, and Islamic and Secular mysticisms. All of them portray the part of Islamic service to human civilization.

While the three above-mentioned trends consider Sufism in terms of its fundamental concepts, there is one more trend among intellectuals who consider Sufism with regards to its moral virtues like tolerance, inner peace, compassion, and love rather than its metaphysical ideas like the manifestation of God, marriage between God's names and so on. They argue such metaphysical concepts of Sufism are not achievable through rationalism and critical thinking which is dominant in our era. This trend also holds that the ethical aspects of Sufism can fight the superficial understanding of Islam and relate Shariah to its spiritual objectives. They argue ethical aspects of Sufism are universal and fit human demands of the global village for they are not attached to some special metaphysics. It calls, indeed, humanity to a kind of return to "self" while many things in our era alienate people from the self. This alienation happens by keeping people busy with material or immaterial stuffs including daily products regarding initial needs, luxury of life, or cultural interests in a consumptive industry. In the world of business, Sufism is a calling for divine value in humanity through a special kind of introspection. This call can be experienced fully through these poems of Rumi:

"You [the people] are a magnificent prescription of God; you are a brilliant mirror to reflect beauty of the King; what is in the world is not outside you; beg from yourself what you are looking for, because you are already that." (Diwan-i Kabir, No. 1759)

Suggested Resources

- Abdullah Ansari of Herat An Early Sufi Master*, Ravan Farhadi, Curzon Press, 1996.
- Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Quran, Miraj, Poetic and Theological Writings*, Michael A. Sells, Paulist Press, 1996.
- Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, Fritz Meier, John O'Kane (trans.), Brill, 1999.
- Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam (Perennial Philosophy)*, Eric Geoffroy, World Wisdom, 2010.
- Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism*, John Renard, Paulist Press, 2004.
- Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism: Foundations of Islamic Mystical Theology*, John Renard (Ed and Trans), Paulist Press, 2004.
- Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel, The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- Seven Doors to Islam, Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims*, John Renard, University of California, 1996.
- Sufi Ritual: The Parallel Universe*, Ian Richard Netton, Curzon Press, 2000.
- Sufism, A Short Introduction*, William Chittick, Oneworld Oxford, 2000.
- The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam*, M. A. Amir-Moezzi, I. B. Tauris, 2011.
- The Wisdom of Sufism*, Leonard Lewisohn (Ed), Oneworld Oxford, 2001.
- Three Early Sufi Texts*, Nicholas Heer and Kenneth L. Honerkamp (intro and trans.), Fons Vitae, 2003.
- Women of Sufism, A Hidden Treasure*, Camille Adams Helminski, Shambhala, 2003.

CHAPTER 5.

Islamic Philosophy (Hikmah)

Abstract. This chapter begins with an illustration about the connection between Islam and philosophy. This connection is based on three elements: the reflection of Islamic faith in Islamic philosophy, the creation of harmony between Philosophy and religion by certain Muslim philosophers, and the interaction between Philosophy and diverse aspects of Islamic intellectualism. Then, it examines the internal and external motives in Islam that promote philosophical study. After a discussion about the implications of philosophy for Islam, it details four schools of philosophy in Islam: Peripatetic with an Aristotelian mode; Ismaili Hermeneutic with a denominational and esoteric mode; Illuminative Wisdom of Suhrawardi (a mixture of Platonic and ancient Persian philosophy); and the Transcendental Wisdom of Mulla Sadra a conjunction of revelation, reason and intuition. Since peripatetic philosophy was more dominant across the Islamic regions, there is a short introduction to the main figures of this school and their contribution to philosophy: al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, Ibn Tufail and Averroes. Therefore, the chapter discusses how knowing the evolution of Islamic philosophy helps understanding Islamic culture, intellectual movements within current Islam, the dialogue between Islam and the West, and the shift of intellectual dialogue between Islam and the Western culture towards a constructive ground. Highlighting some original aspects of Islamic philosophy, the study ends with a look at the current situation of philosophical knowledge within Islam. The chapter also consists of two charts: examining Islamic philosophy in comparison to Sufism and theology, and a comparison between the existential phases of Sufism with subjects of Transcendental Wisdom.

Background and Terminology

Islamic philosophy in the West is mostly known as Arabic philosophy because either it begins with the Arab philosopher, namely al-Kindi (who was born in Kufa/Iraq), or because books were written in the Arabic language which was the scientific dominant language at the time. Otherwise, except for Al-Kindi, the other great Muslim philosophers were non-Arabs; for example al-Farabi (from Faryab/Afghanistan or Farab/Kazakhstan), Avicenna (from Bukhara/Uzbekistan), Ibn Tufail (from Granada/Spain), Averroes (from Cordoba/Spain), Suhrawardi (from Zanjan/Iran), and Mulla Sadra (from Shiraz/Iran).

However, the combination of “Islamic” and “philosophy” points out three facts: first, this philosophy was developed by Muslim intellectuals, and second Islam had a strong hand in shaping this philosophy through suggesting several concepts, questions, and objectives and which it impacted Islamic theology and mysticism. For example, the relationship between revelation (*Wahy*) and philosophy was continually a major subject in Islamic philosophy, so that Muslim philosophers had attempted to understand *Gabriel* (the major angel who frequently brought the *Wahy* to the Prophet) by identifying him with the first intellect. Also, the idea of al-Farabi to synthesize Plato and Aristotle likely was inspired by the idea of the unity of truth “*Haq*” in Islam¹. Third, it is a substantive part of Islamic intellectual movements insofar as it was somehow integrated with other Islamic intellectual trends like theology and Sufism. For instance, philosophical criticism enriched Islamic theology in analyzing the nature of the body, and it also enhanced Sufism in the discussion of the graded manifestation of the plural world – from the One. Additionally, Islamic philosophy

¹ Some modern philosophers suggest how the sophisticated notion of certainty “*Yaqin*” influenced Islamic philosophy. See Paya, 2014, 308-310.

was greatly influenced by the theological conception of creation – unity and plurality.

Among Islamic branches of knowledge which are related to the universal doctrines on the truth and the world, namely *Kalam* and Mysticism, philosophy is the one which has of course a non-Islamic source. Although the journey of philosophy in Islam constituted its own special meaning and form, its major schools remained a body of knowledge independent of religious study in regard to the fundamental concepts, the method, and the goal. It begins from the first principles, continues with a purely rational method, and aims at reaching the truth regardless of its consistency with the religious ideas while Islamic theology begins from different principles including generally accepted premises, religious statements, and also first principles, continues with rational and revealed arguments, and aims to reach religious truth. The *Table 4* exhibits the main differences among three above-mentioned branches of knowledge in Islam.

Table 4. Comparing among Islamic Theology, Gnosticism and Philosophy

Name	Fundamental concepts	Method	Objective
Theology (Kalam)	Rational and inherent goodness and badness + revealed statements	Rational + dialectical/Polemical	Conceiving religious truths
Gnosticism (Sufism)	Love and following the master	Austerity + Intuition	Actualizing the truth within
Philosophy (Falsafa)	The laws of thought (the law of identity, of non-contradiction, and of excluded middle)	Rationality	Conceiving the independent truth

So, it is worthwhile to discuss what encouraged Muslims to take the philosophy seriously and develop their philosophical thoughts. Indeed, the causes at work in the emergence of Islamic philosophy are more or less the same reasons for the appearance of Islamic theology (*Kalam*), and accordingly, I elaborate the following two categories focusing on philosophical “color:”

1) The internal grounds. This entails the factors within Islam including the Quran and Sunnah. The first revelation of the Quran to the Prophet was a unique emphasis on reading informative communication, connecting humanity to its physical and metaphysical origins as follows: "Read! In the name of your lord who created, created the human from a (blood) clot. Read! Your lord is most bountiful, He who taught (the use of) the pen, taught the human what he did not know" (96: 1-5). Also, the Quran constantly demonstrates a high respect to listening to others, evaluating ideas, and critical reasoning, for instance, saying: "Therefore, give good tidings to my servants those who listen to the words and follow what is the best of it: those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding" (39: 17-18). Additionally, several times when the Quran talks about God and salvation, it clearly emphasizes arguing based on common sense, encouraging, "bring your convincing proof" (2:111; 21:24; 27:64; 28:75). Furthermore, the Quran notably motivates Muslims to think of and understand the content of the Quran (4:82; 25:73) as the permanent miracle of the Prophet. The Quran calls its opponents explicitly to challenge it if they can (for example see, 2:23-24; 4:82; 17:88; 52:33-34). Muslims attempted to comprehend some Quranic ideas like what it says about God "He is the first and the last, the evident and the immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things" (57:3); "God is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). They also attempted to elaborate Islamic regulations which created the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) using linguistic and philosophical study.

Averroes' Shariah view against stereotypes. The work of Ibn Rushd (Latinized as Averroes) (1126-1198) which is argued from Shariah is a clear example to show how wrong this stereotype is that Islam is an orthopraxy, rather than an orthodox faith. Furthermore, it illustrates how he takes philosophical work seriously which enterprise itself is also based on the Shariah (Averroes uses the term

"Fi'l al-Falsafah" to highlight the process of philosophizing rather than a particular philosophical school or doctrine). I would like to underline two of Averroes' doctrines in order to show first how his philosophy was impacted by the Quran and secondly, how philosophy is not a hobby in Islam, at least in view of an eminent jurist like Averroes.

As a skillful jurist, Averroes elaborates Shariah's view of philosophy using Shariah's terminology and method. He asked if studying Philosophy is allowed or not allowed (*Haram*) according to Islamic law? And if it is allowed, is it just allowed (*Mubah*), or is it a preferred (*Nadb*) or a necessary religious obligation (*Wajib*)? (I will discuss the exact definition and forms of these terminologies further in the Shariah section.) Averroes identifies philosophy as examining beings to understand their formation and creator. He continues that the Quran ordered people in verses like 59:2; 7:184; 6:75; 88:17, and 3:191 to rationally examine the world, life and beings. Averroes thus concludes that rational arguments and philosophizing is a religious obligation because they help us to distinguish between valid and invalid arguments. Subsequently a religious contemplation of the Quranic verses leads Averroes to issue Islamic Fatwa (verdict) that reading philosophy is a general Islamic obligation to be fulfilled at least by a few. As I will discuss later he categorizes people into different groups with each part having their allotted portion of arguments and also Quranic statements (Ibn Rushd, 1997).

In his main work which criticizes theological schools in Islam in favor of his philosophy, Averroes presents two original philosophical proofs for the existence of God which he claimed to have learned from the Quran. They are called the proof of caring (*Inayat*) and of innovation (*Ikhtira'a*). The first proof outlines all parts of beings in this world including time, space, earth, seasons, fruits, animals, including our own parts of body and he says all are in harmony with human existence (and they are ordered to the care of

human beings). This harmony reveals a designer with a free mind because chance cannot create harmony. The second suggests that because they are appearing or moving (some cases) then all beings are coming to being (innovated). We clearly understand this innovation cannot happen without an innovator, or a cause. Discussing many examples, Averroes concludes that all Quranic verses proving God's existence can be understood in these two ways² (Ibn Rushd, 1998). However, far from judging about the validity of proofs and even of its deduction from the Quran, both above mentioned perspectives show how Averroes thought his philosophy originated from the Quran directly or indirectly.

The Prophet used to encourage the faithful to learn from others, saying, for example, this "wisdom has been lost by the faithful man. He merits more than others to attain it, no matter where it is" (al-Tirmidhi, 1996, 4:417) and "search for knowledge even requires one to travel to China" (al-Majlisi, 1388, 1:115). At that time China served as an example of the farthest place from the center of Islam, Medina. Also since the Prophet was preaching there and the Quran was revealed there, this use of China means that the knowledge to be sought cannot refer to religious truth. Furthermore, there are several quotations of Imam Ali, the fourth Caliph of Sunni and first Imam of Shia, that inspire philosophical discussion.³ All of these motivated Muslims to embrace the philosophical explorations from among non-Muslims.

² These two arguments do not leave the Aristotelian school of Averroes. The first merits his view of cosmos, and the second his view of form and matter instead of ex nihilo because in Averroes creating means making connection between form and matter, see, Ibn Rushd, 1998, p. 81; Akhlaq, 1388, 127-129.

³ For example, Imam Ali's first sermon in *Nahj al-Balaghah* includes the following highly philosophical praising God: "The foremost in religion is the acknowledgement of Him, the perfection of acknowledging Him is to testify Him, the perfection of testifying Him is to believe in His Oneness, the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes, because every attribute is a proof that it is different from that to which it is attributed and everything to which something

2) The external grounds: This comes from the confrontation of Islam with new ideas and schools of thought because of the expansion of Islam. Getting inspiration from an Islamic background moved this confrontation to a cultural meeting which created a huge treasure for humanity to have mutual understanding, to enrich each other, and to establish a profound ground for dialogue among civilizations. This was associated with the movement of translation that is claimed as a reason to build Baghdad in 762 by the caliph al-Mansur (714-775). However there were two caliphs, al-Harun and al-Ma'mun, who encouraged Muslims to translate the non-Arabic and non-Muslims' books including Greek ones through founding "the house of wisdom." Al-Ma'mun was so keen for translation that after winning a war against the Byzantine Emperor, Theophilos (813-842), he put as a part of his peace treaty to receive a number of Greek manuscripts annually. Additionally, the master of the translators, Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (809-873), a Christian Physician and scientist, gained the books' weight in gold from al-Ma'mun for his translation.

These internal and external elements laid the foundation for Islamic philosophy⁴. But what does the term "philosophy" refer to in the Islamic context? Muslims use the term "*Falsafa*", an Arabized form of "Philosophy," applying to two disciplines; generally to all

is attributed is different from the attribute. Thus whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognizes His like, and whoever recognizes His like regards Him two; and whoever regards Him as two recognizes parts for Him; and whoever recognizes parts for Him mistook Him; and whoever mistook Him pointed at Him; and whoever pointed at Him admitted limitations for Him; and whoever admitted limitations for Him numbered Him. Whoever said: 'In what does He exist?', believed that He is contained; and whoever said: 'On what does He set?', believed there is something on which He is not setting [because He sets only on a particular place]." (Ali ibn Abitalib, 2004, 39-49)

⁴ In this paper, I examined the journey of philosophy in various schools in Islam to investigate how they handled the pivotal concepts of Islam such as the idea of one God, prophecy, and the Day of Judgment, while transitioning between theism and deism: "Islamic Philosophy between Theism and Deism," in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Vol. 72 (1), 2016, pp. 65-84.

Rational Sciences and particularly to metaphysics. Muslims mostly at the first step divide knowledge into two divisions: the textual knowledge and the rational knowledge. The former is related to text including religious and secular ones like literature, rhetoric, linguistics, exegeses, *al-Hadith*, Islamic laws (*Fiqh*), and the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usul al-Fiqh*). These principles also are local, time-limited, and text-oriented, having their authorities. In contrast, the latter or the rational disciplines including logic, mathematics, physics, ethics, and metaphysics are universal, unlimited to a nation, a language, or a period of time, open to any new idea and approach based on human efforts. Thus broadly, philosophy equals all rational knowledge and the philosopher was he who had expertise in all these domains so that it used to be said a philosopher is a micro scientific world because his mind reflects the whole world, and philosophy is attaining the perfection of soul in theory and in practice. Another more popular name for philosophy is *Hikmat*, literally wisdom, and for philosopher *Hakim*, wise, echoing the Islamic concept of God as *al-Hakim* to declare the aim of unity of all knowledge regarding the transcendental fact that comes with a comprehensive and intellectual personality. Accordingly, Muslims split philosophy into two branches: theoretical and practical. The first talks about the beings including physical, mathematical, and supernatural ones and universal rules which the last one shapes *Mabad al-Tabi'a* (metaphysics). The second talks about the deeds of humanity per se (ethics), in family (management of the family), and in community (politics).

In the particular and narrow application, philosophy equals metaphysics mirroring the human struggle to conceive the universal principles of the world and of the mind through reasoning as much as the human faculty permits.

Historically although great Muslim philosophers have had books and ideas about ethics, politics, and medicine, they are

known for their metaphysical perspectives such that when you are talking about first grade philosophers in Islam you consider more Avicenna and Averroes than Ibn Miskawayh (932-1030) and Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). However, philosophy equaling metaphysics is considered as dealing with clear and conceptual definitions, and universal and pure rational approach toward a subject, without leaving an unexamined point at the origin, the process of formation, and the end of a subject and relating it to the comprehensive view of the world. Therefore, philosophy is not a science on the same footing as the other sciences, but it is a higher knowledge that firstly provides a ground for all sciences because it examines the possibility of knowledge through epistemological questioning, like can we conceive the truth and how, the forms and implications of skepticism and relativism, the relevance of knowledge to existence, the relation between senses and intellect, and the relative positions of physics and metaphysics. Secondly, it studies issues not available to experimental sciences like the supernatural facts, God, soul, the possibility of the judgment day, the nature of time, the kinds of existences, the relation between existence and quiddity, and so on. Thirdly, it constantly evaluates itself including the power and limitations of the reason, the methods of reasoning, its attachment to background, and similar things. And fourthly, it advances other sciences by presenting rational ideas and theory about their subjects and their perspectives like meaning of the public order, object of the political power, the religious language, the metaphysics of creation, the historicity of being, the categories of people, the ethical values, the substantial change, the acquired and presential (non-acquired/intuitional) knowledge, individuation and identity, and the rest (Akhlaq, 1388).

Looking at the above-mentioned issues introduces us to two very crucial and mostly misunderstood points: the Islamic philosophy is not simply a conduit of Greek philosophy, even though it bears major elements of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy.

Additionally, although some Muslim theologians opposed it, Islamic philosophy is part and parcel of religious knowledge and without it one cannot gain full understanding of the Islamic intellectual universe. Its position in the Islamic context is not less than the position of Maimonides for Jewish thought or St. Thomas Aquinas for Christian. Therefore, Muslim philosophers' attempting to establish a system of philosophy harmonizing some elements of Greek philosophy with Islamic faith is a unique endeavor to nourish reason's transcendental and supernatural demands and to make religion more reasonable. Regardless of its success it is a mistake to simply call it Greek philosophy. This feature caused some scholars to title Islamic philosophy "prophetic philosophy" or "theosophy" highlighting the distinction and focusing on its Islamic substance. It is hard to apply these titles to the entire view, but indeed there are various schools all flavored by the Islamic faith.

Islamic Schools of Philosophy

To learn more about Islamic philosophy let's look briefly at the Islamic schools of philosophy.

1) *Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy*. This was known as the mainstream school of philosophy from the East to the West of the Islamic world during different centuries and involves the most eminent Muslim philosophers. The term "peripatetic" (*Masha'i*) like its Western school here refers to Aristotle but in an Islamic fashion associated with Neoplatonic and Islamic teachings. The name of Aristotle at the head of a philosophical school in Islam contradicts the style of Plato; the first advocates a purely "ratiocination" while the second also promotes the "illumination" as we will see in the second school. If I had to list the doctrines of this school, it observes philosophy as an intellectual process that deals with experimental perceptions and conceptual frames. Reason here is considered a self-sufficient and immanent faculty that is the same in different

regions and periods of times. We can gain insight into the truth through a methodical process and apply philosophical achievements for practical purposes to benefit society. Like modern empiricists, Peripatetic philosophy believes in the blank slate (*tabula rasa*) and in the significance of educating people which is a junction of philosophy and prophecy in Islam (Akhlaq, 1388). I would like to introduce the Peripatetic philosophers, who are both pioneers in the field of Islamic philosophy and can be seen to have many similarities with the Western philosophical tradition.

- **Al-Kindi** or Alkindus (d. 873). He is the first Muslim philosopher backed with the Mu'tazila context who laid the foundation for the peripatetic school. He stated there is nothing greater than the truth, no matter where and from whom we are learning. He wrote around 260 books about various topics including physics, the intellect, metaphysics, logic, mathematics, astronomy, optics, chemistry, medicine, ethics, geography, music, and so on but only one-tenth have survived. Changing the common religious idea of creation to emanation, he argued there is a consistency between Islam and philosophy because both are looking for the truth, although the philosophical approach merely reaches us Apophatic (negative) theology. Al-Kindi continued that even the faithful who reject philosophy must learn philosophy because they have to reject rationally. Using some Quranic verses, he distinguished between philosophical and prophetic knowledge saying the first is humanistic, through reasoning, acquiring, gradation, and is for the public while the second is divine, direct, non-acquiring, sudden, and is for the learned. He created the first philosophical Islamic terminology and was recognized highly by Ibn Nadim (d. 990), the great Muslim bibliographer, as a "Unique scholar in the time" as well as by Roger Bacon as a "pioneer like Claudius Ptolemy."

- **Al-Farabi** or Alpharabius (870-950). It is al-Farabi who established the comprehensive system of Islamic philosophy consisting of metaphysics, cosmology, epistemology, psychology,

and practical philosophy, associating it with prophetic knowledge. Although al-Farabi commented on the logical works of Aristotle and Porphyry, he tried to unify the political thought of Plato with Islamic ones. Earlier Muslims have understood Aristotle through the eyes of Neoplatonism because Plotinus's book *Enneads* was thought to have been written by Aristotle and was referred to as *The Theology of Aristotle*. Even so, al-Farabi strongly advocated the idea of unity of the truth in different phenomena including in religious and philosophical forms or Platonic and Aristotelian methods. He continued that Gabriel who brings the message of God to the Prophet is the same as the active intellect in philosophy, expressing the unity of the prophet and the philosopher, although religion has more popular language to inspire people toward the truth. His well-known book *al-Jam Bayn Rayay al-Hakimayn* (Concordance of the Opinions of Plato and Aristotle) exhibits a unique talent to unify the intellectual efforts toward the truth originating from that Islamic context of unity. Al-Farabi argues that Plato and Aristotle were great and correct philosophers who discovered the exact knowledge of being. Their dissimilarities thus come from their varied personal life and writings. Consequently, al-Farabi expertly reread the theories of Forms (Ideas), of Remembrance (Anamnesis), and of Moral Habits, which he thinks seem to be different in Plato and Aristotle, but actually they concord with each other.

Regarding the theory of politics, al-Farabi categorized governments into virtue-based and ignorance-based. The first means to promote and institutionalize voluntary deeds, habits, and rules among people aiming at true happiness. The second spreads an imaginary happiness among people that can be hidden under valuable covers like self-esteem, honor, and freedom. However, there is a strong encouragement for voluntarism, critical knowledge, social ethics, and true happiness as the main foundations of an ideal society. Since al-Farabi is looking for human happiness in his metaphysics, ethics, religious views, and politics,

we can consider him as the philosopher of happiness. In addition, he developed the ontology by distinction between being (that it is) and essence (quiddity) (what a thing is), and the cosmological proof for existence of God based on Necessary and Contingent (possible) beings. However, in Islam, al-Farabi was called the “Second Teacher” after Aristotle, the “First Teacher” because of his outstanding position in various branches of knowledge and founding the Islamic philosophy.

- Ibn Sina or **Avicenna** (980-1037): Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy achieves its peak of maturity in a systematic metaphysics by Avicenna who developed his predecessors’ path to harmonize Islam and ancient philosophy, although sadly there is a collapse in regards to al-Farabi’s contemplation on politics. Avicenna’s masterpieces in philosophy are *al-Nijat* (the Salvation), *Shifa* (the Healing), and *al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat* (the Remarks and Admonitions), the first two of which were written earlier and the last one much later. Also, the last one substitutes the section of mathematics with mysticism providing the first philosophical analysis of Islamic mysticism. These three books still are considered as standard peripatetic texts in Islamic *Madrasahs* (seminaries) for education and discussion among its supporters and opponents⁵. His significant book on medicine *al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* (Canon of Medicine) also was very popular and was taught around the world as late as 1650 as a medical textbook. A glance at the names of the above-mentioned masterly books leads us to see the exalted position of metaphysics in Avicenna’s view. We can also see here

⁵ Often Muslim scholars used to begin their book by praising and praying to God. To see how Muslims acknowledge Avicenna’s harmony between faith and reason there is a beautiful example. One of Avicenna’s great commentators begins one of his works with a prayer that mentions Avicenna’s books as follows: “O the only source of ‘healing’ in Your benevolence, the only path to ‘Salvation’ is His existence’s grace, there are many ‘Remarks’ in His book [Quran] toward the truths of the worlds of Kingdom and Dominance, and there are ‘Admonitions’ in His addresses to orient how we reach the holy Mighty” (Narraqi, 1365,1).

the idea of “unity of knowledge” since philosophy is counted as the medicine of the soul and medicine as the philosophy of the body. I would like to mention here a much-neglected issue in his philosophy which is connected with faith and it reflects different aspects of Avicenna.

Avicenna argued that revealed religion from God is necessary for the community, saying that humanity is a sociable being and cannot fulfill its demands fully by himself. Social affairs need rule of law, but law cannot be followed by people if they are not sure it fits justice and have come from a superior knowledge of who is God (otherwise, people may think the law-makers pursue their own interests). Law comes through the messenger of God who has to prove his authority through showing some miracles. The otherworldly awards and punishments guarantee people to follow the divine law and messenger. Additionally, God obligated people to worship to remind them constantly of their duties and connections to God. Since God has not overlooked even seemingly very little things for people like the sole of the foot, of course, He cannot abandon this most significant thing so He revealed and built religions (Yasrebi, 1383).

This idea, that still more or less is common in Islamic theology, reminds us of various angles of Avicenna’s philosophy which are expanded in his works. For example, his theological questions include the concept of God and His existence, several attributes of God, the relationship of people to God, and that between the creation and creator. Obviously, he developed the philosophical theology within his elaborated ontology and dealt with questions regarding the four causes, why an effect requires a cause, the hierarchical frame of being, the necessary and possible beings, the first emanation, the emanation of plurality from unity, the difference between essence (quiddity) and existence, the relationship between body and mind, the matter and form, physics and metaphysics, and eternity and time. Since ontology and

theology cannot be developed without having an epistemological approach, Avicenna promoted logic and discussed in detail issues like the possibility of knowledge, the truth and falsity of judgment, the position of sense to reason, and rational and empirical propositions. Also, the suggestion of the need for a revealed religion leads Avicenna to examine the human ability to receive God's revelation, its relation to rational achievements, the differences between people, and how to deal with people in regard to both truth and justice. He had skillfully discussed the meaning of revelation, the language and rituals in faith, the judgment day, and some issues related to human sciences like the enjoyments and pains, the evils and catastrophic events, the different aspects and grades of the soul, the imagination and illusion, and so on. However, although I offered all these topics related to Avicenna's theory of religion, he developed them in a very philosophical approach based on pure empiricism, far from a theological perspective, making him the target of attacks of Ash'ari theologians like Imam Ghazzali and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. This by itself exhibits Avicenna's own innovation in philosophy and Greek thought fully modified in an Islamic context.

- **Ibn Tufail** (d. 1185): the tenth to the twelfth centuries mark the golden age of Islamic philosophy in Spain starting with a combination of Philosophy and mysticism, in Ibn Massarah (d. 931) and completed by the pure peripatetic school of Averroes. I cannot ignore however pointing out to Ibn Tufail and his very significant opus, *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*⁶ (Living Son of the Awake) known extensively in the West as *Philosophus Autodidactus* (The Self-Taught Philosopher) which concerns the question of the ability of human reason to reach its own ultimate truth and true knowledge. It portrays clearly the improvement of human reason in philosophical exploration as it is exhibited in the life of Hayy ibn Yaqzan—an

⁶ Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi also wrote books with the same title but with mystical and illustrative approaches.

infant left alone on an island. The child survived through being nourished by a gazelle and he grew up in a location far from the impact of a religious and value-oriented education and indoctrination. First of all the child's senses developed and then his imagination, volition, and appetite. He compared himself with animals in the jungle and learned many things. When he found his mother, the gazelle, dead he tried to understand it by exploring the soul through a couple years of investigation. Further, Ibn Tufail highly structured how Hayy understands unity and plurality, causality, the primary elements, categorizing, different forms of beings, matter and form, material and immaterial entities, the eternity, God and the Judgment Day by establishing a natural religion and ethics. Like previous philosophers, Ibn Tufail explores a unity between religious and philosophical truths especially related to justice, a highly sought value by the world (Ibn Tufail, 2005). This is the first philosophical book which explicitly elaborates the structure of thought formation, fundamental concepts of empiricism, *tabula rasa*, and nature versus nurture through fiction. It had a profound influence on modern Western civilization becoming one among other influential best-sellers throughout Western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, and is one of the most important books whose impact can be traced until the age of Enlightenment and great philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and even further, in our time to John Rawls.

- Ibn Rushd or **Averroes** (d. 1198): He is the only Muslim philosopher who was a chief religious authority in Islamic law (*Shariah*) and acted as the main judge (*Qadhi*) and is the most famous and influential Spanish Muslim philosopher who has had greater influence on Western intellectual life even more so than on Islamic thought. Although he wrote his own ideas on philosophy, Islamic theology, and the comparative study of Islamic jurisprudence, because of his significant commentaries on Aristotle's works he is

well-known in the West as the “Commentator⁷.” Averroes is recognized as a pure peripatetic in Islam trying to detach philosophy from its non-Aristotelian elements devoting to a full rationalistic approach. His religious position provides Averroes a chance to elaborate proficiently on the relation of Islam to philosophy from the perspective of a Shariah scholar called *Fasl al-Maqal* (A Decisive Discourse on the Delineation of the Relation between Religion and Philosophy). As it is mentioned above, based on several Quranic verses he concludes that it is a religious necessity to learn and promote philosophy. Then he discusses how to reconcile when there are contradictions between Islamic and philosophical statements. He, here, elaborates on the rules, conditions, and method of esoteric interpretation of the Quran (*Ta’wil*) to harmonize what appears contradictory without spreading among laypeople, because there is not more than one truth. Accordingly, Averroes advocates a social form of Aristotelian’s logic about techniques of reasoning. However, this completely Averroistic idea distancing between the nature of truth and the appearance of the truth, constituted one of main doctrines of his Western followers called the “double truth.”

In addition, in the same treatise, Averroes was the first philosopher before the age of the enlightenment who strongly upheld the idea of progress. In the era in which individual meditations were usual and major philosophers used to reestablish

⁷ I have a question regarding Averroes and his title in the West “the commentator.” While Latin Averroes-ism was known for the idea of “Double Truth” (because this idea originates from his book *Fasl al-Maqal* which is the summit of Islamic philosophy on this issue), one could still ask why he is recognized as a commentator rather than an original thinker. Cannot his high position in both Islamic Shariah and Philosophy reveal the non-discussed potential of Islam for philosophy? Could we say that the Islamic emphasis on rationalism, humanism, worldly affairs, and talking of one ultimate truth, at least for intellectuals like him, was an inspiring source in the process of harmonization between Philosophy and Faith, and thus it is clear that he was an original thinker.

their own new metaphysical systems, Averroes encouraged philosophers to attempt to learn from each other and try to further advance human knowledge. Whereas revelation happens in a moment, he notes, philosophy like science grows gradually through the efforts of many. Muslims have to learn the previous ontology, cosmology and epistemology of others, integrating their own philosophy with truths discovered elsewhere while rejecting what is erroneous. This is not surprising because we are concerned with human knowledge which necessarily possesses human limitations. Averroes criticizes Ghazzali for his excommunicating Muslim philosophers because Ghazzali thought they were not true Muslims. Although Averroes disagrees with al-Farabi and Avicenna because of their non-Aristotelian perspectives, he argues that those philosophers nevertheless followed their principles to their logical conclusions. Since conclusions follow necessarily from their premises people have no choice but to accept these conclusions. So there is no place for condemning a person for his rational achievement since in a way it is involuntary. This is the mistake of Ghazzali, with regards to Averroes, in excommunicating Muslim philosophers. If a wrong but sophisticated judgment is allowed in Shariah concerning matters of law, Averroes continues, why is it not allowed in theology and philosophy? This argument refers to the idea of *Takhta'a* in Islamic jurisprudence. It means if a jurist deduces a wrong verdict after trying his best in Shariah law God will not punish him. In other words, a jurist in Shariah always is rewarded. If he is correct there will be two rewards; one for effort and the second for capturing the truth. If he is wrong he will still gain a reward for his effort. The opposite idea is called *Taswib* which holds that the jurist is always right because there is no objective truth. What he reaches through scholarly work will be considered as the truth by God. Averroes elaborates that God forgives scholarly mistakes even in fundamental concepts of philosophy. So scholars are encouraged to work fearlessly to discover more truth. In this

way Averroes successfully integrates philosophy and Shariah while doing honor to both and providing a Shariah-based defense of philosophy (Ibn Rushd, 1997). Although and unfortunately Averroes' path in philosophy has not been followed in Islam, his translated books affected greatly Jewish and Christian intellectual traditions; his commentaries on Aristotle greatly enriched scholasticism and his own ideas inspired the school of Averroism which its advocates were dominant in universities like Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, and Paris for centuries laying the ground for the modern world (Akhlaq, 1389. 183-235). In contrast to the West, one important intellectual reason why Ibn Rushd was not followed in Islam was Imam Ghazzali (1058-1111)'s popular book *Tahafut al-Fulasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers). Using a very polemical method, Ghazzali accused Muslim Philosophers especially al-Farabi and Avicenna of leaving Islamic dogmas in the twenty articles. Calling them *Kafir* (infidel) and apostate, Ghazzali clearly excommunicated philosophers from Islam in these three issues: eternity of the world, God's knowledge of universals, and rejection of the physical resurrection. Averroes meticulously criticized this book in a masterwork called *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (The Incoherence of the Incoherence) but because of his fully philosophical style and his completely Aristotelian approach, it could not reestablish the position of peripatetic philosophy in Islam. Indeed, the construction is harder than deconstruction particularly when the enemy is supported with populism and religious enthusiasm.

2) *Ismaili Philosophy*. This is a completely denominational philosophy among Shia-Islam with a strong tendency toward esoteric and political understanding of religion. The Ismaili school of philosophy was highly interested in ancient wisdom from Greece and Persia like Hermeticism, Pythagoreanism, Zoroastrianism, and Manichaeism. This school grew rapidly in the ninth and tenth centuries producing figures like Abu Hatam al-Razi (811-891),

Hamid al-Din Kirmani (996-1021), the philosophical group called *Ekhwan al-Safa* (The Brethren of Purity), and the great Farsi Poet and thinker, Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088). The political climax of Ismaili was the Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171) which spanned a large area of North Africa and built the famous Islamic *Madrasah*, al-Azhar, in their newly built city of Cairo. Following their doctrines, they exercised a great degree of religious tolerance regarding non-Ismaili within and without Islam including Jews and Christians. The invasion of the Mongols moved them underground, spreading into some parts of Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen, and the Indian Subcontinent.

The central concept of Ismaili philosophy is that there is a hidden form behind every single, large or little, phenomenon. Therefore their teachings divide into three divisions: outward teachings, inward teachings, and the principle of teaching. The first teaching includes some Islamic laws and the issue of *Imamah* (spiritual leadership). The last teaching criticizes the rational and revealed truths saying the ensured path toward the ultimate truth comes through a trusted and true teacher referring to Ismaili Imam or his successor. In other words, a rational investigation is merely a device which brings the seeker to Imam, after that, an individual has to listen to Imam and understand only through him.

The philosophy of Ismaili appears in the inward teaching that consists of two parts: the first is the principle of *Ta'wil* (spiritual hermeneutics). This principle provided them a very broad domain to reduce all Islamic practices to some internal affairs for example equating prayer (*Salat*) with calling Imam, fasting (*Sawm*) with hiding the faith from the enemies, orienting toward Mecca in prayer (*Qiblah*) with orienting to Imam, almsgiving with acquiring religious knowledge, and pilgrimage to Mecca with promoting his Ismaili faith. The second is the principle of (*Haqqayeq*) the truths that lay the ground for theology, metaphysics, and cosmology alongside with an enigmatic belief in some numbers like seven and twelve.

They advanced a unique theology, for example, we can neither attribute some qualities to God nor detach them from God. That God is all-knowable means that He gives knowledge; also He is neither eternal nor bounded by time. They put the concept of innovation (*Ibda'a*) in place of the philosophical concept of emanation (*Fayz*). Accordingly, the process of emanation covers several phases from God to humanity: the sphere of divinity, of the first intellect, of the soul, of the celestial sphere, of the simple elements (four elements Earth, Water, Air, and Fire), of the complex entities (minerals, plants, animals), and of humanity which by itself presents the micro-cosmos in contrast to the macro cosmos. Nasir Khusraw categorizes the seven spheres of beings as related to time: the eternal with neither beginning nor end (the Divinity, the first intellect, and the universal soul); the eternal without end but created in time (celestial and stars), and created in time and with an end (the natures and the components). In addition, they discussed seven periods of the Prophethood following with seven successors. Ismaili also accounts seven levels of being a faithful and spreads this view, seven layers, to grades of spreading the faith as well (Dadbeh, 1374). However, since Ismaili emphasizes the inner (*batin*) meaning of faith over its external or apparent (*zahir*) sense, it is known as Batinites (Batiniyya) and refuted broadly by both Sunni and Shia theologians (Mutahhari, 1382,2:25).

3) *Illuminative Wisdom*. During the lifetime of Averroes, a profound intellectual face in Persia named Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d. 1191) arose, founding a new school of philosophy called *al-Ishraq* (illumination). Although he was killed in Aleppo by a Salah al-Din Ibn Ayyub (Saladin) (1137-1193) who also invaded and ended Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt⁸, on the charge of heresy, Suhrawardi presented a new form of wisdom in Islam impacting greatly later Islamic intellectualism. With respect to the peripatetic

⁸ Indeed Suhrawardi died because of a snare in the religio-political struggles of Syria at that time.

ratiocination and the logical training of the mind as the prerequisite for wisdom, this school sought to find one more and greater source of learning the ultimate truth that is the purification of the mind and the heart to reach intellectual vision and receive the illumination. Alongside Aristotelian philosophy, then Suhrawardi went beyond the philosophical boundaries of ancient Greece, looking as well at Persian wisdom and in different periods of times integrating with Islamic concepts of the Prophethood. His genius work, the *Hikmat al-Ishraq* (The Theosophy of the Orient of Light), which is called the bible of Illuminative Wisdom, elaborates the light instead of being, presenting a metaphysics of hierarchy and different levels of the light. It casts God as the "Light of Lights" and all creatures as continuous and co-eternal with the divine, insofar as they receive luminosity from this one original source. Suhrawardi adeptly criticizes the peripatetic logical idea of definition and makes Avicenna's argument for the necessity of Prophethood stronger through otherworldly consideration. On the other hand, "Intellect" is the first creation of God consisting of three dimensions: knowledge of God which produced beauty and goodness (*Husn*), of self which produced love, and of the created existences which produced sadness. Here, intellect reflects a different substance than the Sufi and peripatetic view because Sufism and peripatetic, even though differently, separate intellect from love. This is why Suhrawardi prefers to call his path wisdom than philosophy, and we call it theosophy because it is concentrated on God's emanation. He explicitly presents a hierarchy of who is involved with theosophy and philosophy and prefers a pure theosophist to a pure philosopher, while his ideal is the theosophist philosopher as vicegerent of God fitting the comprehensive leadership who can fill the world with enlightenment.

However, the illustrative school is recognized for following Plato, whom Suhrawardi calls the head of illustrative philosophers, and for priority of intuition and illustration over the pure reason.

His idea of intuition and his respect to personal revelation obviously motivates the unity of holy experiences among the founders of religion inspiring an essential approach regarding the different approaches to wisdom and faiths. Suhrawardi clarifies that the content of his philosophy first revealed to him through intuition and then he rationalized it with the intention that he cannot leave some of his principles if, for example, they be rejected. He strongly expresses the unity of all wisemen (philosophers) saying any kind of divergences among them is because of their different ways of teaching or styles of personal life. The true seeker has to transcend the dissimilar external appearances looking for the same internal sense (Yasrebi, 2007; Noorbakhsh, 1390).

This school of thought was followed by al-Shahrzuri (13th century) and affected philosophers like Ibn Kamuneh (d. 1284) and Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 1311), Ibn Abi Jomhoor Ihsaii (d. 1499) and Jalal al-Din Dawani (d. 1501). Although illustrative wisdom has not been a mainstream philosophy in the whole world of Islam⁹, like peripatetic philosophy, it played a big role in the formation of the last Islamic philosophy of Mulla Sadra and attracted Shia-Islam theologians and had an influence on the subcontinent thinkers.

4) *The Transcendental Wisdom*. Same time in shaping Modern Western philosophy with empiricism and rationalism, philosophy also experienced the emergence of a completely new school flavored with its own Islamic taste. Mulla Sadra (d. 1604), from Shiraz/Iran, established the school *al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah* (Transcendental Wisdom) creating a masterly synthesis of two previous philosophical schools, namely peripatetic and illustrative, plus Islamic Gnosticism (Sufism) and theology (*Kalam*). Although his monumental work in following Sufi' path was called *al-Asfar al-Arba'ah* (The Four Journeys), he emphasized that the three major

⁹ My recent work in the history of Philosophy in Afghanistan showed me how much Illuminative philosophy was effective on the eastern part of the Islamic world like India, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

paths to the truth followed by those branches of knowledge—namely, revelation followed with revealed theology, illumination followed by Illustrative wisdom and Sufism, and ratiocination followed by peripatetic and rational theology—direct ultimately to the same objective. Mulla Sadra developed very deep contemplations on being and formed philosophical examinations like a spiritual trip and elaborated the issues in a Sufi shape as the *Table 5* depicts.

Table 5. Four Journeys in Sufism and Transcendental Wisdom

	Four Journeys	Goals in Sufism	Issues in Transcendental Wisdom
1	From Creation to the Truth	Reaching God by following Shaykh	The fundamental concepts and propositions of philosophy
2	In the Truth with the Truth	Attracting the divine manifestations	The Simple substances, the intelligences, the souls and their bodies (Natural sciences)
3	From the Truth to Creation with the Truth	Experiencing divinity in the world through annihilation in Him	The divine actions and the different levels of existence
4	With the Truth in Creation	Helping and guiding people toward annihilation in God	The development of the human Soul and the Resurrection

The significance of Sadra appears in launching a unique and comprehensive ontology and metaphysics which causes to prosper all the intermixed components of classical philosophy like theology, psychology, eschatology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetic, and logic. For example, these are fundamental concepts of Sadra's philosophy: principality of existence, indigence possibility, individuation, gradation of existence, substantial motion, becoming, acquired and presential knowledge, ontological indigence, creation of the body and soul, and immortality of the soul, which every one of them has a hand in shaping the transcendental wisdom. Therefore, transcendental wisdom exhibits a major and last systematic image of the Islamic philosophical quest to find harmony between faith

and reason presenting the continuous idea of unity of truth, existence, and knowledge. However, this school is still very much alive in Islamic intellectualism, especially Shia-Islam. In the twentieth century, an updated version of Mulla Sadra's school was suggested by Allamah Sayed Muhahamad Hussain Tabataba'i. His major book "The Principles and Method of the Philosophy of Realism" marked a watershed in the long tradition of Islamic philosophy by applying the machinery of this philosophy to an imported philosophy, namely Marxism and Dialectical Materialism. Tabataba'i also debated two very significant philosophical issues in Islam for the first time: the idea of knowledge about conventions "*Etibariyat*," decades before David Lewis and John Searl, and the impossibility of deriving an 'ought' from an 'is,' without any awareness of Hume. (Paya, 2014, 305-7)

To sum up, the four above-mentioned schools of thought explicitly reflect the journey of philosophy in Islam; even though it originated from Greek thought it has kept its spirit, namely the interactions between faith and reason. There is a very insightful image of unity in plurality; all forms of Islamic philosophy are separated from Islamic theology but at the same time, they take God and Islam seriously. Additionally, all focus on intellect and reasoning but reflect a different meaning of intellect. So in studying Islamic philosophy, it is important to consider the long journey, diversity of perspectives, and also continuous vitality of the approaches toward the truth. If the Medieval Age has died out in the West, it is not true about Islam because of Muslims history and Islamic faith. Surely this over a millennium-old philosophy cannot be ignored by Muslims in regards to regional development and cannot be ignored by Westerns in regards to understanding Muslims and cannot be ignored by both in dialogue among Islam and West. Accordingly, the Islamic philosophy left us a good example of confrontation between Islam and the West leading to

understanding each other and helping others toward a more meaningful life and a better world.

Practical Reflections

The last sentences bring me to the discussion of the practical benefits of examining Islamic philosophy in the here and now. After detailed discussion, I can summarize that Islamic Philosophy consists of two different aspects with two broad scopes: on the one hand it is philosophical knowledge which refers to rational examination to reach the ultimate truth within an Islamic context. It is rational because Muslim philosophers emphasized they followed pure reasoning regardless of where it led. It orients itself toward ultimate truth because it tries to get a clear understanding of the fundamentals of the world, life, and knowledge. It is connected to the Islamic context because it grew up dealing with questions of a religious nature within the Islamic culture (i.e. Creation, the nature of Revelation, the tension between Reason and Revelation, the Islamic concept of Resurrection). On the other hand, it addresses broader areas suggesting a tool to study more concrete subjects related to the daily life of Muslims. Some old examples are: the relationship between Reason and Revelation, the philosophy of politics as discussed in al-Farabi and Avicenna, the role of prophecy which shapes the whole of Islamic philosophy according to one interpretation, the quality of eternal life, and so on. In addition, we have modern examples similar to the previously mentioned traditional ones: religious identity, social justice, modernity, colonialism, postcolonialism, government legitimacy, gender, otherness, immigration, faithful community and so on. Many motivations and reasons inspire current Muslim scholars to use philosophical methods and tools in discussion of social issues like the nature of Islam, the political context of current global events like the Israel-Palestine, 9/11, Arab spring, or the rise of extremist Islam.

This concern, of course, requires more than metaphysical evolution in Islamic Classical Philosophy, and thus, neither a linguistic nor speculative framework is prerequisite to get involved with this aspect.

Regarding the first scope, doubtless, Islamic philosophy is deeply indebted to the Greek tradition in metaphysics, psychology and natural philosophy. It also branched-out in Latin translation to inform European philosophy. So, Islamic philosophy as a part of Western Philosophy¹⁰, more or less has the same power to shape Islamic culture and suggest new ideas to Muslims today. This is why I would like to highlight several points here. Unfortunately, as yet the practical implications of Islamic Philosophy which are relevant to Muslims in the West have not been fully explored. It means getting familiarity with these key concepts of Islamic Intellectualism is not necessary only for scholars of Islam and Philosophy, but also for bridge-builders, peace-makers, human and women's rights activists who are concerned with free-speech, democracy, cross-cultural study and pluralism. My arguments follow:

To enhance our understanding of Islamic culture. The position of Philosophy in Islam is more or less the same position of Philosophy as in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The intellectual tradition of Catholicism cannot be understood without St. Thomas Aquinas and the intellectual tradition of Islamic Theology cannot be understood without Avicenna. Even the majesty of Ibn Taymiyyah, the father of Salafism, cannot be reached, if his criticism of Theology, Philosophy and Sufism is neglected. Thus, to have an authentic knowledge of the foundations of Islamic culture we have to look at Reason and Revelation in Islam which is discussed through Philosophy.

¹⁰ I agree with Professor Richard C. Taylor who argued and advised during the 2014 Annual Meeting of American Philosophical Association that it should be taught in philosophy departments.

To increase our knowledge of current Islamic movements. The pioneers of Islamism in the Middle East were inspired with philosophical thought and imagination. Muhammad Iqbal in Pakistan and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran were philosophers. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, deriving from al-Afghani, has socio-philosophical roots. Even the original source of the Taliban in India was rooted in the philosophical and the mystical ideas of Shah Waliullah of Delhi¹¹. Re-interpreting the faith, approaching Islam rationally and applying Islam to the current world are common among all these various socio-political movements which have a hand in shaping recent events.

To understand the first meeting between Islam and the West. Often people consider the first meeting of Islam and the Western culture through the Crusades, Modernization, and Colonialism. To the contrary, the first meeting happened much earlier, at the beginning of Islam in a very harmonious way. It led to the establishment of the "House of Wisdom" around 800 C.A. It inspired Muslims in the Translation Movement where they learned from other cultures, the Western culture among them. It has a very profound effect on Islamic theology, Sufism, and philosophy. It is a unique example of Islamic openness to others. Studying Islamic philosophy brings us directly to the heart of the issue, equipping us with new tools.

To improve our ideas about dialogue among civilizations. Like other faiths, Islam emphasizes the authenticity of each person and religious group. The contribution of Islamic philosophy suggests how dialogue among different civilizations is possible and fruitful. For instance, al-Farabi focuses on various levels of language which makes dialogue possible. He, also, tried to understand Plato

¹¹ In his thought-provoking book, *Defending Muhammad in Modernity*, SherAli Tareen demonstrates how tensions in the current Islamic circles in South Asia have been shaped by philosophical challenges such as the power of God, Muhammad's humanness, and the concepts of innovation and tradition.

and Aristotle in a way which harmonizes them with each other, first, and then with Islam, secondly. The Illuminative School of Philosophy in Islam harmonized the Ancient Persian culture with Western Platonic philosophy. This previous approach helped this school to adjust in India to its new culture. These historical models offer us previous successful examples of dialogue among civilizations to shift political concerns to cultural and mutual understanding. Westerners and Muslims need a mutual understanding rather than merely temporary coalitions. Decreasing hate and violence requires a knowledge of the causes and motivations which occurs through deep and unbiased understanding. The rationality of Islamic philosophy provides us with that opportunity. In addition, since this philosophy takes us to the heart of intellectual and spiritual debates in Islam it connects us to the foundations of that culture.

To explore the capacity for peaceful Islam. Islamic philosophy, like all philosophical schools, promotes rationality and humanism. Al-Farabi's disciples are known as Muslim humanists. Averroes was a major Muslim jurist, one of the greatest scholars of Shariah, and did not apply lots of Islamic punishments and had a respectful position toward women during his times heading the highest level of the judiciary (Islamic Supreme Court). Several exegeses for the Quranic verses have been left by these philosophers and can advance more moderate and peaceful use of Islamic rules.

To support intellectualism and rationalization across the world. As people of the twenty-first century we are gifted with many chances to enjoy freedom of speech, freedom of consciousness, democratic systems, and human and women's rights. These are the result of centuries of intellectual struggle done by our ancestors. It requires us to analyze our times and move humanity forward toward such human values. Regarding the Islamic world, who are suffering severely from violence, Islamic

philosophy can abate much of the suffering and counter textualism promoted by violent fundamentalists.

Of course, like St. Thomas Aquinas in Christianity, Muslim philosophers have their opponents within Islam. Moreover, we cannot expect from the Islamic philosophy all of the answers but it can contribute to the whole.

Last Glance

Therefore, Islamic philosophy in its various “colors,” served humanity showing harmony between philosophy and religion as outcomes of human reason independent of God’s grace and guidance. The harmony between God, the world, and the intellect as is manifested in Islamic philosophy is trying to satisfy essential dimensions of humanity in questing for the truth, the benevolence, and beauty as Plato mentioned. There is a loud voice calling us to our vital demands: coming out from human-centrism and looking at humanity related to nature and the truth. Although in several structures the Islamic theology and mysticism overlap philosophy, still illustrative and transcendental wisdom claim their independence from theology and mysticism. The difference is seen in their different ideas and also how they rationalize their contents. This independence, at least as a desired goal, must not count for little; rather it calls us to think of different manifestations of the truth regarding a kind of social categorizing in pursuing the transcendent. Muslim philosophers, to a great extent helped the human philosophical examinations especially in ontology and metaphysics by projecting new questions and points like the nature of God and His attributes, theodicy, the kinds of originations (for example perpetual, essential, and temporal), the sorts of knowledge (like acquired and presential), the resurrection day, subjective and objective existences, known by essence and known by accident, intermediate body, kinds of possibility (essential, indigence,

quiddative, occurring) and the like. As I mentioned already Muslim philosophers were pioneers in dialogue among civilizations in facing their metaphysical and epistemological foundations. They showed that religious and local interests cannot prohibit them from acquiring knowledge and truth from others. At least the global village has to prepare us to learn from them that all people regardless of their civilized background need each other to promote their share of the truth, happiness, and responsibility. Since they recognized products of foreign civilizations including Greek and Persian, historically, Muslim philosophers showed that they adequately followed the Quranic advice to “listen to word and follow the best one.” (39:18) This helped them to develop a model and path of thinking for other nations including Jewish and Christians enriching the scholasticism, mainstream of medieval age philosophy, Jewish philosophy, and laying seeds for creation of Latin Averroism which was an introduction to the modern world. All of them exhibit Islam’s potential not merely to concentrate on modern values but also to its flexibility and inspiration for others that should be explored further.

Let’s complete the discussion by looking at current situations of Islamic philosophy. In addition to historical conflict among Muslim law-experts (Shariah scholars), theologians and Gnostics with philosophers, there are two more trends within current Islam that challenge the philosophical researches: first, the majority of Salafists among Sunni-Islam and minority of textualists among Shia-Islam that both limit Islam to the revealed restricted laws and advice; second, the concrete and vital demands among the majority of Muslims from corrupt governments and socio-economic problems. Even so, philosophy is struggling to reestablish its position in the current civilization of Islam especially in regards to understanding the Western culture and to growing new generations. Muslims used to learn theology and Gnosticism alongside philosophy to show philosophy’s validity and authenticity

because the school of philosophy is seen to be in opposition to what the theologians and Gnostics promote. Therefore, often Shia *Madrasahs* put the transcendental wisdom with new commentaries or summaries from Sabzawari and Tabataba'i among seminarian curriculums. Similarly, the classical *Madrasahs* of Egypt and India, from the west to east of Islamic world, more or less consider peripatetic philosophy to be a subject of religious study. Only *Madrasahs* in regions affected with radical Salafism like Saudi Arabia do not allow teaching philosophy.

Also, there are powerful trends among the new-theologians in Islam from al-Afghani Sayed Jamal, Pakistani Muhammad Iqbal to Moroccan Muhammed Abed al-Jabri to critically revive the spirit of Islamic philosophy, in its different approaches, in consistency with existing demands in areas of culture and civilization. Constantly, we are reaching new studies in transcendental wisdom, peripatetic philosophy, comparative study between Muslim and non-Muslim philosophers and philosophies including Western ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary ones and Asian wisdom. However, in the study of philosophy, several comparative points, especially between Islam and Western philosophy both insofar as it transcends religions and times, make the issues meaningful for young generations and serve for mutual understanding among people. These include very common concepts, such as creation, love, silence, justice, and law.

There is also a meaningful approach toward Perennial philosophy looking for common ideas among all Islamic branches of philosophy and the heart of religions. This shift of opinion distinguishes between reason and intellect, the first is more related to the modern mind, cares for secular values, and spreads the quantitative approach while the second originates from divine soul and cares for sacred values observing humanity in its relation to God. Additionally, there is a leaning toward counting the Principles of Islamic jurisprudence as the pure Islamic philosophy

encouraging further contemplation of itself. I will give a larger picture of that in the next chapter on Islamic law and the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence.

Suggested Resources

A History of Islamic Philosophy, Majid Fakhry, Columbia University Press, 1983.

An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Amin Razavi (Ed.), Oxford University Press, 2000.

An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy, Oliver Leaman, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Arabic Philosophy and the West: Continuity and Interaction, Therese-Anne Druart (Ed.), Georgetown University, 1988.

Averroes and the Enlightenment, Mourad Wahba and Mona Abousenna (Ed), Prometheus Books, 1996.

Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources, John McGinnis and David C. Reisman, Hackett Publishing Company, 2007.

Eschatology and the World of Image in Suhrawardi and His Commentators, Lambertus Willem Cornelis van Lit, Quaestiones Infnitae, 2014.

Greek Philosophers in the Arabic Tradition, Dimitri Gutas, Ashgate, 2001.

History of Islamic Philosophy, Henry Corbin, Liadain Sherrard (trans.), Kegan Paul, 1993.

History of Islamic Philosophy, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, Routledge, 1996.

Intellectual Traditions in Islam, Farhad Daftary (Ed), I.B. Tauris, 2000.

Islamic Humanism, Lenn E. Goodman, Oxford University Press, 2003.

Jewish and Islamic Philosophy: Crosspollinations in the Classic Age, Lenn E. Goodman, Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Mediaeval Ismaili History and Thought, Farhad Daftary (Ed), Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Philosophy in the Islamic World (a history of philosophy without any gaps), Peter Adamson, Oxford University, 2016.

Philosophy, Dogma, and the Impact of Greek Thought in Islam, Majid Fakhry, Ashgate/Variorum, 1994.

The Formative Period of Islamic Thought, William Montgomery Watt, Oneworld Oxford, 1998.

The Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives in the Abrahamic Traditions, Richard C. Taylor and Irfan Omar (Ed.), Marquette University Press, 2012.

The Routledge Companion to Islamic Philosophy, Richard C. Taylor and Luis Xavier Lopez-Farjeat (Ed.), Routledge 2015.

This Wisdom of the Mystic East: Suhrawardi and Platonic Orientalism, John Walbridge, SUNY Press, 2001.

CHAPTER 6.

Islamic Jurisprudence and Its Principles (Shariah)

Abstract. This chapter overall aims to suggest how sacred texts – the Quran and Sunnah – join with secular efforts – like reason (*Aql*) and customary traditions (*Urf*) – to shape Shariah law in Islam. Ignoring this crucial point causes a lack of constructive work among Muslims as well as misusing Shariah. It begins with the significance and the terminology of Shariah. Then, it discusses how the Quran and Sunnah inspired Muslims to form Shariah law. In order to understand Shariah law, it presents a clear and detailed articulation of two relevant sciences: jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence. Thus it studies how the Quran, Sunnah, reason and Islamic consensus are understood and applied to produce Shariah law. Next, the five schools of Shariah are examined: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Jafari (Shia) and how they apply to the two aforementioned sciences. It also gives a taste of many controversial laws in Shariah and shows how experts of Shariah structure them, the division of the world into the house of Islam and of the infidel; human rights; Jihad; Hudud (Islamic serious penalties); and apostasy. The chapter continues with a section of how to deal with modern values and rationality in forming Shariah law. It is followed by a segment concerning the abuse of Shariah which focuses on how Islamic piety has been abused during earlier Islam by Kharijites and how it has been revived currently by Islamist militias. This chapter concludes with a reference to the latest concerns about Shariah among Muslims. It also offers a chart on Islamic popular terms regarding the practices of Muslims.

Significance and Terminology

In this section, we are talking about a field of study in Islam that is among those things with which Muslim seminarians are very involved; that is part of the generic knowledge that all Muslims acquire as a part of growing up; that has the main impact of shaping Islamic practices; and that historically has created most Muslim scholars and the broader field of study in Islam. Though Shariah only represents one-third of Islam (with the rest comprising creed (*aqa'id*) and ethics) and only one-thirteenth of the verses of the Quran, it has a substantial influence on the development of the Muslim's identity. On the one hand, the Quran and Sunnah laid the foundations for the promotion of Shariah, and on the other hand daily life and ordinary demands caused its growth. A Muslim like others learns through dealing with usual subjects including private and public interests and goals. They think these concrete and particular affairs unite them with God more and more easily than philosophical contemplation or mystical meditation. Though Islam has created extraordinary scholars of philosophy (*Hikmah*), theology (*Kalam*), mysticism (Sufism) and ethics (*Akhlaq*) during the long journey of its civilization, the role of these other fields is not the same as the mujtahids and muftis (experts in Shariah law) when it comes to the public. Non-Sharia professionals used to adjust their ideas to Shariah; for example, Muslim muftis were accustomed to accuse Sufis of heresy through innovation (*Bid'ah*) because of their dervish dance. The Sufis tried to defend themselves by saying it is a good, not a bad, innovation and so it is allowed in Shariah¹. Also,

¹ This approach of Sufism illustrates a vital need within Islam. The dynamic of Sharia in terms of new emerging issues appears and functions between two ends: the Prophet's Hadith, "every [religious] innovation is a going astray" (al-Muslim, 2007, 2:385) and another hadith saying, "Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam will have the reward for that and the reward of those who do it after him, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest" (Ibid, 3:64). The distinction between good (*Hasana*) and evil (*Saiyya*) innovation occurred during an earlier period of Islam. A clear example is the second

recent Muslim reformists like al-Afghani in Egypt, Muhammad Iqbal in Pakistan, and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran who were interested in Islamic philosophy and Sufism, and were critical of the traditional muftis, they supported application of Shariah law and the spread of its dominance. Such that no reform in Islamic regions is conceivable without a serious consideration of Shariah. Moreover, ignoring the position and significance of Shariah leads to two more problems: the loss of a great opportunity in Islam for reform and the loss of a ground for local progress and inward development. These opportunities arise through thinking of the mixture of sacred and secular aspects in Shariah. It also is as much known among Westerners who often equate Islam with it. It is the science of Shariah, its significance, names, content, process of formulation, and finally the association of sacred and secular efforts. Let's begin with the terminology of the issue. There are three very significant terms used in Islamic context related to Islamic law and jurisprudence which we mention as follows:

A) *Shariah*. Shariah is an Arabic term rooted in "Sh-r-a" meaning the clear path which leads to a source of water. In the Quran it is used generally for all paths especially religious paths (42:21; 7:163). The Islamic holy text recognizes the different divine paths, namely Shariah, among faithful especially Abrahamic faiths as the divine plan to examine people how much they are striving in a race to spread all virtues (5:48). Generally and in broad usage,

caliph's tradition in instituting a new religious tradition in congregational prayer for non-obligatory prayer called *Salat at-Tarawih*. He described his innovation as a good innovation (*Nima Bid'at Hazih*) (al-Bukhari, 2002, 482). Clinging to one end leads to misuse of Shariah and extremism, regardless of the intention behind it. The later development articulates the idea of *Bid'ah* into five groups like the five forms of Islamic duties in terms of Sharia. The great commentator of *Sahih Muslim*, al-Nawawi (1233-1277) and the eminent Hanafi Jurist Ibn Abidin (1783-1839), both discussed the obligatory (*Wajib*) and advised (*Mandub*) innovation (*Bid'ah*), like respectively theological arguments and new forms of charity, along with prohibited ones (*Haram*) in Shariah (see, Ibn Abidin, 2003, 2:299; al-Nawawi, 1929, 6:155).

Shariah is equated with religion, which the Quran applied to that of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (42:13) not limiting it to Islam; However Muslims used to use the phrases the “Shariah of Moses” and the “Shariah of Jesus”. Consequently, just the last version of Shariah was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (45:18). In a technical and particular manner, Muslims reduce Shariah to religious laws, especially Islamic ones, so when they are talking about the practice or domination of Shariah mostly they mean applying Islamic laws and rules, namely the one-third part of Islam (the two other parts are doctrines and morals, as mentioned already).

B) *Fiqh and Faqih*. *Fiqh* is also an Arabic term that means deep understanding that is used in the Quranic verses encouraging all people to use their hearts to reach this level (7:179; 6: 69 & 98; 17:44 & 46; 63:3). Although at the first centuries of Islam, the term *Fiqh* used to be used for all aspects of Islamic life particularly calling Islamic doctrines as the Greater Understanding (*al-Fiqh al-Akbar*), gradually it became restricted to Islamic regulations and jurisprudence. Therefore, nowadays *Fiqh* means a science which is attempting to deduce Islamic regulations of actions from the relevant sources. The master of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) is called *Faqih* who must have great familiarity in advance with several sciences like of Arabic literature (since the language of the Quran and Sunnah is Arabic), of exegesis of the Quran (that includes around 500 verses about regulations), of *Hadith* (the narrations related to the Prophet or infallible Imams in Shia-Islam), of the learned men (who narrated the *Hadith*), of logic (to argue correctly), of social realities (to understand *Urf*/custom and usual norms), and of the principles of the Islamic jurisprudence that we will discuss later.

C) *Ijtihad and Mujtahid*. *Ijtihad* is an Arabic term that comes from “*Juhd*” meaning the high struggle that appears also in the form of *Jihad* an Islamic term referring to a great effort in the path of God.

Therefore *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning) echoes a profound process of effort in order to deduce Islamic laws. So, *Mujtahid*, one who has high expertise in this profession, is the same *Faqih*. There are plenty of the Quranic verses like (9:122; 16:43; 39:17-18; 2:168-170; 4:83) that are used by Muslim scholars to infer that acquiring *ijtihad* is an Islamic obligation and laypeople have to follow *mujtahid*. Another common title is *mufti* a Muslim professional who declares *Fatwa* (juristic opinion). *Fatwa* is an authoritative legal opinion deduced from Islamic sources and reveals two aspects: *Mufti/Mujtahid* scholarly effort, and divine will on particular actions. Different schools of law make use of multiple titles to refer to a Muslim jurist, such as *Mujtahid*, *Mufti*, and *Faqih*. These titles differ with respect to the degree of education and local culture. In particular, Shias refer to a *Mujtahid* as an *Ayatollah* (lit. sign of God); hence *Grand Ayatollah* (in Shia Muslims) means a *mujtahid* qualified to be followed by non-*mujtahids*.

As a result, *Shariah* mostly refers to Islamic laws and regulations, and this is the connection point between *Shariah* and *Fiqh* through *mufti/mujtahid* in its technical usage. Although more or less *Shariah* and *Fiqh* simultaneously parallel Islamic laws, there are some small differences between them. *Shariah* refers typically to the divine aspect of law while *fiqh* to the human aspect; it means *Shariah* has more of a holy mood than *fiqh* and this is why the term *Shariah* is more popular among Muslims. Subsequently it is assumed that there is nothing wrong in *Shariah*, but this is not the case with *fiqh*. Also, *Shariah* is above the time and space but *Fiqh* is subjected to the place, time, the personality of *faqih*, and other particulars. In addition, sometimes *Shariah* is used in a broader study than *fiqh* so that in *fiqh* only Islamic laws are mentioned but in *Shariah* some parts of doctrines and ethics are as well. Moreover, each Muslim has to follow God's *Shariah* but not to follow a *mujtahid's* *fiqh* if he is a *mujtahid*. Finally, although *Faqih*, *Mufti* and *Mujtahid* are the same in nature, namely revealing God's will

about particular actions, these play different roles in different fields for example textualism among Sunni-Salafi and Shia-Akhbari are critical of *ijtihad* but publish several fatwas based on the Quran and Sunnah.

Formation

All the above-mentioned terms refer to a key part of Islam that reflects one important feature of Islamic faith. Concentrating on three factors can help us to depict the significance, colorfulness, and position of regulations, laws, and jurisprudence in Islam.

First of all, there is not a special hierarchy of spiritual leaders and institutionalized system/order, like in Catholicism, to limit reaching the rank of *mufti/mujtahid/faqih* among a particular circle or people. After the Prophet Muhammad (and Infallible Imams regarding Shia), the way of *ijtihad/fiqh* is open to the public and anybody can methodically criticize other Islamic authorities attaining the position of a *mufti/faqih/mujtahid* through his talent and exertion². Of course, he has to acquire lots of substantial religious knowledge but the point is that this knowledge is not restricted to a special place or authority. He has to demonstrate his expertise with researching, authoring, teaching, and getting a reputation as a profound scholar among the people.

Second, I illustrated in the first part of the book, namely the theology section, the exclusive feature of Islam due to its unique miracle, a book, and detailed narrations of 23 years of the Prophet's life. As I explain more later the Quran came to the Prophet interpreting the particular events and needs of the people. Also, the

² The dominant school in the current Twelver Shia proudly promotes the idea that *ijtihad* is open to all qualified believers. The four established schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islam tended to emphasize that the door of *ijtihad* was closed with the works of the four founding scholars, but in actuality, *ijtihad* was continually taking place. Salafi and modernizing Muslims generally agree that new *ijtihad* is necessary, though they utilize different methodologies.

Prophet appeared for Muslims not merely as a spiritual leader and an inspiring existence toward the transcendental objects, but in addition as a human being with ordinary and personal demands who experiences with people's laughter, fears, hopes, and family issues, and thus manages daily affairs, faces problems, solves conflicts, overcomes unexpected circumstances, and waits for God's revealing. Subsequently, alongside doctrines and morals, the Islamic faith emerged with a large potency for laws and regulations. Again, not only did Muslims used to look at the Prophet's speech, behaviors and morals to explore the exemplified meaning of faith in the factual circumstances, but also the Quran encouraged them to a seek the resolution for their problems before the Prophet, saying, "And if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the messenger (4:59)". These lived experiences provided an intensive foundation for regulations all related to various aspects of life including individual and family, local and international community, cross-cultural communications, and even environment to inspire practicing the faith in every single moment of life in different situations. This fact, for instance, created plenty of classifications of Islamic laws so that there has never been a general agreement as to how the different issues of jurisprudence should be categorized. I would like to recount the following simple classification to have a big picture of the domains of Islamic regulations. It divides all the Islamic laws and legislations into five groups, under the headings of

1) "Worship and Affairs of Self-Perfection," including the issues of cleanliness, *Salat* (ritual prayer), *Sawm* (fasting), and *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca);

2) "Social Affairs," including *al-'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* (Exhortation to perform the good and prohibition of doing evil), *Hijab* (social clothing), *Mahram* and non-Mahram (lawful intimate sociability and unlawful intimate sociability), congregations, resolving social conflicts;

3) “Economic Affairs,” which includes *Zakat* (almsgiving), *Khums* (a fifth share), endowment, buying and selling, *Riba* (usury), investment, partnership, etc.;

4) “Family Affairs,” including marriage, divorce, wills and inheritance; and

5) “Political Affairs,” which includes arbitration, Caliphate and *Imamah*, Islamic punishments, *Shura* (counsel/parliament), *Jihad*, and so on.

Indeed, this holistic feature of Islamic laws created for Muslims the idea of a “comprehensive Shariah/Islamic law,” namely God has a law, regarding which each single action and behavior must be considered. The theological and even philosophical background, as we saw in Avicenna, promotes this idea. Accordingly, every single action, in personal areas like eating, dressing, and walking, and in social forms like gathering, celebrating, mourning, contracts, and so on can be considered under these five Islamic terms (see *Table 6*).

Table 6. Five categories of religious values in Islam

	Title	Reward	Punishment	Example
1	Wajib/Fardh ³ = obligation; have to do	Yes	Yes	Daily praying; respecting parents
2	Haram = Forbidden; must avoid	Yes	Yes	Alcohol drinking
3	Mustahab (Mandub/Sunnah) = prefer/better to do	Yes	No	Greetings; supererogatory charity
4	Makruh = prefer to avoid	Yes	No	Eating hot food
5	Mubah (Halal) = neutral (equal to do)	No	No	Sitting; walking

³ There is a very scholarly difference between Fardh and Wajib merely in the school of Abu Hanifah: the first is obligated because of certain proofs like Quranic verse about daily praying, the second is obligated because of supposing proofs like Hadith that is narrated by only an individual about killing an animal as a part of pilgrimage to Mecca. It continues only denying Fardh leaves a person out of Islam, not so with denying a Wajib.

So we have to discover that law regarding any new event even though these things did not exist in the past. Considering this point, similar to issues related to Islamic doctrines and creeds, some new questions, needs, and hesitations arose about some Islamic laws causing a professional study of the Islamic jurisprudence, its roots, method, and objectives.

Third, since the major source of Islamic faith is the Quran it seems that examining the meaning of the Quran was among the most significant causes to constitute *Fiqh* and Shariah law. To understand better, let's consider the following parameters:

1) The Quran appeared for Muslims as an everlasting miracle of God that anybody can approach, whenever and wherever they want. All Islamic denominations agree with the complete authority of the Quran, but are continuing, Quran is surely issued by God although some of its meanings are a matter of examination because it includes simultaneously universal/general (*Aam*) and particular/special (*Khas*), unconditioned (*Mutlaq*) and conditioned (*Muqayyad*), indicated (*Mubayyan*) and non-indicated (*Mujmal*), and abrogating (*Nasikh*) and abrogated (*Mansukh*) propositions.

2) The Quranic verse 7 chapter 3 explicitly divides its verses into two divisions: precise in meaning which are fundamental concepts of faith (*Muhkam*) and allegorical (*Mutashabih*) which merit a hermeneutic approach (*Ta'wil*). So, not only scholarly division in belief in particular-general, conditioned-unconditioned, and indicated-non-indicated ones, and historical events of abrogating-abrogated ones, but in addition the holy text recognizes clearly the complexity of the Quran demanding hermeneutic approach.

3) Islamic regulations took place gradually and more or less related to particular situations during 23 years of the Prophet's life. This gradation reflected in the Quran, for example prohibiting drinking alcohol happened in these three stages: ethical advice (2:219), then prohibiting when praying (4:43), and finally absolute prohibition (5:90). Muslims used to record the connection between

the particular circumstances and revelation under "*Shan-i Nuzol*" (the circumstances of revelation) to verify the particular context, time, place, or events in which or in response to which, particular verse/s of the Quran revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. This study inspired Muslims greatly to think of the relationship between Shariah and the demands of time and space.

Jurisprudence and its Principles

All these three factors, namely lack of specified authority, historical aspects of Islamic faith, and hermeneutic approach to the Quran and Sunnah, created Islamic fiqh/jurisprudence and more. I mean since Islam through its widespread laws is involved with different aspects of life, its followers identify them with Islamic features including the external ones. Thus, Islamic fiqh, which is involved with external appearances and gestures of Muslims becomes a very important part in Islamic civilization. However, this is the context within which the Islamic laws take their shape. It paved the path for ijihad, the thoughtful process of effort in order to deduce Islamic regulations from its sources regarding new situations and demands. To justify ijihad Muslims argued that the explicit statements (*Nass*) in the Quran and Sunnah are limited while the life events and facts for humanity are unlimited. Then by placing each fact and event in its position relative to Islamic law, Ijihad emerges. Muslims have to deduce new laws to fit new events and demands. This aspect highlights the humanistic aspect of Shariah: Shariah is divine law as long as a human effort can join God's will to its human potential. Clearly Shariah, in its nature, consists of two elements: the divine and the humanistic. For example, there are verses in the Quran commanding people to pray but it is the Muslim jurist (*mujtahid/mufti*) who deduces how the praying has to be done in various places and times. There are

several penal codes in Islamic law, but it is the jurist who decides how, when, where, and with which conditions they will impose.

Ijtihad, indeed, targets two purposes: inferring new law in terms of new emerging issues. Changing styles of life, building nation-states, and using new technology are a few examples of modern issues which mujtahids/muftis have to make decisions in accordance with Islamic law. Ijtihad also has to figure out how several already established laws in Islam may change. There are several Quranic verses enlightening how Islamic laws are shaped and can be changed. The verse 106 chapter 17 suggests how the Quran was revealed to the Prophet step by step. The same thing happened in terms of Islamic law. For instance, first the Quran contrasted “intoxicant” to “good provision” (16:67). Then it states the injuries of drinking are greater than its benefits (2:219). Next, it prohibited drinking when people go to prayer (4:43). Finally, it prohibited drinking at all (5:90). Similarly, the punishment for adultery changed (see 4:15; 24:2). Also, respecting consulting the Prophet privately, the verse 12 chapter 58 asks Muslims to pay charity in advance and the next verse removes the obligation (also c.f. chapter 8, verses 65-66 about how a situation changes the law). While these verses highlight the changeability of law during the Prophet’s time, there are several verses that illustrate that in hard times law changes with regards to acts of worship like fasting and ritual washing for prayer (*Tayammum*). It clarifies, these modifications occur when the original rule cannot be performed due to hard circumstances because God intended to make it easy for His servants to be thankful rather than putting them in hardship (2:185; 5:6; 22:78). This Quranic emphasis created the legal maxim, “hardship begets facility⁴” (Kamali, 2010, 148)⁵. This refers to the

⁴ It is called (*al-mashaqqatu tajlib al-taysir*) in Sunni Fiqh and (maxim of *Ushr wa Haraj*) in Shia Fiqh.

⁵ Shia also deduce the maxim of *Taqiyyah* (16:106) which allows the faithful to function or declare what is in contrast to his or her faith.

impact of time and space on the faithful statement and function (the different forms of performing *Hajj* for those who live around Mecca and those who come from far away also suggest the impact of place on worship, 2:196). The Quran credits various options in several circumstances as equal acts of worship. For example, feeding or clothing the poor is accounted as fasting in some cases (5:89). In addition, the Quran suggests how the will of people can shift several religious obligations/commands from one to another; for example, we can make a *Halal* thing (allowed) a *Haram* one (illegal) if we take an oath to avoid it. It was legal because of its nature and then became illegal because of my oath. Then if we pay expiation it becomes again *Halal* (66: 1-2). It is inspiring to realize that the religious value attached to an act depends on the context in which it takes place. Its value can vary depending on the particular circumstances of its occurrence. The flexibility of any change in value also proves how wrong the person who tries to issue a Fatwa (religious verdict) based on a single Hadith or even a Quranic verse without examining the internal and external context. All the above-mentioned notes, however, propose how the Quran encourages Muslims to examine and adjust Islamic law in terms of various times and spaces. The divine law appeared graded; it also recognizes human conditions and respects their wills as constructive matter⁶. The Quran, thus, inspires scholars to promote *ijtihad* through methodical inquiry dealing with texts and real life.

As I mentioned before, *ijtihad* is directly involved with two particular sciences: *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and the Principles

⁶ Many disputes among established jurists in Islam occurred based on spatial, temporal, and empirical observations. They deduced different values, such as *mustahab* or *haram*, for the same religious act, with a notable example being the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (Tareen, 2020, pp. 225-237). In modern times, many jurists add the interests of the *ummah*, or even the government, into factors that can alter the religious value of an act. A clear example is Ayatollah Khomeini's concept of the *wilayat al-faqih* and *Maslihat-i Nizam* (guardianship of the Islamic jurist and The Commonwealth of the System).

of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usul al-Fiqh*). The first one deduces Islamic regulations in regards to particular events and actions from its foundations which are the Quran, Sunnah, *Ijma* (consensus of Muslim Community) and *Qiyas* (deductive analogy) in Sunni-Islam⁷, the last of which is substituted by *Aql* (reasoning) in Shia-Islam. The second science, *Usul al-Fiqh*, studies the possibility, validity, methodology, and domains of these four sources regarding Islamic jurisprudence to provide a ground for Fiqh. Mostly the position of Usul al-Fiqh to Fiqh is considered as the position of logic to philosophy, i.e. the first one prepares the students for the second one and also gives scholars an exact tool to apply in the field of *Fiqh*.

Historically, at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, he was the final arbiter for any question in regard to Islamic law. There is a well-known quotation of the Prophet among Sunni-Islam said, the best peoples are my contemporaries, then those who come after them and finally those who come after them. The first generation are called *Sahabah* (companions), the second *Tabi'un* (the followers), and the last one *Tabi'un-i Tabi'un* (the followers of the followers). These are *Salaf* (the descendants) whom Salafists claim they are following. Consequently, in accordance with the Sunni, after the Prophet, companions and followers were the references whom majority of Muslims were following in issues related to laws. It seems the first time the title of *Fuqaha*, plural of *Faqih*, is used is for seven scholars of the Followers called "*Fuqaha Sab'a*" (seven jurisprudence scholars) in Medina. However, emergence of new generations facing new questions which originated from vast extension of Islam required regulations in regards to new matters. It laid the ground for several approaches toward jurisprudences of which historically four of them have survived among Sunni-Islam

⁷ Mu'tazila is a clear exception in classical Islam. It criticized both *Ijma* and *Qiyas* as the sources of deducting Islamic law. Qadhi Abu al-Jabbar reinterprets *Ijma* as the collection of right-believing people even if it is only one individual (Qadhi, 186-187; Amarraji, 2000, 98-100).

as will follow. I would like to provide some information on the Shia school of jurisprudence as well, so we have five schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Madhhab*). All of them acknowledge the Quran, Sunnah, *Ijma*, and Reason as the main sources of Islamic law. Let's see how the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence proceeds with exploring these sources before talking of their particularities.

The Quran. As the first source of Islam, the Quran includes around 500 verses related to religious regulations which equals one-thirteenth of the total. There are some books specified to these kinds of verses like *al-Tafsirat al-Ahmadiyyah* (The Exegeses of Shaykh Ahmad) in Sunni-Islam and *Ayat al-Ahkam* (The Verses Related to Regulations) in Shia-Islam. In the previous chapter, I discussed the position of the Quran to create issues of thinking and philosophizing among Muslims regarding the regulations. All Muslims but radical *Akhbaris* (who are limited to hadiths) believe in the authority of the Quranic statements using the valid methods. Akhbaris were a small Shia school at the late Safavid period who rejected using reasoning, *Ijma*, and referring to the Quran to achieve Islamic laws. They recognized Sunnah as the only source of laws without referring to a mujtahid. After a brief introduction to Sunnah, I will list several examinations in the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence about the Quranic verses related to regulation.

Sunnah. Sunnah (lit. tradition) in Islamic context means the speech, action, and confirmation of the infallible individual which is the Prophet for Sunni and the Prophet and Twelve Imams in Shia-Islam as I discussed in the first chapter. There is a division among Sunnah or Hadith regarding how many and how people reported it. All Muslims trust in *Mutawatir* (successive) narration which is conveyed by narrators so numerous and various that it is not conceivable that they have agreed upon a wrong one⁸. There is a big dispute among Muslims' schools of law about how many non-

⁸ It is said that Mu'tazila did not grade *Mutawatir* Hadiths believing they may have fake attributes to the Prophet (Amarraji, 2000, 99).

Mutawatir reports of the Prophet's (and Imams') life are valid. Could we trust a single narration that conducts a strong guess? Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) among Sunni and Akhbaris among Shia are overly accepting about this Sunnah and Abu Hanifah among Sunni is overly rejecting of such Hadith, that technically called *Khabar Vahid* or *Hadith-i Ahad* (a religious report that is narrated by only a few narrators) and majority of Sunni and Shia treat it with some criteria related to the reporter. Additionally, Muslims consider the Sunnah valid as long as it supports the Quranic idea. It means if there is a Sunnah saying something contradicting the Quranic view, it is not valid anymore. Scholars also discuss when there are contradictions among some narrations, how to treat them in harmonizing among them, preferring some to others, and so on.

There are common questions related to the Quran and Sunnah including the following that constitute a large section of the content of the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence:

1) The meaning of a word must be examined in five steps. First, what is the meaning of a word used in religious law in vocabulary, namely is it general or particular or common? Second, what is the meaning of the word in the context; is it clear (which in turn divides into four forms: apparent, obvious, detailed, and firm) or unclear (which in turn includes four kinds: hidden, challenging, complicated, and deceptive)? Third, how is it used in the statement, namely in literal, metaphoric, directly, or innuendo? Fourth, how does a Mujtahid reach the meaning through the expression, indication, implication, or inference? Fifth, how does a Mujtahid look at the word regarding its linguistic position, definitions, order, and rules? One Hanafi scholar arrived at 80 perspectives in evaluating each word in this way! Other following examinations criticize the issues within the statements (see, al-Shashi, 2003).

2) What do the religious commands and imperatives entail? It means obligatory (*Wajib*) or of being desirable (*Mustahab*), or of

neither? Do they imply immediate application or can they be done after a delay? Does it require repetition or only once?

3) What do the negative religious imperatives entail? It means forbidden (*Haram*) or being undesirable but allowed (*Makruh*) or both? For once or ever?

4) If there are general (*Aam*) and particular (*Khas*) laws, how must they be reconciled? What about unconditional (*Mutlaq*) and conditional (*Muqayyad*) law? The first group of law is related to individual people and to special professions, and the second is related to the nature of things like the essence of praying regardless of who is praying.

5) What is the relationship between spoken (*Mantuq*) and implied (*Maflhum*)? Spoken is the direct meaning of a speech but the implied is the logical signification. For instance, in saying if you participate in the course I will give you the book, it implies (1) if you are participating in the course you will receive the book, and (2) if you are not participating in the course you will not receive the book. The first is meaning and the second is implied.

6) What are the implications of a law? Does the introduction to an ordered thing also need to be ordered? What about the requirements of a forbidden, are they also forbidden? If we face a situation that requires at the same time to do two different things, for example praying or cleaning the mosque, which of them has the priority and what priority is implied here? Does an order include numbers warning about the opposite side? And what must a person do if he is in the situation that is involved in two opposing orders by the same action, for example praying in a particular place that is currently forbidden is acceptable because of prayer but not allowed because it happened in a non-allowed place (Mutahhari, 1380).

As has come to light, these are linguistic investigations that connect the principles of Jurisprudence to philosophical, especially linguistic approaches. This is why some scholars, in Sunni and Shia, believe that genuine Islamic philosophy is this because it grew up

in a pure Islamic context and deals with Islamic practical articles of faith.

Ijma (consensus). There is a well-known quotation of the Prophet saying, not all my people gather together in wrong. This brings the idea of *Ijma*, agreement of the Muslim community, among the four sources of Islamic laws. There is a dispute among Sunni and Shia about the foundation of validity of *Ijma*; is it based on itself or based on the fact that it discovers the idea of an infallible individual. Sunni follow the first premise and Shia the second one. Although there are several disagreements between Sunni and Shia, and among Sunni itself, more or less *Ijma* is considered as a one source of laws in Islam.

Aql (Reason). Alongside the Quran, Sunnah, and *Ijma'* Muslims advocate *Aql* (reason) as the fourth source of Islamic laws. They discuss two kinds of issues under the authority of reason in Shariah law: the implications of reason and rational independencies (*Mustaqillat Aqliyyah*). The first one explores the rational implications of religious regulations. For example, there is a clear order in the Quran to perform daily praying (*Salat*) but rationally one infers from this order the necessity of devoting time for daily prayer. The second one explores the position of reason to obligate people under the name of God. Since here reason infers the obligations independently they are called the rational independencies. This issue is based on two ideas: (1) There are some objective goods and evils that can be comprehended independently of reason. This idea is entirely related to the theological ideas we discussed earlier. (2) There is a parallel between rational and religious order and judgments. Since God is the head of reasoners, the creator of reasons, and the same universal intellect, He does not judge in opposition to reason at all. What is certainly good to reason is *Mustahab* in Shariah, better is *Wajib*, tolerated is *Makruh*, and evil is *Haram* regarding the body or soul, the individual or society, worldly or otherworldly. On the other hand, because the reason believes in

pursuing social interests (*Maslahat/Istislah*) in religious judgments so it tries to discover it in following religious order. It is worth mentioning, although there is a fully rationalistic color, all the subjects approach through common sense and are based on customary tradition (*Urf*) in Usul al-Fiqh. In Sunni context reason as the fourth source of Islamic jurisprudence is mostly equaled with *Qiyas* which means the process of deductive analogy. Based on *Qiyas* the jurist can reach the judgment of a recent event through examining the similar one which is in a clear value in Islam. It works through applying four essential elements: *Asl* (what has a clear value in Islam), *Far'a* (what is looking for its value through similarity with *Asl*), *Hukm* (the religious value), and *Illat* (the similarity between *Asl* and *Far'a*).

Muslim scholars also developed the principles of application when there is not a clear deduction of the Quran, Sunnah, *Ijma*, and reason as follows. These principles can apply to all sections of Islamic law:

1) The principle of Exemption (*Bara'at*) means we are released from our obligation and we have no duty. It performs when we have no idea about the obligation and previous state of the subject like whether this food is legal or illegal. In such cases of doubt, it is legal.

2) The principle of Precaution (*Ihtiyat*) means we must act according to precaution. It performs when we have some clear idea about the obligation and we can perform both things like there are two bottles and we know one of them is alcohol so we have to avoid both.

3) The principle of Option (*takhyyir*) means we have the option to choose one of two things, whichever we like. It performs when we have some unclear idea about the obligation but cannot perform both like we have to go forward and know not which path to take. So we are allowed to opt for one.

4) The principle of Presumption of Continuity (*Istishab*) meaning believing in continuity of the previous state or presuming continuation of the status quo ante (the certainty is not lost due to doubt). It performs when we have no idea about the obligation but we know the previous state of the subject like whether our hands are still clean or they became dirty.

5) The principle of Prohibiting the Devices (*Sadd al-Dhara'i*) meaning that what is not usually *Haram* (unlawful) per se but since it leads to a *Haram* so it regards *Haram*⁹. Because the extension of this principle can face society with hardship, (which there is an axiom in Islam: Difficulty necessitates facilitation or Shariah comes to make things easy not hard (2:185)), it is restricted to conditions like the device in most cases leads to harm (*Mafsidah*) or has to be specified regarding its harmful aspect and limited so that when that harmful aspect is removed the principle is removed. For example it is not allowed to sell army tools when the situation is not clear.

6) The principle of Preference something good (*Istihsan*) meaning leaving a deductive analogy for when it is likely to lead to unfair result; jurist preference in bridging the gap between law and social realities¹⁰. For example, a person who cannot manage his financial affairs because of immaturity of mind (*Safih*) is not allowed to have fiscal dealing by himself including devotion and charity. If he wills to spend some of his wealth on charity, his will must be done although his independent will generally is not accepted, because there is benefit for both him and others.

⁹ This term is not common in Shia Principles of Jurisprudence. They discuss the same issue under the name of relation between *Wajib* or *Haram* and its Preliminaries (*Muqaddimah-i Wajib*).

¹⁰ Some consider *Istihsan* equality in Islamic law because it is inspired by the principle of fairness and conscience as well as it authorizes departure from a rule of positive law when its enforcement leads to unfair results (Kamali, 2003,321). Generally, traditional Shia jurisprudence does not recognize *Istihsan*; however, it is now more open to using it for matters related to the public good of the ummah.

7) The principle of Public Interests (*Masalih Mursalah*) means considering the public interests which are not mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the process of legislation especially in regards to new issues. They can be considered as religious issues as long as they are presented to the common intellects they agree with. Since it can change Shariah to a conventional law, it is conditioned to civil intersection (*Mu'amilat*), necessary, objective, and certain interests which are not limited to a specific group.

8) The principle of Shariah Objectives (*Maqasid al-Shariah*) meaning the objectives which Shariah is following through each single law. Traditionally it is thought that Shariah comes to preserve and protect (1) faith; because the human is a religious creature in nature (30:30) there are several laws to clear the connection between people with God and also to themselves; (2) life, since humans are God's vicegerent in the earth (2:30) the life of an individual is considered as a life of all people (5:32), there are plenty of laws in regards to marriage, eating, drinking, inhabitation, and what harm a community; (3) property and wealth, the Quran recognizes property as the means to maintain life (4:5) as well as a decoration from God to balance between worldly and otherworldly joys (3:14) so encouraging *Halal* business avoiding theft, fraud, treason, and squandering; (4) reason and intellect as what humans are honored with (8:22), obligation of reasoning, and warning what harms the intellect like intoxicants, superstitions, dreams, sorcery, and alcohol drinking; (5) family and lineage recognizing marriage as the sign of God (30:21) so establishing family laws and prohibiting sins which harm public innocence and personal honor, like accusing. In some Hadiths, the faithful's reputation is equaled with the reputation of God's holy house in Mecca. These five are all called *Kulliyat al-Khmas* (the five universals) because they cover the reason for whole parts of Shariah. Imam al-Shatibi (d. 1388) and its unique book "*al-Muwafaqaat fi Usul al-Shariah*" (The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law) are well-known for leading the way

in new intellectual conversations among scholars. Al-Shatibi develops his philosophy based on these four fundamentals premises about objectives of Shariah: (1) happiness for the whole of humanity; (2) makes sense for public; (3) the religious obligations must fit human limitations and capacities; and (4) Shariah is in consistency with rational customs of the people.

The outcomes of all the above-mentioned examinations alongside several principles in Islamic law (*Fiqh*) produce a very broad domain to determine the Islamic view concerning sacred and secular issues; they tend to be conservative about *Ibadat* the acts of worshiping (which are characterized by God, lead to God's mercy, has to be done just for the sake of Him, and is inviolable) by applying the principle of Precaution, and to be very liberal about *Mu'amilat wa Adat* or civil and social activities (which are based on reason and custom, leading to easiness of life, and can be tolerated) by applying the principle of Exemption.

The Five Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence

The scholars of Usul Fiqh study the four above-mentioned sources and the practical principles, then Fiqh applies them on the concrete and particular subjects and so the Islamic laws shape. However, it is broadly believed that schools of law remained in the four following legal systems called *Madhhab* among Sunni-Islam which means *ijtihad* is closed or at least is not running as the main stream. Then later scholars of jurisprudence mostly developed their ideas within these schools following one of them. Let's take a glance briefly on them alongside the Shia school of jurisprudence as well to explore how these five surviving schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Madhhab*) apply the practical principles:

Hanafi. This school is named after Abu Hanifah (699-767) whose roots come from Kabul and was born in Kufa studied before Imam Baqir (676-743) and Imam Sadiq (702-765) the fifth and sixth

Imams of Shia-Islam. Imam Abu Hanifah was the most liberal and rational Imam among the four leaders of Shariah schools. In this context, liberal means openness to secular achievements and concerns, while rational means that the texts should be interpreted in a common-sense way rather than taking only their literal meaning at the moment of revelation. Abu Hanifah is known as the founder of the people of opinion (*Ahl al-Ra'y*) which is opposite to the people of Hadith. Although the use of analogical reasoning (*Qiyas*) preceded him, Abu Hanifah is recognized as the one who systematized this idea. Also he developed *Istihsan* (juristic preference, to deem something good) that is in opposition to *Qiyas* and tries to detach a case from its similar examining in its particular position. There is a respect for Urf (the customs of the local population) as much as it does not contradict the clear text as well as a respect for the clear statement of the Companions. His school is considered the oldest and largest school of jurisprudence among Sunni-Islam. There is a story narrated by Abu al-Hassan Ash'ari illustrating how truly liberal Abu Hanifah was. Once a questioner asked him about whether a person could still be considered faithful even though believing that God has prohibited eating pork is nevertheless not sure if this common kind of pork is the forbidden one. Abu Hanifah confirmed his faithfulness. The Questioner asked about a person who believes God obligated Muslims to do pilgrimage to Mecca but he is not sure about whether this is the exact place. Again the answer was in favor of leniency. The questioner asked if it is permissible to believe in the Prophet Muhammad but to be unsure about his race. Also, Abu Hanifah considered that person faithful (al-Ashari, 1990, 221). We can understand the excellence of his liberal thought when we compare it with many religious verdicts which excommunicate many contemporary Muslim intellectuals for criticizing some historical features or stereotypes within Islam.

Maliki. This school is named after Imam Malik bin Anas (711-795) who was born in Medina and studied before Imam Sadiq as well. Believing in statements of the companions, Qiyas, Istihsan and Urf, he added Masalih Mursalah (considering the public interest which is not mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah in the process of legislation especially in regards to new issues), and Sadd al-Dhara'i (prohibiting what usually leads to evil). Imam Malik tried by providing a flexible school of law to make a connection between Islamic law and public interest and surrounding facts in Muslims life.

Shafi'i. This school is named after Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767-820) who was born in Gaza City and studied before Imam Malik. He recognized Qiyas and the statement of the companions rejecting the validity of *Masalih Mursalah* also called *Istislah* (the consideration of public interests or human welfare in the preferring of one rule over another). He has a book on verses of the Quran on laws and is the first Muslim scholar who wrote a separate book on *Usul al-Fiqh*. The Sunni schools of jurisprudence are renowned among two extreme borders: the people of Hijaz who were also the people of Hadith devoted to the appearance of the Quran, Sunnah, and the statements of the companions; the people of Iraq who were also the people of opinion and analogical reasoning devoted to reasoning and causes on the religious regulations. Imam al-Shafi'i stood at the middle step. He examined the social contracts and business considering merely the formal part (Abd ar-Razzaq, 2011).

Hanbali. This school is named after Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) who was born in Baghdad and is celebrated among Salafi people as "Shaykh al-Islam" (the scholar of Islam) and recognized as a father of very orthodox scholars advocating restriction to Hadiths and Sunnah alone¹¹. Limiting to the Quran, Sunnah, and

¹¹ There are two ironic points: first, although Imam Hanbal was born and died in Baghdad, his school of thought and jurisprudence, namely "the people of

statement of the companions, and respecting all Hadiths, Hanbal did not recognize rational efforts to discover the true Islamic law. He did not try to deal scholarly with the different hypothetical situations which are necessary for establishing a school of law, saying religious statements and Fatwa are restricted to present facts instead of imaginary situations. However, he applied restricted rules regarding praying and open rules regarding business among people. Imam Hanbal expanded the judgments about business and social contracts to their objectives and results as well.

Ja'fari. This school is named after Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (702-765) who was a descendent of Imam Ali, the first Imam of Shia, from his father's side and Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Sunni, from his mother's side and was born in Medina. He is the sixth Imam of Shia-Islam and Twelver-Shia's jurisprudence is known for his name although they are inspired by the Hadiths of all Imams. In contrast to Four Schools of law in Sunni, Shia-Islam proudly announces the way to a new deduction of Islamic laws (*ijtihad*) is open and can be seen through a continual emergence of scholars everywhere. However, some critics believe the current Shia mujtahids simply replicate the views of their predecessors, and the openness of *ijtihad* is quite shallow. Yet "*Ja'fari*" here only refers to the origin of the school because Imam Sadiq is considered as an infallible Imam rather than a Faqih. Jafari School is limited to Quran, Sunnah, Ijma, reason, and using four practical principles. The first four above-mentioned divisions of role of reason in Shariah, namely the principles of exemption, precaution, option, and presumption of continuity, were taken from Shia's explanation. They are known in Shia context as "practical principles" and can be applied by any Muslim regarding a specific subject without limiting to Mujtahid in

Hadith," is paralleled by the people of Hijaz (west of present-day Saudi Arabia). Second, Salafists and Wahhabists who proclaim themselves as the followers of Imam Hanbal, more or less, do not follow his way of deduction in Islamic law by limiting themselves to several Hadiths.

regards to canon law. Though Shia does not utilize the other practical applications mentioned above directly, they can be found in some parts of jurisprudence. There is also a large section about the rational independencies alongside detailed debate on rational implications of imperatives.

However, by distinguishing between the authorized great scholars in institutionalized *Madrasahs* such as of Cairo, Deobandi, Qum, and Najaf and between those who promulgate religious laws wherever, we come across many commonalities among the majority of Muslims among the first group in regards to social and cultural affairs.

Some Examples of Islamic Laws

Let us now turn to some social issues in Islamic “Fiqh” (the science of Shariah) that are controversial from a Western point of view. I mention them because I believe they are very much misunderstood by Westerners and misused by radical Muslims who do not follow mainstream Shariah. I do not support the proposed ideas; instead, I stand against oversimplification, stereotypes, and derogatory dialogue, which prevents a proper understanding of the issue and impedes progress towards a beneficial outcome. Then, I would like to discuss them in the classical context of Shariah.

- *Dar al-Kufr and Dar al-Islam*. Islamic law used to divide the world into two divisions: *Dar al-Islam* (the house of Islam) referring to a region of which the majority are Muslims in opposition to *Dar al-Kur* (the house of infidel) in which the majority are non-Muslims. Only if there is a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims *Dar al-Harb* (the house of fighting) emerges to illustrate the difference. According to Abu Hanifa, a third state of territory emerged during times of peace between the House of Islam and the House of War. This third state was referred to as the House of Truce (*Dar al-Ahd*)

or the House of Peace (*Dar al-Sulh*). It was an intermediate category which could continue by renewing contracts (Hillenbrand, 2015, 224-5). The main reason for the division comes from the Islamic emphasis on solidarity among Muslims (*Ummah*) and applying some Islamic laws like markets (it is not necessary to examine whether it is *Halal* in Islamic market), immigration (Muslims who live in *Dar al-Kufr* without permission to practice Islamic duties must immigrate to *Dar al-Islam*), and a found orphan (in *Dar al-Islam* it means s/he is a Muslim). Also Muslims must define the boundaries of *Dar al-Islam* wherever and make sure that non-Muslim habitants live safely. Regarding non-Muslim government, Abu Hanifah points out safety for Muslims as the main feature of *Dar al-Islam*. Under the Hanafi jurisprudence, a Muslim country could only make the transition from *Dar al-Islam* (house of Islam) to *Dar al-Harb* (house of war) and thus become a proper battlefield for Jihad, if three conditions were met: (1) if all Islamic rules were replaced with infidel rules; (2) if that Islamic land became adjacent the lawful battlefield (the land of war); and (3) if there is no safety for Muslims and compliant non-Muslims (Ibn Abidin, 6:288-9). Clearly this kind of change does not seem most likely in current times and also with the rise of secular regimes that sharp distinction between the two houses disappears (Muntazeri, 1387, 71-73). However, the growth of nation-states and countries in the Islamic world from one side and overcoming secular states in non-Muslim countries from the other side makes this division radically obsolete. Only greatly politicized theorists explain three more characteristics for *Dar al-Islam* namely having Islamic government, applying Islamic laws without limitation, and safety for all Muslims. Although some Islamic fundamentalists use these terms, the irony is that all extremist Muslim régimes who are advocating Islamic radicalism and militancy under name of *Dar al-Islam* and *Jihad* treat with other Muslims with different nationalities as strangers disregarding Islamic law about Muslim co-identity; this

demonstrates plainly the effect of ideology and politicization under the name of faith. Additionally, there are plenty of verses in the Quran acknowledging the faith of people of the scriptures (Jewish and Christians and, most believe, Zoroastrians) (3:75 & 113-115 & 199) especially Christians ones (5:82).

- *Human Rights*. The Arabic term for rights is *Haq* which also means truth and ultimate reality and is a name of God (22:6 & 62; 23:116; 31:30; 34:6). According to Islam, God, the ultimate reality, granted every single thing its correct portion (20:50; 87:2-3) and created people in the best form (95:4) to reach their completion. God thus bestowed on people two significant assets: a perfect nature and a clear orientation in religion. These two support the intellectual and voluntary efforts to acquire the useful (*Maslaha*) and avoid the harmful (*Mafsadah*) in the desired life. Rights therefore come from nature and are associated with responsibility (*Taklif*). This is actualized by the desired perfection through following reason and revelation. Given this, rights originate from God's creation, namely human nature, orienting to help humanity in reaching perfection.

So rights must be respected and actualized through the association of intellect and revelation. It means people can learn about the helpful and harmful to their perfection in these three ways: individual reason, collective intellect and God's revelation. For example, the first brings one to fundamental concepts, the second to conventional laws, and the last to religious concerns; these three together shape the Islamic perspective on human rights. The Quran expresses the dignity and honor of humanity regardless of gender, race, color, language, locations, time, and religion (17:70). Right and responsibility are associated in this context, then the Quran continues that even God puts some obligations and responsibility on Himself to be merciful to all (6:54) and helpful for the faithful (30:47) which is why Muslim theologians and philosophers used to say God has obligations. All the above-

mentioned points lay a foundation for human rights in Islam although there is a difference with what is called human rights in Western culture including the women's rights. The set of human rights in Islam is related to justice and means giving each his due and rights. Men and women represent different parts of God's plan to complete humanity (2:187; 30:21) so they have the same dignity and honor. There are only some differences in regards to issues like *Diyya* (Blood money), heritage, divorce, some testimonies in court which is replaced in the case of *Nafaqah* (husband has to provide the life expenses of his wife and children) or *Mahr* (dowry; a required payment promised by groom to the bride at the time of marriage) or can be changed by some conditions and regarded by social and cultural climax. Islam had very progressive laws for its time on women and a flexibility to reread its law, and it currently is still very family-oriented aiming to build a faithful, optimistic, and creative community; the law for this community has to try balancing between rights and responsibility, harmony between material and spiritual demands, and accord between private and public affairs in mutual reflections between reason and revelation.

One more controversial topic connected to freedom is conversion from Islam called *Irtidad* (back-warding). There are several verses in the Quran condemning *Irtidad* but not appointing a special punishment (2:217; 5:54; 47:25). The last verse distinguishes between looking for the truth and fighting based on malice and obstinacy while the convert returns from a clear path. Verse 72 chapter 3 exposes the political plot behind it; they became Muslims and then after a while their faith weakened and they abandoned it in order to weaken Muslims' ambitions. So although its punishment is based on political plot and social activities disrespecting Islamic faith, it is flexible due to its root in *Hudud*, as we will discuss later. Otherwise there is no punishment for intellectual conversion.

I would like to complete this idea by pointing out the case of *Sabb al-Nabi* (profanity to a prophet) which has a capital punishment in Islam. There is a verse in the Quran warning Muslims to do no profanity against other faithful in order that they do not do it toward Islam (6:108). Also believing in the sameness of and testifying in the Prophets before the Prophet Muhammad especially Abraham, Moses, and Jesus is an indispensable part of Islamic faith so without it the person is not a Muslim (for example see 2:4 & 285, chapter 21). Then, in regards to Islamic law, Muslims cannot tolerate insulting and profanation to any single prophet equaling it with insulting themselves. Although the quality of punishment can be examined, the sensitivity and comprehensiveness of the issue has to be more understood. Regarding Shariah law in an intercultural era, they must also consider social background and cultural literature determining what profanity, criticism and so on are. Something might be viewed as insulting from Muslim's view but not from another view. While non-Muslims have to understand the socio-political aspect of law, Shariah scholars must reread the law in terms of ethical virtues as well. The Quran many times states that all prophets, no exception, have faced many attacks of profanity and mocking (14:11; 36:30; 43:7) and asks the Prophet to be patient with that (20:130; 30:60; 38:17; 50:39; 73:10). The Prophet himself during his power in Medina exhibited not only a great patience but also a great mercy to people like Abd-Allah ibn Ubay (Ibn Salul) who insulted the Prophet publicly (see the story behind Quranic verses 63:9-11). As the leader of the hypocrites and among most vicious enemies in Medina he insulted the Prophet saying to his people, "fatten [strengthen] your dog and it eats you. By God, when we return to Medina, the honorable will expel the disgraceful," the latter referring to the Prophet. Later when Ibn Salul was dying with the same attitude, the Prophet went to his deathbed to visit him. He asked the Prophet to give him his shirt, wrap his body with it, and

pray for him. The Prophet did this despite some disagreement with his companion (see story behind verses 80 and 84 chapter 9)¹². The Prophet exhibited the same mercifulness with his insulting enemies when he got power in Mecca. While some of his companions, proud of victory, were advertising “today is for revenge” he commanded replacing this motto with “today is for mercy” and fired the officer who promoted that slogan (Ibn Asakir, 2000, 23:454; and see, al-Bukhari, 2002, 1048)

- *Jihad*. 29 verses of the Quran discuss the issue of Jihad, literally exertion, in a broad meaning from a spiritual and financial to common behaviors among different prophets (3:146), to fighting against enemies. The first meaning created core concept of Islamic ethic *Jihad-i Nafs* (exertion to reform one’s own self¹³) a great encouragement toward a self-purification against our own mind’s temptations toward evils (2:218; 12:53; 22:78; 29:6). The last one comes with focus on defining or at most thwarting a demonic plan (2:190-191 & 193; 4:75 & 90; 9:12-13&36; 49:19¹⁴) otherwise the Quran addresses dealing with non-Muslims based on ethical virtues (60:8-

¹² This article examines how both Muslim and western intellectuals are compromising their respective traditions when engaging with the tragic case of Shorli Abde. Sayed Hassan Akhalq, “The Source of the Problem: Both Islam and the West Have Forgotten Their Roots (A Philosophical Study of the Charlie Hebdo Shooting),” in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Villanova University, Vol. 25, No. 3, 74-84.

¹³ The Prophet Muhammad greeted a group of triumphant Muslims returning from battle, saying, “Welcome to the people who have conquered the lesser Jihad (al-jihad al-asghar), yet still face the greater Jihad (al-jihad al-akabr)!” Confused by the greeting, the group asked him to explain. He responded, “The greater Jihad is the effort to reform oneself” (al-Kulayni, 5:12).

¹⁴ It seems the verse 4:75 is widely misused by militants against non-Muslims. This verse encourages Muslims to fight against oppressors to Islamic community. First, it is not related to spreading faith at all. Second, it obligates Muslims to take care of their community who are oppressed; namely the social duty of Muslims from one side and the practical and ongoing oppression based on discrimination; third, considering several verses in the Quran which show very high respect to the social contract and promoting peace among nations, it can be understood as advocating nonviolence including diplomacy, law, and civility.

9) (Akhlaq, 2013, 83-106). In addition, it is obvious that Islam prefers the exertion regarding the own self and mind to the exertion regarding the external enemies because losing fight before an external enemy is considered a victory (9:52) but losing self is of course the greatest loss (59:19). However, there are three further terms related to fighting in the Quran, they are *Qital* (fighting), *Harb* (removing), and *Ghazwa* (combating) that provide the literature of *Jihad* in Islamic laws. Historically the Prophet was involved with several fights during his life in Medina but Muslims believed all of them happened in order to define rather than to attack; the Prophet was accustomed to not begin the war. There are Quranic verses saying that the Prophet Muhammad cannot enforce people toward religion and that it is impossible (2:256; 18:29; 76:29; 81:21-22; 109:6). Regarding Islamic law's exploration and related to fighting non-Muslim enemies (because it is not allowed that two Muslims fight each other) however, Shia jurists explicitly divide *Jihad* into two sections: *Difa'i* (defensive) and *Ibtida'i* (initial) saying the second is not acceptable at the absence of infallible Imam. Regarding Imam Abu Hanifah's opinion, *Jihad* applies when these three conditions gather in one case: Shariah is abandoned, the region is connected to *Dar al-Kufr*, and there is no more safety for people of the region. He concentrates on safety meaning if there is a peaceful life between Muslim people and non-Muslim government there is no reason for *Jihad*¹⁵. To understand, there is a big concern about public safety in Islam. The Quran entitled God as *Mu'min* (who brings safety) (59:23) and calls giving food and providing safety as the most

¹⁵ Recently a very well done research was produced on *Jihad* by a great Iranian mujtahid using a traditional method. Ayatollah Salehi Najafabadi examining many distinguished jurists like Imam Shafei, Ibn Homam Hanafi, and Ayatullah Khui, in both Sunni and Shia, argues that portrayals of *Jihad* in the Quran and Sunnah contradict the major jurists' legal works. The Quran and Sunnah required Muslims to have cordial relations with the unbelievers and to be kind toward the harmless. But the jurists suggested that the initial form of *Jihad* is designed to impose Islam on non-believers through military forces, even if they are non-hostile and pose no threat (See Salehi Najafabadi, 2012).

bounties of God to people (106:4) so historically theologians have not been positive to rebellion and revolution against corrupt governments instead suggesting negotiation and soft reformation saying safety is the name of God and we are not allowed to remove it. Accordingly, we can understand why the harshest punishment in the Quran is to a person who spread fear among the people (*Yuharebuna*) which is exactly what is called terrorism; it is "execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the hereafter" (5:33). So what is called holy war is backed with Western mass media and politicization rather than Islamic faith.

- *Hudud*: *Hudud* comes from the Arabic term *Hadd* meaning limitation, used in the Quran in order to show restrictions God made to keep both the family and society safe, faithful and moral (2:187 & 229 & 230; 4:13-14; 9:97&112; 58:4; 65:1). *Hudud* (prescribed punishment) is a part of four categories of penalties in Islamic penal law. Others are (1) *Qisas* (retaliation) meaning the principle of eye for an eye; (2) *Diyya* (Blood money) means the compensation paid to the heirs of a victim; (3) *Ta'azir* (denouncing) meaning punishment determined at the discretion of the judge.

However, *Hudud* refers to the class of big penalties like flogging, amputation, capital punishment through crucifixion and stoning, they are fixed for certain crimes including fornication and adultery (*Zina*) (24:2), theft (*Sariqa*) (5:38), false accusation of *Zina* (*Qazf*) (24:4), Drinking alcohol (*Shurb*) (Sunnah), *Irtidad/Riddah* (Apostasy) (Sunnah), and *Muharib* (Terrorism) and Highway robbery (*Qat'a al-Tariq*) (5:33) which are done by a mature, knowledgeable, free person who is aware that they are prohibited in Islam. In traditional Islamic legal systems, there are very accurate norms of proof that have to be met if these punishments are to be applied. Also, there is a famous and significant principle in Fiqh saying, "leave *Hudud* when an unclear situation surrounds the case"

based on several *hadiths* (al-Hanafi al-Hamawi, 1985, 1:379). This includes all psycho-socio-politico-economic conditions. For example, seeing adultery by four faithful adults who have seen sexual intercourse clearly by their eye and testify at the same time, otherwise the witnesses will be punished because of false accusations. Are the faithful allowed to look directly and immediately at sexual intercourse? Do adulterers perform it before the eye of faithful people? These norms remind us of some Muslim jurists saying that Hudud prevents people from performing these crimes because there is a big risk of immense punishment; it has a more preventative function rather than a corrective one. Some Muslim reformers consider them appropriate within the historical and social contexts in which they were revealed and inappropriate nowadays; these rules merely indicate they are such heinous sins encouraging Muslims to eradicate the cause of crimes. Also, some traditional Shia Scholars believe that these punishments are applicable only in the time of the Prophet and infallible Imam's government.

Irtidad (apostasy): the Arabic term for apostasy is *Irtidad/Riddah* literally meaning returning back and implying going backwards after progress. This is what the Quran means; this turning backward causes his previous progress goes astray (2:217). The orthodox jurisprudence considers a person who was previously Muslim and then left Islam as *Murtad* (Apostate) who faces capital punishment, except for women in Hanafi School¹⁶. There is no Quranic verse for that punishment; it is all based on Sunnah. The Quranic verse 47, chapter 25, implies that this outrageous affront is due to clear hostility to truth while they already know the truth. "Being sure about truthfulness of Islam", the grand Ayatollah Muntazeri argues, "and then leaving it is an essential part of apostasy law in Shariah." However, being certain that apostasy has

¹⁶ It seems that mainstream jurisprudence in Shia School is extremist since they do not accept repentance for most cases.

truly taken place is not possible usually on account of the apostate's subjectivity. Also the jurisprudential axiom "leave Hudud when there is something unclear" encourages Muslims to not apply it (Muntazeri, 1387, 131). However, this law per se suggests understanding which background created it. The story behind many verses of the Quran regarding this law, says there were some non-Muslims who wanted to convert in Islam and then leave Islam in order to make Muslims doubtful of their faith (al-Suyuti, 2002, 75; Imami, 1385, 99). During the formation of Islam at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, leaving Islam meant joining enemies, polytheists, who were at war with Muslims and thus it was very politically charged. This background alongside the Quranic clear statement "no compulsion in religion" (2:255), points out that the extreme law for apostasy in Islam is related to socio-politico-historical aspects rather than free-conscientious and free will. Therefore it requires that modern Muslim jurists review it in terms of new socio-political phenomena.

How to Deal with Shariah Today

Once again, Muslims more or less grow up with Shariah regulation in their family and daily affairs and find it is a part of their identity. The divine aspect of Shariah backed with the historical fact of the Quran and the Prophet's life inspires Muslims to look at Shariah as the unparalleled source of salvation, safety, and happiness. Here I intentionally emphasize safety because the Quran calls God as "*Mu'min*" (who gives safety) (59:23) and profound scholars in Islam consider attack to safety as the attack to God's name.

Regarding worship, prayer, and private deeds or status, there is no hesitation about respect for Shariah but the question emerges about some harsh public punishments or public affairs. With regard to the public aspects of Shariah, one must attend to its secular aspect

which starts with a linguistic and rational investigation of the Principles of Jurisprudence. Now, I would like to list some suggestions for those who care about modern and human values like human and women rights and democracy as to how to treat Shariah in Islam.

First of all we have to know that Shariah is an association of sacred and secular efforts; if a little traffic event can be understood differently in the court though it is very concrete and surrounded by actual conditions, how can we say Shariah law is fixed in regards to a particular case. The long way from Islamic regulation to imposing the penal code in the 21st century cannot be passed without a hard struggle by humanity as it is affected by too many factors. This is only a simple example, moreover there is a huge discussion among different schools of jurisprudence in Islam regarding how human exertion merits God's will. As a result, Shariah or Islamic law is not completely divine as well as not fully humanistic, while it ensures us of God's satisfaction because Islam allows ijthihad (to deduce Islamic law from its authorized sources).

Second, awareness of these two aspects can encourage us to leave the holistic approach toward Shariah as it consists of stable and changeable elements. Muslims cannot ignore the Shariah fully because it is God's will, but also they cannot ignore the human portion in its understanding. There is always a negotiation between the divine aspect which is absolute and sacred, and the human aspect which is conditioned and secular. Although the scholarship of Muslim jurists is highly appreciated, a devoted Muslim is obligated to engage in the interpretation of Sharia through asking thoughtful questions and making humane critiques. However, a Muslim is not fulfilling their duty to their religion if they do not use critical reasoning when engaging with Muslim jurists. Foster respect for scholars and dedication to the mufti, not at the expense

of conscientiousness, genuine curiosity, and human dignity¹⁷. Non-Muslims are not allowed to insult Shariah because it is a part of Muslims' identity, but they can share in it as promoting the humanistic aspect, and reminding Muslims of Shariah's objectives as well. They also can enrich Shariah in deducing new laws and adjusting them in accordance with the current state of humanity through calling the attention of muftis to some social, historical and linguistic points.

Third, there is a large gap between Muslims and non-Muslims that looks at Shariah as black and white. The Muslim has to keep in mind that although Shariah is divine it is interpreted by humans, and to comprehend it within its formative components. Actually, there is a big need to understand each other instead of judging; understanding is the first vital step toward resolution. Shariah solves a lot of conflicts among communities, connects very different relationships, builds a bond and solidarity among isolated peoples, encourages the faithful to moral values, educates rural areas, eases life among familiars, and inspires humanity to pursue the truth through every little thing. It can be misused and abused like all other laws and so it is a common task not to allow hate and fear in the name of God.

Fourth, there is a Qur'anic verse saying the guided and blessed people are those who listen to every idea and accept the best one (39:17-18). Explicitly it gives confidence to Muslims to listen to others and to follow the best thought. Verses like this lay a field for dialogue among civilizations and provide Muslims the chance to compare themselves with others. There is also a big need to sit down

¹⁷ In this chapter, I explore how a practicing Muslim can engage responsibly and constructively with modern life, and how doing so can create a vibrant and meaningful community in a Western context. "Being a Muslim in Global Times: Taqlid, Jihad and Hijra in the Quranic Hermeneutic," in *Community and Tradition in Global Times*, Edited by Denys Kiryukhin, (Washington DC.: RVP), 157-178, 2021.

together and try to know each other's potentials and challenges. For example, Sufis are accustomed to soften several hard positions in regard to Shariah issues like treating with non-Muslims in terms of the moral values of Islam and the spiritual states of humanity. There are assets among other parts of Islam to bring Muslims and non-Muslims close together and these must be considered. Furthermore, for example, the penalty for insulting the Prophet in Islam is not limited to Muhammad, but includes Moses and Jesus as well. Muslims are not allowed to profane other faithful (6:108) when they want their own holiness to remain respected. In addition, Islamic law recognizes the difference between insulting and criticizing. All this supports the effort to harmonize Shariah and human rights' interests.

Fifth, except for the Prophets (and the infallible Imams in Shia-Islam) there is no unimpeachable individual in Islam. The narrations related to the Prophet are also matters of discussion. So Muslims distinguish Islam and Muslims, opening the way to criticism. Muslims feel honor and identity with Shariah, but not with all who practice or even preach Shariah. It is usual among them to criticize or question some laws issued in the name of Islam referring constantly to the objectives of Shariah. We already learned that Shariah suggests the following five matters as its ultimate goals and objectives, all of which have to be protected through every law: life, intellect, property, faith, and family. Discussion of each of these objectives can happen based on common sense which in turn builds a field of talk of human responsibility toward peace, communication, progress, safety, happiness, and integrity. However, if Muslims feel that critics are concerned about reducing human suffering, of course they are welcomed. The big conflict among advocates of human or women's rights with Muslims emerges when they find that their counterparts aim to deconstruct their fundamental values instead of solving an ongoing problem. Reasonably, they are on guard against attacks so it is the responsibility of their counterparts to find

a common language. There is only one source of ultimate truth for Muslims and that is God. So, they cannot be empathetic with who appear as the new savers of humanity, but under the name of human or women rights and democracy. It is the duty of advocates of these values to show their commitment is to reducing human suffering rather than destroying their authorities.

Sixth, although because of its nature Islam has some political aspects, it is a great religion trying to connect people to the experience of the holy in their daily life. Muslims are greatly suffering from the politicization of Islam and a politicized approach to the faith. To take a Quranic verse far from its context or out of its background causes distance among humanity and insulting their holinesses. However, it is the common responsibility of Muslims and non-Muslims to stand for human aspects of Shariah as well as not allow non professionals in Shariah to talk on behalf of Shariah.

I would like to conclude this section with a quotation of al-Afghani, the great ground-breaker of all recent Islamic movements, including Islamists, socialists, and liberalists. He used to say, I have seen Islam in Western countries and Muslims in Islamic regions admiring their organization, hard work, honesty, and responsibility. It includes wisdom that concentrates on common human values to work together and make the world safer, peaceful, happy, and connected to the truth. I am sure if there is a will to understand Shariah there is a way toward peaceful co-existence that suggests one more source of knowledge.

Abuse of Shariah

The Prophet used to say there are two professions within Islam if they are reformed all his people are reformed and if they are corrupt all are corrupted. These two groups consist of religious experts (*Fuqaha* or *Ulama*) and political leaders (Ibn Abd al-Bir, 1994, 641; Mutahhari, 1385, 9:121). Since politics and religion are linked in

Islam, it can be clearly seen that there is a potential for religion to be abused by those faithful who have a political agenda. Also the Quran condemns pre-Islam faithful for uncritically following their religious leaders (9:31 & 3:64, also see 2:44 & 79; 3:19, 78 & 187; 9:34). It, in addition, means there is always a chance for religious leaders to be corrupted which greatly afflicts the people. The history of Islam, like that of several other religions, suggests many of them. They were condemned mostly because of their abusing Shariah for their personal interest and ambitions. I would like to discuss another form of abusing Shariah which is very common in our era. It is abusing Shariah by very pious people who are devoted totally to Islam for the sake of God and they commit to a process of proving their dedication (*Ikhlas*) to God. The Kharijites sect, opposing both Sunni and Shia denominations, in earlier Islam represented this quality. Regarding socio-political features it is known for its ideas of excommunication and immigration, and I will discuss these two in the next chapter. In terms of the private aspect of faith they look very pious and devoted which is my main focus here. Ibn Abbas (619-687), the great companion of the Prophet and one of the early Quran exegete, described them as following, “For long prostration [in praying], their foreheads get ulcers and their hands get like camels’ knees; they wear old fashion clothes and are steady and determined” (Ibn Abd Rabbuh al-Andulisi, 1983, 2:233). Ali ibn Abitalib who fought against them, as the righteous Caliph after they rose up in armed rebellion against the governor, said,

“They have been collected from all sides and picked up from every pack. They need to be taught the tenets (of Islam), disciplined, instructed, trained, supervised and led by the hand. They are neither *Muhajirun* (immigrants from Mecca), nor *Ansar* (helpers of Medina) nor those who made their dwellings in the abode (in Medina) and in belief.” (Ali ibn Abi Talib, 2004, 357)

Indeed, the core idea of the Kharijites sight came from this Quranic verse, “the judgment is only God’s” (6:57) which limits

“*Hukm*,” referring to judgment, decision, and command, to God. Kharijites meant if God makes the decision, then people are not allowed to make the decision and Ali’s support of making decisions in peace-building during the civil war between Muslims was illegal because it replaced God with humanity. Thus Ali said to them,

“A true statement to which a false meaning is attributed. It is true that the verdict lies but with Allah, but these people say that (the function of) governance is only for Allah. The fact is that there is no escape for people from rulers, good or bad. The faithful persons perform (good) acts in his rule while the unfaithful enjoys (worldly) benefits in it. During the rule, God would carry everything to an end. Through the ruler tax is collected, the enemy is fought, roadways are protected and the right of the weak is taken from the strong till the virtuous enjoys peace and allowed protection from (the oppression of) the wicked.” (Ali ibn AbiTalib, 2004, 82; also see 182-183)

These points feature three characteristics for these pious people: lacking full education in Shariah, causing the confusion by utilizing religious ideas and statements, and oversimplifying Islam to one aspect or doctrine. However there is no doubt that they were pious, honest, and Muslims. This is why this was said about them, “one who seeks right but does not find it, is not like one who seeks wrong and finds it” (Ibid, 94). However, Ali warned how harmful and unhealthy is this version of Islam when he addressed them by saying “Certainly you [*Kharijites*] are the most evil of all persons and are those whom Satan has put on his lines and thrown out into his wayless land.” (Ibid, 184)

This historical phenomenon, in fact, points out a hidden spirit and symbol rather than merely a historical fact. This spirit has not disappeared; in fact it continually reappears and revives among Muslims very many times. For a while it appears very clear and strongly as the great Hanafi mufti Ibn Abidin, who equated Wahhabism with Kharijites (Ibn Abidin, 2003, 6:413). Often it is hidden under various religious trends as Murteza Mutahhari

suggests how scripturalism in both Sunni and Shia, during different epochs, is influenced by Kharijite's spirit (Mutahhari, 1390, 128-155). Of course, Shariah or Islamic practice is the main focus of scriptural trends for pious Muslims who want to prove their dedication in faith through practice, rather than meditation.

Given that, there is a sharp turning back to this abuse of Shariah in current Islam which affects both Muslims and non-Muslims across the world. It's becoming part of the Western life to be shocked by the news relating to Shariah. Rise of extremist movements among Muslims worldwide who claim to be practicing Shariah is spreading from the Middle East to East Asia and Northern Africa. The Taliban on the news, *Daesh (ISIS)* in Syria and Iraq, *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, and the imposition of the Shariah penal code by the government of Brunei all feed two extreme views; the first, being that the majority of Muslims believe that the ideology of groups such as ISIS are incorrect in an Islamic context. Nevertheless, they also add that ISIS's ideas and concerns are grounded on political dealings in national and international contexts that cannot be ignored; and the second most common answer is an anti-Islamic view saying that the ideas of ISIS are actually an unveiling of the true nature of Islam. These ideas are backed with several sacred quotations and laws taken from the Quran and Sunnah. Those who hold this latter opinion point out that these extremist groups describe themselves as "true Muslims" highlighting several Islamic terms and concepts such as Jihad and Ummah. To touch the issue one must consider the potential of Shariah to be misunderstood and abused. As a matter of fact, several factors need to be looked at as a result of ISIS being created: notably the weakness of Syrian and Iraqi central power; dominant tribal fights; an uneducated population; international as well as regional interests; the funding of international forces supplied to groups who opposed Assad; the dictatorship of *Ba'ath* parties in Iraq and Syria; and, the conflictual relationship between the Sunni and the Shia extremists in some

areas. However it seems there is a potential within Shariah as well to make the situation more tragic. What is this potential and how can it be counteracted? In fact, being connected with daily and petty affairs plays the role of a double edged sword for Shariah; it is useful to connect each single moment of life with the clear will of God but it is also harmful to reduce Shariah as a means to justify socio-political affairs of Muslims. The big responsibility of Muslim scholars is to clarify Shariah to such an extent that it is effectively prevented from being misused. They have to stand for justified use of Shariah. When Shariah is reduced to a socio-political ideology it is an explicit shift from its objectives and big abuse. Shariah is a guide to the water of life, inner and outer peace through free will and spiritual self-consciousness not a map or plan of engineering the society whose free will or consciousness are not valid. Although Shariah divides people into faithful and unfaithful it recognizes the human dignity in a whole by addressing them with "O people" instead of merely "O faithful."¹⁸

In reducing Shariah to ideology, faith changes to a restricted regulation for political aim which divides people into two sections: one side those who are in the camp of that ideology and the other side anyone who doesn't share that ideology thus creating enemies. Ideology is directed to practice while the Islamic Shariah is directed to awareness and meditation; this is why intellect and maturity are the primary conditions to discuss Shariah. Since ideologues greatly desire to immediately implement practice, they ignore the contemplation of faith. They turn what should be a source of peace, love, and faith, into a device of hate and violence. Shariah always encourages the faithful to attempt to get closer to God. When the faithful pray or fast, any kind of worship, they must make an intention that they are doing this in order to get closer to God

¹⁸ I personally prefer "faith" to "belief" in translation of "*Iman*" because "Belief" equates Arabic tern "A-q-d"; the point is faith (*Iman*) mostly refers to a flexible and sophisticated trust while the "belief" (*Itiqad*) refers to restricted and tight cling.

(*Niyyat Qurbat ilallah*). The holders of ideology, in contrast, think they already reached the truth and so only want to imply it regardless how much this implication costs. Since a religious ideology is focused on implication, the primary problem of the absence of methodic and scholarly study, work, and investigation emerges. Many times the ideologues selectively choose Quranic verses, occasional Hadiths, quotations from a rightful Caliph, and ideas of Muslim scholars merely to justify their plan of social engineering. They are used to support their beliefs, but in doing so they ignore the context and turn it into a statement which is no longer of the Quran or Hadith. It takes it out of history and eliminates any analysis. Instead of the Quran informing practice, practice informs the Quran. Like an aggressive army who picks selected things from a specific area, the ideological Shariah is picky and committed to its non-Islamic presuppositions. The ideologues simply place some religious concepts in their pockets and use them easily to accuse others and justify themselves. To have an idea which fosters rapid implementation, religious ideologues have no time to contemplate the history of Islamic civilization and intellectual scholarship. This sort of thing makes them confused. Reducing Shariah to ideology leads to the oversimplification of Islam.

Oversimplifying Islam through ideological Shariah has three aspects in my view: over-highlighting some aspects of Shariah at expense of other parts (it makes Shariah a cartoon); deducing Shariah law out of its institutionalized models (five schools which have passed many historical examinations); and separating Shariah from other scholarships in Islam. An example of the first aspect being how several Muslims often simplify Islam to the simplest form of just pure enthusiasm and passion. Shariah in this thought is nothing but Jihad. For example, when I was serving as a dean of a university, I was shocked once I learned from a chief officer of police in Farah of Afghanistan who fought against the Taliban that many

Taliban who fight under the name of Islam and perform Jihad, do not know even basic Islamic prayer. These ideologues make harsh protests against some insult to the Prophet Muhammad but not regarding Jesus and Moses who are considered by the same Shariah law. The ideological Shariah overlooks the history of Islam and its intellectual journey. Lack of historical knowledge leads to separation of facts and to an unhealthy level of self-confidence. All Islamic scholars can agree that Quranic verses were revealed to the Prophet connected to specific conditions, events and times. Inferring a universal rule from a particular fact requires skills and knowledge that is related to history. Islam encourages building self-confidence by learning from others and being open to other proposed arguments and perspectives (39:17-18). Muslims who lack historical approaches and dialogue will not only lose a great asset and scholarly method, but as seen can fall into totalitarianism. Regarding the third aspect, unfortunately, many Muslim traditional jurists, with Shariah-law background, belittle Islamic philosophy and Sufism accusing them of not being integral and original parts of Islam. On the one hand, Sufis and philosophers often degrade Islamic jurisprudence and Shariah-law, claiming Shariah law is a secondary and superficial part of Islam which is far from the spirit of Islam. On the other hand, jurists focus on the outer aspect of Islam and Sufis as well as Philosophers concentrate on the inner aspect of Islam. Both groups invalidate secular investigations and fail to see the human rationality of the other side. Sufism and Islamic philosophy acknowledge rationality and secular discovery through hermeneutics (in the Islamic context, *Ta'wil*) and the Islamic Shariah does through the Principles of Jurisprudence (*Usul al-Fiqh*) which emphasizes common sense and mores (*Urf*). Then both groups by disrespecting the richness of each branch of knowledge reduce Islam to their interests; the former reduces faith to restricted law and revelation to literal text while the latter reduces it to transcendental and supernatural realms; therefore, from two

opposite extremes they provide the same result - superstition. Recently, new religious thinkers have joined this debate and belittle both of these groups based on their reductionist methods. In the Islamist reading they simplify Islam to their political ideology. Moreover, in the reformist and liberal interpretation they have tried in vain to apply the developments that occurred overtime in Christianity to Islam without respect for the unique historical and cultural context. They think of Islam without Shariah law which is not Islam anymore. Finally, in the worst form - the Salafi version, they freeze Islam to a literal interpretation limited to the first generations from the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Sadly, all of the above mentioned groups consider themselves the purest form of Islam and view the others as bastardizations. All these approaches forget that the only permanent Islamic miracle of the Prophet is a book, the Quran. Having a written book as the miracle and bedrock of faith presupposes and promotes education, dialogue and co-understanding as both a way of faith and life.

To overcome this abuse of Shariah, first and foremost Muslims must present a clear definition of Islamic faith which associates piety with rational understanding as it appeared in emerging theology in Islam. Second, they have to consider faith within its various aspects; I mean as much as Shariah is part of Islamic faith, so are ethics, spirituality, theology and philosophy as well. Reducing Islam to Shariah which is associated with many daily affairs is making a cartoon of Islam. Moreover, the interpretation of Shariah must be done by scholars who have already proven their expertise in the field through a clear process of study, research and teachings. There is a great need shifting from popularity to skillfulness in Shariah. As long as Islam is not reducible to the Shariah aspect, the Shariah law is not deducible through only one Hadith or even a verse of the Quran. Whoever presents a meta-narrative or grand-judgment based on a single quotation, historical event, hadith, or even a verse of the Quran is

not a scholar of Shariah. The religious decree and statement (*Fatwa*) which didn't pass linguistic investigations, examinations for the related verses and Hadiths, jurisprudential methods and hermeneutic approach cannot be viewed as a valid opinion in Shariah. Hadiths have to be understood with respect to the Quran and its relations with other Hadiths, spirit of Islam (objectives of Shariah), and in its own socio-historical formation. Muslim scholars must raise their voice against abuse of Shariah and examine the potential within Shariah to get misused.

Fredrick Nietzsche, a German philosopher, has wisdom that warns us directly when we are facing abusers of Shariah. He says when you are going to fight against a demon you should be careful you don't gain affection for their tools and methods so that you become a second demon. In fighting against excommunicators one should be aware of not going through the same hell although through opposite ends: saying extremist campaigners of Shariah are not "true" Muslims. We have to be brave enough to accept there is potential in Shariah to be misused and then take responsibility to reinterpret it. Finally, why do the true scholars of Shariah not look for the other potentials in religion to promote peace and co-existence as much as abusers of Shariah make a loud voice to spread hate and war? If there are Quranic verses that relate to Jihad it should also be mentioned that there are counterbalancing Quranic verses such as the one that considers killing an innocent individual equal to killing all of humanity (5:32). While extremists aim to find evidence justifying their negative approach in a matter that is far from the aims of Shariah, why have we not attempted to highlight evidence to support a genuine and positive approach with respect to Shariah? Doubtless there is an extremely significant need to highlight human aspect of Shariah and illustrate how much God cares about His people? This is not the world of judgment and evaluation; otherwise the Judgment Day is meaningless. A person is not a righteous individual as long as he or she leaves people in

order to serve God. We have to return to the clear Islamic Shariah point that it is possible God forgives His rights over the person (like worship) but for sure He does not forgive the rights of people over one another. Shariah explicitly distinguishes sins related to God and sins related to people. Traditionally in Islam *Haq al-Nas* (the right of peoples) is more significant than the *Haq Allah* (the right of God); a Muslim who violates people is worse than a Muslim who violates God. In contrast the extremists neglect reason, people and achievements throughout the history of Islamic civilization because in their belief these things violate God's revelation. This is why these groups do not recognize philosophy, Sufism, and even rational ethics in an Islamic context as respectful achievements. However, turning toward human values based on Shariah advice can make a great contribution in peaceful Islam and illustrate how violent Islam is abusing Shariah.

Last Glance

It is worth mentioning that there are great scholars of principles of Islamic law who were also involved with Islamic philosophy and theology. For example Ghazzali and Averroes both have very important books on the principles of Fiqh, respectively *al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usul* (The Extract of the Principles) and *Bidayat al-Mujtahid* (Mujtahid's Primer). Whoever studies Shia's *Usul al-Fiqh* discussion of vocalization (*Alfaz*) or rational independencies can see philosophical investigations clearly. So, it is not fair to claim there is a big gap between Islamic Shariah and theological and philosophical studies. The similarity between philosophical studies and the principle of Islamic jurisprudence caused several scholars to make identification between them. Indeed, they are similar except the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence do not deal with the fundamental questions of life, world, and being which are to be considered by philosophy and

defined therein. Its basic questions are related to religious laws and duties. Regarding *Fiqh*, it seems the Shia point is more concerned with acts of worship and personal status while the Sunni is more concerned with politics and social duties because of their socio-political surrounding conditions.

In my opinion there is a unique harmony and association between the sacred and the secular in Islamic law; the sanctification of human effort and the secularization of divine regulations. What is reached by a rational process (*Ijtihad*) is a divine law because it happened within a divine field dealing with divine regulations. It attempts to not disrespect humans before the transcendental God and not neglect God in order to respect the human's limitations and weaknesses. Indeed it illustrates a distinctive attempt to enlarge the human but not as much as to get God's position and to glorify God but not so that He ignores humans. God's revelation and words are limited but human reason, needs, and efforts are unlimited; God and humans take care of each other like the position of primary and secondary, branching and return to the guideline principles.

There are different definitions of secularism. I am bearing in mind the following two to make clear what I mean by a mixture of secular and sacred issues in Islamic law: first and positive, make an idea or decision based on pure rationality and second and negative, make a judgment regardless of religious preference. Doubtless, elements like rational independencies and objectives of Shariah highlight the link between first meaning of secularism and Islamic law, and like *Urf*, *Istihsan*, and *Masalih Mursalah* bring to light the connection between second meaning and Islam. Moreover, the personal background, educational climate, theological and philosophical interests, and presupposed propositions of mujtahid/mufti play such a big role that Muslims used to say, the Fatwa of a rustic has a smell of village and the Fatwa of an urban setting has a

smell of city, Arab's one has an Arabic flavor and *Ajam*, Non-Arab, has *Ajam's* flavor (Mutahhari, 1374, 20/182; Tareen, 2020, pp. 233).

In addition, the fundamental concept of the possibility of being wrong (*Takhtea*) outlines to the highest degree the humanistic element of Islamic Shariah. Regarding the outcome of *Ijtihad* two extreme ideas among scholars of Shariah emerged: *Takhtea* (possible wrong) and *Taswib* (complete right). The former concept states that *Mujtahid* in the process of deducing Shariah law might reach a wrong idea but he still is rewarded by God because of his scientific struggle. The latter idea holds that *Mujtahid* always reaches the right conclusion because the divine command does not determine many things to one insofar as God considers scholarly *Fatwa*, with its diversity, as His command. The point is that both ideas recognize human effort to reach the divine law and consider the outcome valid before God, no matter what it is. This point, thus, consists of two truly significant aspects: recognition of diversity in Islamic law as well as recognition of the human aspect which, without doubt, is affected by mujtahid's knowledge, skills, and circumstances. From two opposite poles, they come to the same core: humanizing Shariah and making room for pluralism.

As our body, soul, thought, emotions and decisions are linked together, Islamic law does not examine the human as an isolated being and in a separated situation considering him in the context. There is a Quranic verse saying, "the prayer restrains from indecency and unjust deeds" (29:45) and the Muslim refers to outward and inward evil; outward because it is unlawful if, for example, the prayer performs *Salat* (prayer) while dressed with clothes having a single piece of clothing illegally obtained; inward evil because it connects the person to God directly. Accordingly, humans as permanent beings cannot be treated as temporary beings regarding the legislation. It reminds us to regard different aspects of humanity in legislation.

Additionally, although Islamic law has a very humanistic mood, with full trust in God's revelation and laws, it frees regulations from slavery of people and things, self, and superstition. Psychologically, there is an awareness of absolute freedom and satisfaction with God's will while the Muslim mujtahid/mufti deals with daily affairs and interest. Also, the five values of Islamic law from obligatory (*Wajib*) to non-allowed (*Haram*) connect each single moment of life to God in various forms. It breaks the glasses of white/black on the eyes of the faithful to not merely see each thing as either obligation or freedom, allowed and non-allowed. It thus helps faithful exercising variety of options including forbidden, not-preferred, allowed, preferred, and obligated.

Lastly, the schools of Islamic law depict the colorfulness of religious laws in one faith. Interestingly, there is a very profound institutionalized form of the power of the people to choose. The various paths toward Islamic practice are open to the public and they make decisions of who should be followed especially in the Shia context of *Ijtihad*.

To conclude this topic, I will look at the current situation of Shariah study and position among various Muslim groups.

1) Any exploration in Islamic culture cannot be completed without looking at Shariah and institutions related thereto. There is a new trend in Muslim intellectualism discussing why Shariah does not develop relative to some other Islamic aspects namely doctrines and ethics and some other non-Islamic sciences like sociology, psychology, economics, and politics. Then it regards the objectives of Shariah in a broader field. Although the historical, social, and modern hermeneutical approaches toward some issues in Shariah created some conflict between updated scholars and traditional scholars of Shariah, Islamic law is going to learn how to treat new questions, new perspectives, and new cultural trends in order to discover greater aspects of permanent religion.

2) There are two main streams within contemporary Islam: practicing Shariah in its simple shape without getting the help of institutionalized scholarship, and spreading Shariah through its institutionalized body in Islam. The first trend is approached by Salafism¹⁹ and Islamist movements aiming at establishment of a new Islamic Community. It focuses on very practical aspects of Shariah using mostly the Quran by Islamists (who insist on seeing modern circumstances through politics) and Sunnah by Salafism (who are not concerned with the implications of time and space). The second trend is approached by institutionalized scholasticism in Egypt, India, Iraq, and Iran respecting the current Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh aiming to protect Muslims' faith.

3) Although historically the Sunni were involved with the idea "closeness of Ijtihad," which confines ijtiḥād to four founders of law schools, and Shia with "the openness of Ijtihad", which encourages new scholars to deduce Islamic law by their own exertion, indeed, there were some new approaches toward ijtiḥād in Sunni context and limiting ijtiḥād to several restricted issues and method in Shia. However, there is a big quest to reestablish ijtiḥād among Sunni and Shia intellectualism, renewing the principles and sections in order to fit new needs and epistemological atmosphere. Of course there are some potential shifts from classic Islamic laws like *Ahkam Imza'i* (confirmed laws) showing the significance of the collective intellect adjusting Islamic law with the modern world that has been considered.

4) With the grand Imam of al-Azhar Mahmud Shaltut's (1893-1963) recognition of Shia as the fifth school of Islamic law, there are emerging comparative approaches among Sunni and Shia

¹⁹ Although it seems that Salafists who follow Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledge ijtiḥād, their approach equals deconstruction of established schools of Islamic jurisprudence because of the lack of fundamental principles and clear methods to develop Islamic faith. Indeed, they advocate simplicity of Islam based on mere Sunnah without any concern to meet reason's right.

learning from each other and making Muslims closer. I think Shia can learn from socio-political developments in Sunni's *Fiqh* and Sunni can learn more about rational independencies from Shia's *Usul*. Also, facing new circumstances and looking for new answers about modern ideas of human rights, women's rights, Islamic banking, relation to non-Muslims, cross-cultural dialogues, parliamentary system, democracy, separation of powers, and so on can offer a common place for dialogue between them.

5) There are tendencies advocating new *ijtihad* through completely new styles. For example Muhammad Iqbal from Lahore (1877-1938) supports the new *ijtihad* with the parliaments and Muhammad Abed al-Jabiri (1936-2010) from Morocco with new meaning of public interests linked to social and political freedom, and free speech and job and inhabitation. There are ideas about *Ijtihad Mutajazzi* (the specified *ijtihad*) in Shia seminaries to promote professional *ijtihad* so that each of several mujtahids becomes an expert in a highly specialized field to be leader in that field only. If the norms in Shariah are binding to *Urf* and *Addah* (habit) then the ordinary language and psychology of the masses cannot be ignored and in turn, can lead to a change in the fundamental concept of humanity in the contemporary era.

6) The al-Shatibi's concept of the objectives of Shariah is extremely celebrated by many modern scholars as a safe haven to centralize human reason in the making of Islamic law. This idea allows them to think of a version of Islamic Shariah in harmony with necessary conditions of modernity and globalization. It also caused a very sophisticated discussion to relate it to both fundamental concepts of traditional approaches toward Shariah, like the notion of *Ghayb* (unseen) or principle of *Ta'at* (full submission to God) as well as the modern concepts like human and women rights. It also gives a new life to classical discussion of the differences among *Sabab* (cause), *Illat* (reason), and *Hikmah* (wisdom) in terms of Shariah commands. While the traditional

scholars apply the objectives of Shariah in a very narrow way, the modern minds use it for two different scopes: by extremists to justify their anti-rational behaviors like suicide bombing and by liberals to overlook many Islamic social issues like *Hijab* (dressing codes for women in Shariah). However, it is very substantive because it shapes the future of Muslims by forcing them to come to terms with the relationship between reason and revelation.

Suggested Resources

An Introduction to Islamic Law, Wael B. Hallaq, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

And God Knows the Soldiers: The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses, Khaled M. Abou El Fadl, University Press of America, 2001.

Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century, Rudolph Peters, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Disagreements of the Jurists, A Manual of Islamic Legal Theory, al-Qadi al-Numan, New York University, 2017

Encyclopedia of Islamic Law: A Compendium of the Major Schools, Allamah Muhammad Jawad Mughniyyah, Laleh Bakhtiar (Trans.), Kazi Publication, 1996.

Islam and Belief: At Home with Religious Freedom, Abdullah Saeed, Zephyr Institute, 2014.

Islam and Human Rights: Advocacy for Social Change in Local Context, foreword by Abdullahi An-Naim, Ed by Mashood Baderin, Mahmood Monshipouri, Lynn Welchman, and Shadi Mokhtari, Global Media Publications, 2006.

Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Barbara Freyer Stowasser (Ed.), AltaMira Press, 2004.

Law and Power in the Islamic World, Sami Zubaida, I.B. Tauris, 2003.

Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic law, A systems Approach, Jasser Auda, The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008

Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Muhammad Hashim Kamali, The Islamic Texts Society, 2003.

Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law, Khaled Abou El Fadl, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Studies in Modern Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, Oussama Arabi, Kluwer Law International, 2001.

Sharia Law, Questions and Answers, Muhammad Hashim Kamali, Oneworld Oxford, 2017.

The Formation of Islamic Law, Wael B. Hallaq, Ashgate, 2004.

The Justice of Islam: Comparative Perspectives on Islamic Law and Society, Lawrence Rosen, Oxford University Press, 2000.

The Making of Shia Ayatollahs, Sayed Hassan Akhlaq, Rowman & Littlefield, 2023.

The Renewal of Islamic Law, Chibli Mallat, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

The Rule of Law in the Middle East and Islamic World: Human Rights and the Judicial Process, Eugene Cotran and Mai Yamani (Ed.). I.B. Tauris, 2000.

The Spirit of Islamic Law, Bernard G. Weiss, University of Georgia Press, 1998.

The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam, Fatima Mernissi, Trans. by Mary Jo Lakeland, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1991.

The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change, Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Princeton University Press, 2007.

CHAPTER 7.

Islamic Politics (Siyasah)

Abstract. After a terminological examination, the chapter mentions three parameters which connect Islam with politics: the Quran, the Sunnah, and several Islamic laws. Then, it studies the formation of political thought in Islam through philosophical and theological approaches. Although the Sunnis discuss the qualities of the caliphate in jurisprudence and Shia the qualities of Imams in theology, over time both turned from their origins. Examining the evolution of political theory within Islam it shows how in Sunni, exemplified by Imam Ghazzali, it was adopted in order to justify what was happening rather than theorizing about the ideal of politics in Islam. It legitimizes the caliph no matter how he got power whether through the precedent's will, Islamic council, people's alliance, or a rebellion. For the Shia there was also a big shift from theology to jurisprudence. In articulating modern approaches toward politics in Islam, the chapter discusses al-Afghani's contribution, Shia's constitutionalism, Ali Abd al-Raziq's secularism, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic state, Egyptian debate between pro-Islamic and pro-secular governmental structures, Iqbal's spiritual democracy, Khomeini's guardianship of the Islamic Jurist, Muntazeri's version of the guardianship of the Islamic jurist, and Haeri's secularism. Therefore, it probes the mass excommunication in three political phenomena: Kharijites, Wahhabism, and the new Islamist militias. It shows how they seed the sectarian agenda and feed the civil wars within Islam. It concludes with a reflection of how the politics within Islam appears to foster a dynamic coalition between the sacred and the secular, the ideal and the real, and thus offers both opportunities and challenges.

Background and Terminology

In the preceding sections of my book, specifically the Islamic Shariah section, I briefly mentioned political issues with respect to Islamic law and the notion of “comprehensive Shariah.” These two political Islamic blueprints had a direct impact on expanding Islamic regulation and public affairs with regard to political powers and systems. At the start of this chapter, we will discuss three foundational points that shaped Islamic political theory. They are Quranic verses, the Sunnah (the Prophet’s life and behaviors), and Islamic commandments and laws.

Quranic Verses: When referring to Islamic government, generally Muslims adhere to the prophetic style of political leadership under three Arabic terms: Caliphate, Imamate, and *Wilayat* (guardianship), all terms that are applied to the prophets in the Quran. The first term is a term primarily used concerning Sunni-Islamic leadership, the latter is used primarily for Shia-Islamic government and the last one is a fundamental concept, a matter of controversy between Sunni and Shia-Islam. *Caliphate* means the successorship (of the Prophet) while *Wilayat* means the guardianship (of God); both terms are connected to Imamate or the leadership (of the people/*Ummah*). Both terms are rooted in the Quran when referring to theocratic leadership. The Quran uses the term Caliph in different forms of speeches twelve times and applies political and lawful government like so: “O Dawud (David)! Verily, we have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge you between men in truth (And justice) and follow not your desire” (38/26). In another Quranic verse God promises faithful believers that they will be successors and rulers of the world (24/55). Although there are several Quranic verses in which the caliphate is identified with succession of one group to another (see 7:169), it is also emphasized by numerous exegetes to discuss God’s succession to dominate and rule the land¹. In more specific facets of Islamic

¹ For example see al-Tusi (*al-Tibyan fi al-Tafsir al-Quran*) and Qurtubi (*al-Jami al-Ahkam al-Quran*), respectively from Shia and Sunni sects, exegeses Sura Noor,

government from the Quran, it should also be noted that the Quran tells prophet Joseph to become a leader economically (12:55) and the Quran also instructs a prophet to appoint a military leader (2:246).

In the Quran, another political term frequently used is *Wali*, this term refers to political leadership in the community (4:59). *Wali* is used 233 times in different forms of speech in the Quran implying a kind of friendship which leads to dominance and appreciation. This idea is developed amongst Shia and Sufi Islamic groups. A *Wali* leads with a sense of metaphysical/emotional guardianship first and foremost and this guardianship eventually leads to a physical worldly form of leadership. Muslim exegetes study three elements of the Prophet's authenticity and guardianship: the spiritual aspect (59:7); the legal and judiciary aspect (4:65); and the political aspects (33:6; 5:55). All three of these elements were exhibited historically in the time of the Prophet². Islamic exegetes believe these elements should be the priority in regards to leadership as the Prophet's opinion is stronger than their own with respect to both worldly and otherworldly affairs. Several verses in the Quran have also had a direct hand in shaping Islamic political authority. An example of this is a commonly cited verse, verse 6, chapter 33³. Based on al-Tabarsi's narration this verse (6:33) was revealed before the battle of Tabuk in October, 630. The narration states that there is no need to get permission from the parent to

verse 55 (al-Tusi, 7: 454-457; Qurtubi, 1942, 297-300). To understand better, take a look at other verses, which are talking about complete trust in the Prophet.

² Also see the following Quranic verses that seem to emphasize on all three aspects: 62:2; 16:44; 5:49; 8:57-58 & 65; 9:6 & 73 & 103; 4:58 & 105.

³ Narrated Abdullah bin Hashim: We were with the Prophet Muhammad (PUOH) and he was holding the hand of Umar bin Al-Khattab. Umar said to Him: "O Allah's Messenger! You are dearer to me than everything except my own self". The Prophet said: "No, by him in whose hand my soul is, (you will not have completed faith) till I am dearer to you than your own self." Then Umar said to him "Now, by Allah, you are dearer to me than my own self". The Prophet said "Now, O Umar, (you are a believer)" (Al-Bukhari, 2002, 1644).

depart for battle because there is permission from the highest degree of authority of the Prophet⁴ (al-Tabarsi, 2006, 8:93).

The Prophet's life and traditions: The length of time the Prophet Muhammad preached Islam is unprecedented in comparison to any other religion as he preached for 23 years. If a Christian can imagine Jesus living amongst his people for over two decades, a different theology and relationship will likely be supposed in regards to political and worldly affairs. Looking into Prophet Muhammad's life, his mission as a prophet was divided into two periods: His 13 years in Mecca and his 10 years in Medina. His time in Mecca is often considered as a time of suffering and adversity due to the hardships inflicted upon him by the polytheistic and pagan adversaries who stood against his mission. The Prophet and his followers were oppressed severely for their beliefs and his people were subject to boycotts by the people of Mecca. During this time the Prophet and his followers were isolated and marginalized for three years in Shib Abi Talib 616-619, commonly known as the Meccan boycott of the Hashemites. These severe times led to the first and second immigrations of Muslims, men and women, to Ethiopia and Medina respectively. Earlier in my Shariah section I mentioned that these times were when the first Quranic verses

⁴ It reminds me of this verse of the New Testament, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's enemies will be those of his household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (The New American Bible, 2007, Mathew, 10:34-37). Compare it with this verse of the Quran, "You will not find a people who believe in God and the last day loving those who oppose God and his Messenger, even though they be their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. For such, He has written faith upon their hearts and has strengthened them with a spirit from Him, and He will bring them into gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide. God is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are God's party. Truly it is God's party who will achieve felicity" (58:22 and also see 9:24).

regarding Jihad (struggle against evil) were revealed in Mecca to inspire Muslims to bring about stability, patience, and persistence within unjust and oppressive circumstances (29:69; 29:8; 25:52) (al-Ashmawy, 1994, 69). The general backlash the Muslims faced was a result of economic/political turbulence with different tribes and the Meccans believed that in order to resolve this backlash they had to kill the Prophet during his sleep on a particular night. Historians say that Prophet Muhammad received news of what the Meccans had in store for him and fled to Medina because of this. When the Prophet fled to Medina, Muslims in Medina have experienced a form of faith associated with daily practices connected with governmental both economically and politically. The first Muslims indeed had experienced catastrophic oppression in Mecca because of their faith and free consciousness. Muslims in Medina also understood the significance of unity and having central leadership for religious and nonreligious affairs to this time period.

During this ten year period the Prophet took a pledge (*Bay'ah*), produced the constitution of Medina (Sahifat al-Madina), and built an Islamic state bequeathing to his nation a huge amount of guidance both during and after his life. Muhammad showed a commitment to applying leadership based on Islamic counsel and management while simultaneously exhibiting braveness leading battles for his nation and signing peace treaties. The comprehensive leadership, both spiritual and political, the Prophet brought was extremely uncommon during his time, especially in Arab history. According to clearly narrated Islamic reports the Prophet carried out political and administrative functions. He appointed local governors, issued administrative statements, made political/spiritual treaties with the Jewish community in Medina as well as the Najran⁵ Christians and Meccan polytheists, appointed socio-political delegations, employed investigational officers, countered

⁵ Najran is a southern part of Saudi Arabia along the border with Yemen.

the plans of those who attempted to misguide the people of Medina, shaped legal and judicial affairs through different acts of judiciary like judging, appointed judges, and of course planted laws. The Prophet also managed the economic affairs of Muslims in Medina by directing the almsgiving, dealing with natural resources, making financial treatments, and ultimately shaping the market. To conclude his leadership in Medina, the Prophet ultimately brought three things: (1) he brought all the Muslims and Arabs under a new and comprehensive state that was uncommon among earlier Arabs, (2) he personally led the state and directed legal, cultural, economical, political and of course spiritual issues, and (3) he was accepted as a righteous and absolute ruler based on his actions by every single Muslim. The Muslims, during early times had not separated the codes of worship and interactions like financial and political affairs, which the Prophet declared.

Several Islamic Laws: The Islamic idea of an ideal community is associated with vast concepts of justice, self-realization, self-esteem, and freedom (4:135; 57:25). These concepts lead Muslims to think of Islamic idea of *Ummah* (a faithful community committed to social values which guarantee worldly and otherworldly happiness) reminding them of Islamic potential for faithful leadership in the form of political power. In the theology and jurisprudence chapters I discussed several relationships between Islam and politics. I find it important to also focus on several social religious commands that promote the link between Islam and politics. These sort of commands can be categorized into the following five sections: (1) a state containing Hudud and Diyyat; (2) although statehood is not necessary, applying Islamic laws like exhortation to promote what is just could result in having a state; (3) Jihad and peace-making with other states; (4) relationships with family, civilians, and a form of business law; and (5) having relationships with non-Muslims e.g. Muslims are not allowed to be dominated by non-Muslims or they have to act flexibly within the Islamic market. Regardless of the

different readings and teachings of these Islamic regulations, all of them link Islam to politics. As believing in the oneness of God is the core of Islamic worldview, the fundamental socio-political concepts of Islam constitutes the initial part of Islamic practice although they will be determined by how these regulations are interpreted⁶. It should be noted that there are also other theological elements that influence Muslims with respect to government and these elements don't have to do with these commands. Now, I would like to discuss various approaches within Islam to study politics in three sets: philosophical, theological, and modern study.

Philosophical Approaches

As mentioned earlier, Islamic philosophy in its comprehensive system has found its initial roots through al-Farabi. To this day he is regarded as a genuine thinker who skillfully tried to present a clear idea of political leadership in Islamic philosophy. Al-Farabi was looking for the happiness of humanity and found it only in the city because he believed humans are naturally social beings who desire a sense of community and partnership. He believed this was something a community like a village couldn't fully provide and it in turn would not let the human beings in that community reach their full potential. Societies are like a human body that includes different organs with diverse duties. Societies reflect the hierarchy of different beings that can be understood by studying different statuses and positions in a community. A city has two parts and while the first purpose of a city is for its inhabitants to work together and provide necessities of life, the second part of a city aims to produce virtues to fulfill people's desire for happiness. Al-Farabi shows an eagerness for a virtuous city to be led by a divine

⁶ See section of Shariah to have a clear idea of these commandments and their formation in Islam.

philosopher or a prophet; a prophet because imagination and holiness led to knowledge and a philosopher because knowledge was gained through reason. As is it is hard to find someone with these divine characteristics, Al-Farabi assumes three more alternatives and describes them with the following qualifications:

(1) The first prince: he is the ideal prince who gathered six qualities in his nature and will: wisdom, perfect rationality, a talent for convincing people, a talent to produce good imaginations for people, braveness, and lack of physical disability that prevent the fight.

(2) The virtuous princes: there are a group of professionals with the six above-mentioned qualities that together lead the city.

(3) The lawful prince: a prince who has some measure of these qualifications and can establish new regulation based on his knowledge of previous political principles.

(4) The lawful princes: the group who can substitute the lawful prince.

These qualifications reflect six aspects of political leadership which can be translated into the following features: wisdom, rational thought, having social status, using art to give people a more concrete and arousing image, armed forces, and practical approach. It means a single quality cannot fulfill the different aspects of a city; the political leadership is not merely a martial, ideological, emotional, or thoughtful mission: it is a mixture of all and leads citizens to multiple forms of happiness. It also can be considered for the whole body of government namely administrative, legislatives, and judicial. Al-Farabi highlights the natural talent as well as educational growth of a proper ruler to suggest a combination of rational, limited and stable principle of governing with unlimited experimental attempts that open a path for the future.

Acknowledgment of two basic values, namely knowledge and free will, is the foundation of a virtuous city. This city spreads virtues among all citizens and people based on their wills and

common share in contributing virtues. Al-Farabi divides states into two forms: virtuous ones and ignoring ones. The first tries to institutionalize voluntary traditions, virtues, and norms among people to reach true happiness, and the second spreads morals and behaviors which lead to imaginary happiness. The basis for this division is knowledge and free will which are necessary for virtues. So the virtuous government has a single direction, free will and knowledge, while ignorant governments have different directions like honor, dignity, freedom, money, and welfare. Also al-Farabi divides non-virtuous cities into the following categories: ignorant cities that follow apparent goods instead of true goods like what we said of ignorant governments, wrongful cities that have the ideas of virtuous city but the products of ignorant city, changed cities which used to have the same ideas and products of virtuous city but do not have them anymore, and misleading cities which have wrong idea about happiness (al-Farabi, 1995; Akhlaq, 1389).

Abu al-Hassan al-Amiri (d. 992) divided politics into two kinds: Imamate which leads people toward acquiring virtues and reaching permanent happiness, and a sultanate which only governs people and leads to their unhappiness. The first and desired one belongs to the Prophet. He believed in harmony between religion and politics and looked for these attributes in a political ruler: wisdom, chastity, humility, braveness, and practical experiences (Yasrebi, 1387, 59-60).

The philosophical group called *Ekhwan al-Safa* (The Brethren of Purity) developed a theory of government through the association of al-Farabi, Sufism and religious perspectives. They argued for an association between government and prophethood because (1) if power is in the hands of the enemy they may prevent people from faith, (2) people usually follow their rulers and if there is a separation between political power and prophethood it hurts the prophets' benefit to the community, (3) and in their association both will help each other to reach their aim. Therefore, Ekhwan al-

Safa considers the succession of the Prophet in the form of caliphate or Imamate in order to fulfill the Prophet's mission regarding worldly or religious affairs. The Imam has to possess these three features: he must be the best of all the people, the closest to the Prophet, and have a clear statement from the Prophet on his succession. He is the perfect human who has a strong link with God and educates people, manages the different categories of community, and makes decisions concerning relationships with other states. There is a similar hierarchy in the world, in a person's internal powers, and in society. Society includes four groups: technicians, officers, heads, and the perfect human who possesses the will and spiritual majesty (Ibid, 61-63).

Based on his prophetic philosophy, as we saw, Avicenna justifies the political leadership of a prophet. The prophet has to appoint his successor otherwise the connoisseur council must select a proper caliph. The caliph has to possess authentic reason, knowledge of Shariah, braveness, chastity, and good traits. If there are several nominees, people have to choose the wiser and more knowledgeable one. Avicenna explicitly tries to offer ideas to fit both Sunni and Shia concepts because Sunni leave succession of the Prophet to the connoisseur council and Shia to the clear statement of the Prophet. He also did not pay attention to the role that community plays in the acquisition of individual perfection and happiness (Ibid, 63-63).

With Avicenna the theory of politics in Islamic philosophy collapsed and until modern times there has been no new or detailed theory related to political power or government. The only exception is Averroes who flavored al-Farabi's idea with a bit of Aristotelianism. Averroes distinguished two kinds of societies: virtuous ones that look for rational virtues such as the fundamental consent and will of its people, and non-virtuous ones that look for other things such as money, property, honor, excess, freedom, and expand their power over others. He identified government with the

mentality and spirit of citizenship which helps to solve social problems by developing civil values rather than with physical growth. He continues differentiating between virtuous and non-virtuous states according to the following features. (A) spreading and institutionalizing virtues in a way that people follow them *per se* through education and convincing speeches; (B) using lectures, poems, and dialectic to answer new demands of people regarding the virtues and domestic norms; (C) producing scholars and philosophers who create harmony among people's physical and mental needs, future interests, and culture; (D) providing the initial demands of society like foods, cloths, home, and professions; (E) transparency in economic activities to prevent intervention of political and military forces and direct the public interests and individual freedom; (F) developing domestic values to educate and reform people; (G) caring to avoid political corruption like lack of moderate policy; (H) caring of the land as the mother of people; (I) establishing wise and thoughtful army and police; (J) legitimacy has to be very careful and limited to general issues leaving the particulars to people's attitudes. Averroes suggests three models of virtuous governments: the Imam or philosopher model, regardless of gender, which spreads knowledge of virtues and applies the rule of law. This model has five qualifications: wisdom, complete reason, the ability to convince people, power of imagination, and capability to perform Jihad. The second model is a virtuous group which emphasizes good deeds instead of knowledge. These people have to have lots of experiences to encourage people willingly toward virtues. And the third model is a council model which consists of brave and experienced military forces with a profound Muslim jurist (see, Ibn Rushd, 1998; Hassan Majidi and Omid Shafi'i, 1392; Davud Fairihi, 1383). Although Averroes was a unique figure in Islam both a philosopher and Muslim Jurist, his ideas did not have a chance in the Islamic world because of the collapse of philosophy due to the attacks of mysticism and scripturalism.

Theological Approaches

Although all Muslim theologians base their concept of political power on the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad, they split into two different denominations in the period immediately after the Prophet's death; Sunni-Islam went toward the idea of a caliphate grounded on historical experiences and Shia-Islam went toward the idea of Imamate grounded on sacred-text and their theological doctrines⁷. The main question was who is eligible to rule the Islamic community (*Ummah*) based on the Prophet's path. Both denominations attempted to explain their views under the same concept of caliphate/Imamate as "the comprehensive leadership to sacred and secular affairs of Muslims based on the succession of the Prophet."⁸ Historically, although interpretation of the four first caliphs is the core of difference, the Sunni and Shia-Islam have gone to opposite extremes: Sunni theologians have reduced the idea of the caliphate to a kind of Islamic sultanate regardless of how the power is acquired as Imam Ghazzali and Sad al-Din Masud Taftazani (1322-1390) had explained (see Taftazani, 1998, 5:232-320; I will discuss Ghazzali's argument later). The Caliph can be considered only as a secular ruler who keeps the Islamic community safe and running in daily life (also see, Ira M. Lapidus, 1992, 16 &

⁷ Joseph Eliash in a detailed paper argues that twelver Shia and the Sunni legal-theological schools hold a shared belief in the divine origin of authority. This commonality is shared among other monotheistic religions, such as Judaism, Samaritanism, and Christianity. Nevertheless, Shia differs from these faiths in that it completely rejects any attempt to reconcile actual power with divine authority; thus prohibiting any legal methods that would legitimize an earthly ruler, in terms of divine law. Joseph Eliash, "The Ithnā'asharī-Shī'ī Juristic Theory of Political and Legal Authority," in *Studia Islamica*, 1969, No. 29, pp. 17-30. However, the era of puritanism ended with the introduction of Ayatollah Khomeini's concept of Wilayat al-Faqih (The Guardianship of the Jurists).

⁸ Except for a very small group called "Kharijite" in Islam in the late 7th century, other Muslims as a whole had a consensus on the necessity of religious and political rulers among Muslims.

17). The Shia give a transcendence to the leader in both the physical and religious realms. They consider Imam as a distinguished leader who spreads the true meanings of the Quran, applying the Islamic laws, and keeping people faithful through directing their life in accordance with religious law. The seed for these two opposite extremes comes from their various perspectives about the legitimacy of the Imam. Based on historical facts, Sunni justifies the right for ruling over Muslim community through public acceptance (pledge alliance), appointment by the previous caliph or an Islamic council, and obtaining political power through force. Based on theological doctrines, Shia justifies the Imamate as the continuity of the prophethood, only the infallible Imam does not receive new revelation (*Wahy*). Thus they believed that Imam has to have special knowledge and a particular ethical character that makes him infallible. For this distinction, Sunni considers caliphate as a subject of discussion at Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and Shia as subject of discussion at Islamic theology (*Kalam*) (Ghazzali, 2003, 169; Amidi, 1971, 363). In other words, a caliph is an ordinary Muslim, more or less pious, that gets the position because of his chance to get power through force, the people's pledge, or appointment by the last caliph. Imam is an extraordinary Muslim who exhibits his comprehensive knowledge and highest quality of ethical character, and who has the right to rule because of his unique personality.

Historically, and after several centuries, Shia political theology did not develop, and political theory moved onto jurisprudence, as we will discuss in today's theory of jurist guardianship. The Shia political jurisprudence has passed through four phases to get to its current state. In the first phase, which occurred between the fourth and tenth Islamic calendars⁹ Shia

⁹ Since till 941 (329 Islamic Calendar) Shia benefited from infallible Imams or their special deputies, also they have experienced very hard times because of their doctrines, so they used Imams and their special deputies for their jurisprudence and political ideas.

jurisprudence established individual rights and responsibilities, so it was not so concerned with political jurisprudence and constitutional law.

The second phase between the 10th to 13th centuries, Islamic calendar, because of the establishment of a Shia state in Iran, a distinction occurred between religious issues like judging, acting the *Hudud*, and managing *Umor Hisbiyyah* (non-litigious matters)¹⁰ and secular issues like politics and security appeared in Shia jurisprudence. It puts the first issue on the burden of Muslim jurists and the second on Muslim rulers. There was a change from the theological meaning of *Walayat* (leadership) to its jurisprudence meaning namely guardianship (*Wilayat*).

The third phase includes the period of constitutionalism in the first decades of the 14th century. This the time that Shia jurisprudence approaches modern political concepts like citizen's rights, liberty, justice, separation of powers, representativeness, monitoring, autocracy, egalitarianism, and constitution. Two opposite ideas in Shia emerged here: Shaykh Fazlullah Nuri (1843-1909) who although he supported the constitutional movement at first, finally strongly supported the Islamic sultanate and was killed because of his idea; Muhammad Hussain Gharawi Naini (1860-1936) greatly supported constitutionalism and declared it the guarantee for justice and against autocracy. He believed that the constitution in politics and society has the same position of Shariah laws on acts of worship and acts of interactions.

Since Na'ini has such eminent authority¹¹ and since he had an original contribution to the idea of constitutionalism in Shia, I

¹⁰ The term is used in Islamic jurisprudence to refer to some duties which are obligatory in Islam but there is not a particular responsible officer for supporting derelict people, managing the inheritance or will in some cases.

¹¹ He was a grand ayatollah and his treatise, *Tanbih al-Ummah wa Tanzih al-Millah*, was introduced by another renowned Mujtahid, Muhammad Kazim Khorasani (1839-1911) whose book on the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, *Kifayat al-Usul*, still serve as the textbook of the highest level of study in the field.

would like to point out his argument. Two values of freedom and equality are the fundamental concepts of constitutionalism in his view. By freedom Naini refers to political freedom and social gatherings and by equality the equal rights and obligations of governor and people before the law. He uses many Quranic verses and Sunnah narrations to illustrate how Islam supports these two values which enact through constitution and parliament. The Quranic verse, “their rule is to take counsel among themselves” (42:30) in its linguistic form, he argues, orders the Prophet to counsel the people in all social and political affairs. Regarding Islam all people are sharing in public interests. From one side the ruler or king cannot enter into public affairs without previously given permission. From another side, neither can the public gather on all issues nor do all understand the public interest completely, so the wise who know the politics, rights, public interests and virtue form the parliament to apply them through counseling. The Islamic ideal of government, therefore, is a form of *Wilayat* rather than ownership (*Tamlikiyyah*); the first merely protects people’s rights and limitations (*Hudud*) through rule of law while the second is a totalitarian idea which considers all things as its property, pursuing individual or party’s interests. *Mujtahids* or their representatives can take part in the parliament and bolster Islam through a regulatory process.

Naini also uses some common axioms in the Principles of Jurisprudence to strengthen his perspective. For instance, Muslims for safety and progress need a constitution. Having safety and progress is religiously necessary so the constitution is necessary. Also having a government is necessary to prevent anarchy. The infallible Imam, who is the true and ideal ruler or his representative, is not available. So constitutionalism is the best available option. Moreover, the customary things change to religious obligations under secondary conditions (for example *Nazr* (Vow) and *Ahd* (Promise)). Protecting the community from oppression is necessary

and to actually achieve this protection we need a constitution and rule of law, thus they are *Wajib* (religious obligations) for rationally necessary reasons. He in addition applies some jurisprudential issues like recognition of customary (*Urf*) and technical opinions which change for example a *Haram* to *Halal* (like alcohol for the sick in case the physician strongly advises) to support his idea of constitutionalism. There is a Shia Hadith “what is said by all is not doubtful” which is used by Naini to justify the vote of the majority. In his book, the author also answers several religious criticisms to constitutionalism. It is said that freedom leads to ethical corruption, Naini answers that ethical corruption is common in both free and totalitarian societies alike. It is said having law alongside Shariah law or legitimacy of majority is *Bid'ah* (a religious innovation which was not usual and so is unlawful in Islam); he answered *Bid'ah* occurs when an irreligious law appears as religious law while it is a customary law. Having parliament or council requires accepting the vote of the majority because there is no other option. Naini is upset with Ulema who deduce many axioms from a Hadith but do not contribute to institutionalizing freedom and equality within the nation which is greatly harmed by both religious and political despotism. He clearly criticizes religious and political despotism based on religious sources particularly and respectively Quranic verses 9:31 and 26:22. Additionally, Na'ini suggests Quranic verses and Hadiths supporting how the Quran and the Prophet encourage the rule of law without any exception (Naini, 1388; Farasatkah, 1377, 382-391).

The last and fourth phase is known as “the guardianship of Muslim jurist” (Kadivar, 2001) and will be discussed later.

The similar change happened in the history of Sunni-Islam but through a different path: the caliph lost prestige. The term “Rashidun Caliphs,” means “rightly guided caliphs”, is a popular term among Sunni Muslims referring to the first four caliphs after the death of the Prophet. They are Abu Bakr (632-634), Umar ibn al-

Khatab (634-644), Uthman ibn Affan (644-656), and Ali ibn Abitalib (656-661) who are believed to be more “righteous” and exemplary caliphs of Islam than their successors in all later dynasties including the Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, and Ottomans. The first one was selected to this position by a kind of connoisseur council of Muslims, the second by his predecessor’s wish, the third by a council appointed by the second caliph, and the fourth one by public pledge. As a matter of fact, the Sunni political theology was trying to adjust itself to historical events and was merely justifying the legitimization of power. In this way, it was obligated to justify whatever happened in Islamic politics up to modern times. This attempt can be seen very clear in Imam Ghazzali’s work titled “*Fazaih al-Batiniyyat*” (The Scandals of the esoterism). It argued that we must confirm that all previous caliphs so far were qualified, otherwise all actions taken and judgments issued relating to Muslims’ properties or families by local judges or governors were wrong. In other words, Muslims have not been allowed to leave their lives sinfully, since all those actions and judgments are not correct unless all have happened under a lawful judge who was appointed by caliph or Imam. Then he tried to make al-Mustazhir caliph (1078-1118) legislated while he was only 16 years old. Ghazzali wrote that a caliph has to have these ten qualifications: maturity, reason, non-slave, male, healthy body, being from the Quraish tribe, having political power, management skills, knowledge, and piety. The first six qualities are non-achievable things which al-Mustazhir possessed by nature. The last four are required qualities which exist in him because political power comes to him through the support of the Seljuq dynasty, the management skills of his Vizier; He is clearly pious; and his piety guides him to ask scholars when needed. Thus al-Mustazhir is a lawful caliph and everybody has to obey him (al-Ghazzali, 1964, 169-195). The same situation continued among Sunni-Islam until modern times.

Modern Approaches

New contemplations on politics among Muslims occurred with awareness of modernity and often began with Sayed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97). Considering al-Afghani, we have to consider these three fundamental issues: (1) Sayed was deeply troubled by the social and political situation of Muslims at the time; prejudice, limited economic opportunity, foreign occupation, an uneducated population, rampant misunderstandings of Islam, and untrustworthy governments all contributed to the lack of justice, freedom, self-respect, and shared religious solidarity within the Muslim community. Determined to reverse the current conditions, he sought to motivate Muslims to strive for progress, reason, confidence, educational reform, and to revolt against both internal corruption and external colonialism; (2) he attempted to spread his dream of Islamic status among different groups of Muslims by traveling to and meeting with different Muslims around the world from Afghanistan, Iran and India to Saudi, Turkey and Egypt. He delivered various speeches and several letters to scholars and political leaders, wrote books, debated with opponents, published newspapers, and even accepted some administrative positions to contribute to the awakening of Muslims. In this way, he suffered and (3) he compared the social situation in the Western countries to Islamic ones and criticized Muslim ones based on the Westerns. Although he was very angry with Western colonialism, al-Afghani looked at them positively to learn why and how they found power and progress. He enriched his knowledge through his visit to Paris, London, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Munich.

Al-Afghani was looking at the changes in Muslims' knowledge and practice of Islam through political change. This matter makes all his cultural and thoughtful ideas secondary compared to his quest for revolution among Muslims. In his view, we can evaluate a nation's culture through their political system and thought (Asadabadi, 1358, 98; Akhlaq, 1389). It seems he was

searching for a parliamentary system that applies two values: social justice and independence. By recognizing personal freedom, setting up Islamic councils, reevaluating the understanding of Islamic laws, and stimulating contemporary Ijtihad, Muslims can gain assurance to take beneficial lessons from the accomplishments of Western democracies. Of course, there is a tendency to infer a new political system in Islam as a mixture of religion and recent Western achievements.

Sayed's famous disciple at al-Azhar in Egypt, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) advocated the "Enlightened Despot or Autocrat" as a proper political system that can educate Muslims in new ideas and public regimes. The teachings of al-Afghani took two opposite paths in Egypt; one more speculative and one more practical. As an example of speculative development we can refer to Ali Abd al-Raziq (1888-1966) who declared a kind of secularism based on his comprehension of Islam. Indeed, this Egyptian scholar, who graduated from Oxford University and al-Azhar, is known as a pioneer in an articulated explanation of the secular state within Islam. Although there was a hidden path to secularize Islam in al-Afghani's reformist movement, this is Abd al-Raziq who wrote a clear manifesto. During his time of service as religious judge in 1925 in Cairo, his controversial book "Islam and the Foundations of Governance" shocked the traditional community of al-Azhar so that they discredited his religious scholarship and authority. He argued in his book against a role for religion in politics or that there is a political perspective of religious texts. By his criticism of the orthodox and fundamental idea of Caliphate or Imamate as "the comprehensive leadership over worldly and otherworldly affairs of Muslims because of the succession of the Prophet," he argued through the genealogy of the term, that Abu Bakr, the first Caliph accepted the title Caliph in political, not a religious meaning, to keep unity of people around the newly and unprecedented government among Arabs. To distinguish between political and

religious aspects, Abu Bakr himself said, "I am not caliph of God, but I am the caliph of the Prophet" (Abd al-Raziq, 1925, 128). The Muslim kings transferred the title "Caliph" from a political aspect to a religious meaning in order to keep people under their leadership with the name of God (Ibid, 135).

Abd al-Raziq separated the government from Shariah and continued that although the Prophet used to perform administrative and judicial roles, these kinds of activities were out of his prophetic office (Ibid, 69-87). He clearly said that looking for explicit or implicit evidence in the Quran and Sunnah to justify political aspect for Islam reaches nothing certain (*Burhan*) and we are not allowed to follow conjecture (*Zann*) (Ibid, 100). Accordingly, using verses like 3: 59, and 83, some Hadiths, or Muslims' consensus to justify Islamic political system is not valid because this use cannot overcome many criticisms. For example, these verses refer to religious scholars in religious issues, the Hadiths refer to only one option among many, and clear consensus often did not happen. Thus keeping this application is a conjecture (Ibid, 27-32). According to Abd al-Raziq many verses of the Quran and narrations limit the privilege of the Prophet over *Ummah* to preaching Islam (Ibid, 87-108). So the Prophet in order to have rights over Muslims, such as governing them, needs more rights which are not there. Having a state for Muslims is reasonable and also justifiable by the Quran, and Abd al-Raziq concludes that Muslims nevertheless need to learn from human reason and experience in government rather than looking for political Islam.

The Egyptian Brotherhood, which was founded by Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), reflects the practical form of al-Afghani's revival of political Islamism. He called Muslims to return to Islamic law and reject westernization. Without presenting a political structure of Islam he concentrated on establishing a state based on justice and positive law in Islam. This is Abd al-Qadir Awdah (1906-1954) the Brotherhood political theorist who returned to the notion of Imam.

He continued the administrative power as restricted to the Imam who has to spread Islam and orient the administration in Islamic directions. His rights are unlimited and he has to manage the administrative policy, observe its application, and make the final decisions. All regulations have to be derived from Shariah; only where there is no clear statement in Shariah, can a new social regulation be legitimate. As a delegate and representative of *Ummah*, the Imam can appoint the judges, control and change them.

An exemplary debate between Muslim intellectuals from both sides: pro-Islamic government (Islamists) and anti-Islamic government (seculars) occurred in Egypt in 1992. The first group argued that establishing an Islamic state is an initial part of Islam to protect religious identity and fight cultural attack from non-Muslims through “secular-isms” like capitalism or liberalism. Also to apply Islamic social commands and obligations it needs the state. They use different arguments in order to make it reasonable for the modern mind. For example, based on democracy Muslims are allowed to apply the law they believe which is Shariah and the way to realize this is through an Islamic government. Some said with regards to Islamic law, if a ruler loses the qualifications, he can be substituted with a right one. If the system does not enforce law and policy against Shariah, whatever it performs is Islamic. Referring to the Quranic verse 4:59 they emphasized that there are two aspects: using the term “rulers” (*Ulu al-Amr*) in its plural form, and adding “from you” after that. This means the Quran condemns despotism and any non-democratic system. It also limits their leadership within Shariah regulation.

In contrast, the secular Muslim scholars argued that the government aspect of the Prophet was related to his era’s circumstances. Although the Quran equates obedience to the Prophet with obedience to God (4:64), it also states with the Prophet that “whosoever obeys the messenger, indeed he has obeyed God. As for those who turn away, we have not sent you to be their

protector” (4:80). Moreover the Prophet got power through pledge of allegiance which is different from accepting his prophethood. They added the theory of Islamic government is a jurisprudential, not theological, theory requiring a clear plan and proposal which is lacking. The history of Islam particularly after the four righteous caliphs illustrates the caliphs have not practiced most parts of Islam and did not offer a great example. The current pro-Islamic state also produced dogmatism and intolerance before they got power; so what would they do if they gained power? (Firasatkah, 1377, 214-217).

However, there was always an amalgamation of both trends. It is more appealing for Muslims because it simply reflects the transitory state, from traditional to modern, from theory to practice, and from an intellectual to a social aspect. As a sophisticated model, I return to Iqbal.

Muhammad Iqbal from Lahore was impressed by al-Afghani and began his important book “The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam” by saying, “the Quran is a book which emphasized ‘deed’ rather than ‘idea’” to show his eagerness to you don’t inspire people to a thing, you inspire them to do something practical change¹². He skillfully tried to create harmony between

¹² Iqbal in terms of philosophy is recognized with the Philosophy of “Selfness” meaning people must return to their own nature, explore and establish it. Iqbal also completed his above mentioned masterpiece describing “self” as a practical rather than a contemplative entity. To explore how Iqbal is advocating embracing a paradigm shift from a conceptual understanding to a vital intuition, let us see how he ends his work, “The ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something, but to be something. It is in the ego’s effort to be something that he discovers his final opportunity to sharpen his objectivity and acquire a more fundamental ‘I am’ which finds evidence of its reality not in the Cartesian ‘I think’ but in the Kantian ‘I can.’ [...] The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and remade by continuous action. It is a moment of supreme bliss and also a moment of the greatest trial for the ego:” (Iqbal, 1989, 156-157)

Shariah and the modern world. He joined modern institutions like parliament to Islamic idea of *Ijtihad* (new deduction from Islamic law) and offered an institutional *Ijtihad*: when Islam encourages us to worship in gathered form, why we do not perform *Ijtihad* through organization and parliament? The desired *Ijtihad* for Iqbal is associated with a complete authority in legislation like what is occurred by four founders of Sunni schools of jurisprudence. Islam does not require a particular form of government, but its accentuated idea of oneness of God implies modern political values like equality, solidarity, and freedom. Whatever state realizes these ideal principles, no matter its name, is a theocracy. He clearly states that the idea of caliphate is currently an obstacle rather than useful. The main idea behind state in Islam is only an effort to realize the spiritual in a human organization; to study and help humanity adapt to complexity of life and world. He calls it “spiritual democracy” in contrast to the mutually intolerant democracies in the Western countries (Iqbal, 1989, 123-125).

The grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) is a most fortunate Muslim scholar who established a state in Iran according to his new point of view on Islam. His particular doctrine “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist” or “Providence of the Jurist” appeared in this context trying to make a bridge between Shia’s political theology and political jurisprudence. This doctrine was founded on these four premises: (a) Islam needs to establish a state to apply part of its laws; (b) it is a religious obligation of a just mujtahid (Shia mufti) to try to establish a state to apply those Islamic laws; the people also have to support and obey this state; (c) the jurist guardianship is legitimated by Shariah and this government has the same rights of the Prophet and infallible Imams; (d) the Islamic state and its laws are initial parts of Islam and cannot be neglected because of secondary issues. In addition, Imam Khomeini believed that this state gets actualized through public acceptance and voting. This is the meaning of Islamic

Republic State that tries to mix Islamic law and modern needs and ideas (Khomeini, 1372).

The non-seminarian intellectual Shia version of relation between Islam and politics more or less is similar to the Sunni one. But in Shia seminaries, two more theories after Ayatollah Khomeini are worth mentioning. The first theory was suggested by grand Ayatollah Hussain Ali Muntazeri (1922-2009) was known for his close association with Khomeini, who he served as a disciple and appointed successor before eventually stepping down. He played a major role in the Iranian Revolution, and was known for creating the theory around 'Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist.' Later he shifted from jurist to jurisprudence guardianship. An ideal state can be governed by Islamic scholars or parties, as long as an elected group of jurists with a humanistic outlook are consulted on the accordance of Islamic law with regulations. This can be achieved through a fair and free election process. By God people are gifted with free will to make decisions for their private and public affairs. When the Quran discusses the Prophet's right over people, Muntazeri argues, it uses the word "greater right" (33:6) which implies people have right over their affairs. Also, the Prophet's right is privileged in case there is a conflict between people and the Prophet's right. There is an objection which Muntazeri answers: how can people elect rulers for those things that have no right over them like Shiara law? The Quranic commands sometimes target an individual per se like prayer and sometimes target an individual as a part of community so the community is targeted as a whole. Since the whole community cannot perform the job, then people have to elect the proper people to do the affairs of the whole. This is the true meaning of government. Like two parties of a dispute who elect and leave their right to the third party as a judge. Muntazeri also justifies the right of majority by referring to the rational tradition of people to solve the public affairs (Muntazeri, 1387, 12-25).

The other disciple of Khomeini's Ayatollah Mehdi Haeri Yazdi (1923-1999) took a more radical view by providing a theory for a secular state in Islam. In his masterpiece on political philosophy *Hikmat va Hukumat* (Wisdom and Government), Haeri distinguishes between a theological concept of Immate and jurisprudential concept of *Wilayat* which ironically are joined together in "Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist." Imamate is a part of the prophethood. The prophethood consists of two parts: awareness of God's will through a "Presential" knowledge¹³ as well as letting people know what the Prophet received. Since the Prophet is "ahead" and "in front" of people, he is an Imam¹⁴ and since he tells people God's will he is a prophet. As a separate person from the Prophet the Imam is who acquires God's will through the Prophet by associating in spiritual state and thus by the Presential knowledge. Imam states God's will to people because of the Prophet's mission, not directly from God. Therefore the prophethood and Immate are spiritual and metaphysical states far from the natural state. They are not subject to people's decision while the caliphate and political leadership is relevant to physical life subject to their election. Rarely it happens that people are so knowledgeable that they can elect a prophet and Imam as their political leaders through *Bai'at* (traditional form of pledge allegiance in Islam) like what occurred in Pledge of the Tree about the Prophet (reflected in 48:18) and electing Ali as the fourth caliph by people. Haeri concludes that the socio-political leadership is neither a part of the prophethood nor within the nature of Imamate. He describes his view as a continuation of al-Farabi's and Avicenna's theory (Haeri, 1388, 213-219). The jurisprudential

¹³ It is a kind of intuitive knowledge discussed in Transcendental Wisdom of Mulla Sadra. The ordinary knowledge is perceptive meaning one has an idea about the object. In contrast, in Presential, the object per se comes into the knower, rather than its concept like our knowledge of self. It also is called "knowledge by presence".

¹⁴ See Shia use of terminology of Imam in theology chapter.

concept of *Wilayat* (Guardianship) entails if a person because of immaturity of age or reason cannot afford his or her affairs, the jurist must manage their affairs, and there is no room for the person to do that. It is totally meaningless to apply this individual issue on the public and political issues (ibid, 220). Haeri argues there is a self-contradiction in the system of “Islamic Republic” under “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist” because the first asks people’s votes and the second considers them too immature to manage their interests and needs (Ibid, 264-265, and see 298). Haeri also provided his own original thought of political theory. Humanity by nature, without any contact, needs a place to live freely and to have private space. Also for coexistence people own an equity sharing for their shared property and ownership. To apply the ownership right over shared property, people elect attorneys (legal agents) (*Wakil*), no representatives. Thus governmental leaders, in all three aspects of judiciary, legislation and administration, which embodies that attorney (*Wikalat*) are justified as long as people want them and they follow people’s will. Here a jurisprudential concept, *Wikalat*, comes to justify a secular state. This theory promotes an equality of citizens, rule of law, and responsibility of state all regardless of people’s gender, faith and profession and in rule of law. The natural right to property is the foundation of this idea and it is consistent with the Shariah law of ownership. It also provides some means to justify national borders with regards to the Shariah axiom, “People have rights to their properties” (Haeri 1388; Haeri, 1375)

As a result, and in a general view, the recent movements in Islamic countries appear to be perusing two different values in Islam: the more liberal movements emphasize the Islamic *Shura* (using council for public affairs) as a path toward democracy and the more conservative one emphasize central power as a way to unite Muslims with various backgrounds. Of course, both try to deal with Shariah in social and political issues, but the first group tends to suggest a more flexible reading of Shariah and the second

to enforce it. Also there is a trend which equates Islamic theocracy with Muslim government no matter who is the ruler, as long as he pertains to being a Muslim it is enough. In addition, several new scholars concentrate on the objectives of Shariah and the spirit of Islam instead of firm laws which are affected by space and time. Thus they care for justice, modesty, liberty, dignity and ethical issues more than applying restricted Shariah law, *Hijab* (code of wearing), ideological reading of Islam, Islamic formalism/superficies, and laws. In any way, comparisons to western politics are a significant part of current Islamic politics. There are more Islamic movements around the Islamic districts that can be examined through these fundamental ideas. Also I did not want to talk about those who have a loud voice but very little influence on Muslims' intellectualism like Muslim extremists and radicals. They are more reactive and lack a clear idea of Islam and its scholarly exploration in theology, jurisprudence, politics, philosophy, ethics, and mysticism. Their ideologies are more reactive rather than productive. They highlight western colonialism, belittle the majority of Muslims for their positive approach toward the West, and use the media to spread their voice. They pursue a political campaign through taking benefits from Islam as a means for their ideological agenda. While moderate Islamists are known for their radical restrictions against "the other," namely non-Muslims and sometimes western-minded intellectuals, these extremist Islamists are harsh against ordinary Muslims as well. These extremists cannot tolerate the local traditions and regional cultures accusing them of being adulterations of Islam. Since many of them claim a kind of puritanism in Islam and are involved mostly with internal affairs of Muslims, Westerners are not very sensitive to them as much as they are sensitive to other Islamist groups. In my understanding, the major point is that they are going to affect the mentality of the next generation of Muslims toward extremism; a generation who is not very connected with sophisticated and human aspects of Islam in

Sufism, philosophy, and human ethical values. To cut the link between current Muslims and their intellectual struggle in history for humanity, they significantly use the idea of “excommunication” and apply it to the public. It means that any understanding of Islam which differs from their own, even if it is based on the history of Islam, is considered heresy and the believers of such an interpretation are deemed heretics who are worthy of Islamic capital punishment. Since excommunication serves these trends and causes catastrophic massacres in current Islam, I would like to discuss the issue in more detail.

Mass Excommunication

Like any other faith, dividing Muslims into two large groups, right and wrong, and true and false, has a long history in Islam. Also Sunni and Shia, each of them with many subdivisions, considered the other one, even within its broad division, as a wrong and deformed denomination. Still, they do not commit to excommunicate the other based on a religious agenda. In general, the dynamic of Islamic pluralism occurs within two poles. On one hand, there is a well-known *Hadith* of the Prophet, called “*al-Furqa al-Najiyah*” (the Saved Sect), predicting that Muslims will split into seventy-three groups after his death; only one of them is saved¹⁵. On

¹⁵ In the classic sources, most Islamic denominations attempted to exemplify their own denomination as the saved denomination. Imam Ghazzali is an exception who leads the way in advocating a different position. He first highlighted another *Hadith* of the Prophet predicting that Muslims will split into seventy-three groups after his death; only one of them is unsaved. Then, Ghazzali argues this version is more suitable to God’s mercy. So if the famous version, in which only one sect is saved, is authorized it implies salvation of one group directly, and others indirectly, for example through intercession (al-Ghazzali, 1993, 81-89). In modern times, two traditional scholars are worth noting. Shaykh Abdel-Halim Mahmoud (1910-1978), the grand Imam of al-Azhar (1973-1978), shows how upset he is with how Muslims over history tried to distinguish themselves from others in order to approach salvation (*nijat*). Highlighting the *hadith* which says all are saved except one, Mahmoud tries to explain how almost all Islamic

the other hand, there is an explicit Quranic verse, saying that Muslims are not allowed to consider those who call themselves Muslims, non-Muslims (4:94). This dynamic, more or less, has often inspired Muslims to avoid excommunicating other Muslims and instead to embrace diversity. However, there were always some tensions between various versions of Islam. These tensions are found in scholars of Shariah, philosophers, and Sufis who consider opposing ideas distorted and attempt to apply excommunication with regards to doctrines rather than people. There have been and are several tendencies among both Sunni and Shia to consider some schools of thought like Philosophy and Sufism as deformation of Islam. They attempted to prohibit circulation of Sufi or philosophical teachings among ordinary faithful, though this prohibition is limited to scholarly circles and with regards to several sophisticated ideas.

Now I am discussing the excommunication which targets a particular social group and tries to practice its religious verdict using Shariah law of excommunication. The excommunication as a tool to approach masses and force them to embrace their version of Islam is traceable to earlier Islam, Kharijite sect, which was fully dedicated to Islam. Throughout history, Kharijites in terms of their

denominations are sharing the same doctrines and values and then they are the same, saved sect (Mahmoud, 1989, 73-83). Ali Yahya Mu'ammam (1919-1980), an Abadi scholar, narrates a third version of the *hadith*, the Prophet predicting that Muslims will split into seventy-three groups after his death; only one of them is saved and all will claim to be called that one. Muammam tries to experience another perspective: all these denominations are followed by millions of people with great diversity of education, knowledge, rationality, and styles of religion. He argues how the majority of Muslims can be unsaved while they are faithful and practice their faith; only because they are not under a particular sect? Many Muslim jurists promote simple faith in terms of Islam. Also there is not any reason that Islam obligated each Muslim to study all denominations and then find out the saved sect; indeed it does not make sense because Islam does not put an intolerable burden on man's shoulder. Mu'ammam concludes that there are only two kinds of Muslim; no matter what they are called, who are unsaved: innovators in the name of Islam and those who are firm in committing sins (Mu'ammam, 1995, 38-41).

fundamental concepts have changed but their negative ideology toward other Muslims still serves as the inspiring ideological sources of contemporary militant Islamists, thus I want to concentrate on them.

Generally, Islam is known as being divided into two major denominations: Sunni and Shia. During the caliphate of Ali ibn Abitalib, the fourth righteous caliph of Sunni and the first infallible Imam of Shia, one more split within Islam happened with the emergence of a new sect called Kharijites which opposed both Sunni and Shia Islam. Kharijite literally comes from the Arabic term “Kh-R-J” meaning coming out. Technically in terms of an Islamic sect it has a double meaning but applies to the same group: people who came out against Ali ibn Abitalib as well as people who believe those Muslims who commit grave sin are leaving Islam. These two meanings are closely intertwined and join the core of their ideology. With the Kharijite the third part emerged and developed the concept of mass excommunication in Islam. They thought if a Muslim commits grave sin s/he must leave Islam and has to repent in order to return to the faith. Ali argued against Kharijite that non-practicing or guilty Muslims are still Muslims and we faithful are not allowed to excommunicate them. He referred to the Prophet’s tradition to punish the grave sinner but still counted them part of Muslim community and treated them like other Muslims regarding their rights in community (Ali ibn Abitalib, 2004, 184).

Nevertheless, Kharijites considered Ali the leader who has left the faith because he already chose to finish the civil war between Muslims (Ali’s and Muawiyah’s troops) through negotiation. They believed making judgments is limited to God’s order and commands alone rather than human reconciliation. This was their interpretation of a Quranic verse, saying “the decision/judgment/command (*Hukm*) is for God only” (6:57). They thought human negotiation and reconciliation is a grave sin and causes one to leave the faith. Ali criticized that the Quran is a text which people discuss

on behalf of it (Ibid, 182). He also suggested to his great disciple Abdullah ibn Abbas to not argue with Kharijites only based on the Quranic verses because the text proposes a variety of possible meaning; but to argue with them considering how the Prophet acted and performed (Ibid, 465). Consequently, Kharijite created the first civil war in Islam based on religious motives, and accordingly they later killed Ali in a mosque while he was praying¹⁶.

Kharijites had a hard time among Muslims, both Sunni and Shia, because of their radical interpretations and very few of them survived, though in a much-modified form living currently in Oman. Their radical viewpoints resulted in them living far from central places in Islamic civilization like Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Basra, Isfahan, Nishapur, Herat, Balkh, Sham, and Istanbul. They constantly strive to establish new communities and ask other faithful to join them. These two features, namely calling other Muslims as non-Muslims and calling on the faithful to move to their

¹⁶ To understand Kharijite better, it is worth mentioning that in the traditional and classic understanding most Muslims had a consensus on the necessity of a religious and political ruler. Kharijite, in the seventh century, as a very small but vociferous group, believed that having an appointed/selected caliph is not necessary and that Muslims can live without government. In a fascinating and unprecedented 1300 year reversal of roles, today's Kharijites, centered in present-day Oman, seek to ameliorate the relationships between Sunnis and Shias. Its modern day scholar Ali Yahya Mu'ammam is one among other new intellectuals within Islam who promoted religious pluralism as I discussed in the last footnote. Historically while Sunni and Shia were influenced by Kharijite's extremism, the latter was changing into a moderate form called Ibadism. They learned to modify their ideology and open their minds to other interpretations of Islam. New Kharijites presented a more sophisticated definition of excommunication believing Muslims are unthankful when committing grave sin (*Kufr-i Nimat*) instead of a real infidel (*Kufr-i Shirk*). They added it's not allowed to kill Muslims based on excommunication law. They allowed the fellow Kharijites to marry to other Muslims. These "new" Kharijite started to rationalize their faith and present a more open idea about Islamic rulers; it means the ruler can be selected by community and is not necessarily an infallible person (See Ayazi, 1374; Bahrami, 1377). Therefore, Kharijite represents a wonderful turn in the history of intellectualism. The once uber-extremist Kharijites have left their unique features to their opponents and now serve to negotiate between them.

newly-built-community are recognized as their main features. The first is called *Takfir* (excommunication) – coming from Arabic *Kufr* which means naming a self-styled Muslim an infidel – and the second *Hijrah* (emigration). Also Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) who is celebrated as the spiritual father of Wahhabism and Salafism considers these two features the main features of Kharijite¹⁷.

A revised application of Kharijite's mass excommunication appeared in modern times by Wahhabi-Islam. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), the founder, sought to purify Islam from all contact with Christians, Jews, or other perceived infidels particularly polytheists. Making a pact with Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765), in 1744 he established the present-day Saudi state. When they first met, ibn Abd al-Wahhab asked ibn Saud to make an oath that he would perform *Jihad* against the unbelievers in exchange for becoming the ruler of a newly built Muslim community while ibn al-Wahhab would remain leader in religious matters (al-Rasheed, 2010, 16). This "mutual support pact" and power-sharing agreement continued nearly 300 years among the descendants of two which are called *Al ash-Shaykh* (*Al* here means family and *Shaykh* is an Islamic term for religious leader) and *Al Saud*. Fighting against polytheism remains in the heart of ibn al-Wahhab's ideology. He wrote that one has to excommunicate those who seem to him to be polytheists (Bin Abd al-Wahhab, 2010). Accordingly, because Shia venerates the Prophet and their Imams, it is considered polytheism and its adherents must be excommunicated from the Islamic community. The noted Saudi scholar al-Rasheed has demonstrated how excommunicating Muslims as groups alongside *Hijrah* (immigration) and *Jihad* were a mechanism for state expansion in the Wahhabi tradition (Al-Rasheed, 2007, 34-45).

¹⁷ This is his statement, "the main features of Kharijite faith are leaving the Muslim community and believing other Muslims' lives and properties are not protected" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1408, 2:9).

Indeed, since Kharijites illustrated the most radical and literal meaning of Islam, they are considered as an example of extremist Islam applicable for all extremist trends. This is why Imam Ibn Abidin ash-Shami (1783-1836), a very prominent Hanafi jurist who lived in Syria during the Ottoman era, considered Wahhabism as the current-day Kharijites because they excommunicate and then attack those Muslims they believe are not true to the faith. He cheerfully thanked God to defeat Wahhabis on 1233 A H (1818) (Ibn Abidin, 2003, 6:413)¹⁸. Calling the Wahhabi ideology a Kharijite movement was common among Ulama of nineteenth century Damascus and Baghdad (Al-Rasheed, 2007, p. 117)¹⁹.

In addition, there is a new form of excommunicating ideology emerging among Muslims with more focus on socio-political aspects. It is widely called the *al-Takfir wal-Hijrah* trend. Indeed *al-Takfir wal-Hijrah* refers to two entities: a narrow militant Islamist group and a broad “movement” and a “decentralized network” which endorse an ideology of excommunication. *Jama'at al-Muslism* led by Egyptian Shukri Mustafa was the first group to be called this in the early 1970s²⁰. And many terrorist “cells” around the world nowadays spread the same idea. Both the narrow destroyed group and the broad active groups support the same logic. They advocated an extreme interpretation of Sayyid Qutb’s writings. Previously both Qutb and Maududi promoted the idea of *Jahiliyyat*

¹⁸ The Hanafi school of Jurisprudence is the most popular among Sunni Muslims across the globe and this book is still regarded as the authoritative source on matters of law and Islamic jurisprudence.

¹⁹ My paper “The Guise of the Sunni-Shiite Use of Excommunication (*Takfir*) in the Middle East” provides more details about ongoing mass excommunication in the Middle East and explores in detail how the conflict between Sunni and Shia is nourished by excommunication (Akhlaq, 2015).

²⁰ This group was called by Cairo’s press *Ahl al-Kahf* (people of the cave) referring to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus whose story, in Islam, takes up a whole chapter of the Quran, “The Cave;” a new shape of excommunication and emigration ideology appeared as early as 1975 in al-Qaeda. Bin Laden also fastened onto the imagery that the cave evokes for Muslims (Wright, 2006, 123).

(ignorance)²¹. The humanistic perspective which values humanity in terms of materialism is a modern form of ignorance according to Qutb. This substituted God with humanity; Shariah with secular law. Many “isms” come to fill the empty place of God in this modern ignorant era. The excommunicating militia replaces ignorant societies with infidel (*Kafir*) societies. As a matter of fact, the first extensive emigration happened during the Prophet’s time when he traveled from Mecca to Medina with his companions. This emigration plays a crucial role in Islamic history and the division of earlier pious Muslims into two groups i.e. immigrants and helpers (*Muhajir* and *Ansar*)²², though the Quran explicitly recognizes who did not follow the Prophet in this emigration as Muslims (8:72). Qutb in his commentary on this verse argues that these Muslims are still Muslim in terms of their creeds, although are not perfect Muslims in terms of making a nation (Qutb, 2007, 10:1554-1555);

²¹ The concept of *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance) is an important key concept in Islam. Regarding the Arabic term, it originates from “J-h-l” meaning ignorance but in the Quranic context it refers mostly to intellectual immaturity and moral wickedness. It is mentioned four times, all in the Medinan chapters of the Quran as follows: on thought (3:154); on judgment (5:50); on behavior (33:33) and on emotion (48:26). For instance, the first verse highlights how wrongly some faithful think that faith can bring them above the cause and effect system which is set by God (Tabataba’i, 1997, 4:49-51). It seems that a sectarian as well as political understanding of *Jahiliyyah* links both editions of Salafism, sectarian and political, to one another. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab cites one hundred-twenty-three issues to justify his sectarian contribution (Bin Abd al-Wahhab, 2010, 1:333-352). Sayyid Qutb Also uses this concept so many times in his fundamentalist and very inspirational book *Milestones* (*Ma’alim fi al-Tariq*) to substantiate its socio-political campaign. This handbook (12 chapters, 160 pages), first published 1964, is called one of the most influential works in Arabic of the last half century. In addition, his brother Muhhamd Qutb published an elaborated treatise on the issue called “the twelve century ignorance”. In result, both trends deform a cultural and ethical concept to a sectarian or political edition.

²² To have an idea about the impact of this emigration on the whole of Islamic culture and doctrines as well as how it can inspire Muslims in a global age to a mutual respect with non-Muslims, see my paper “Identity and Immigration: A Quranic Perspective” (Akhlq, 2013, 83-106)

however in spite of this grave defect they are considered Muslims and Qutb does not excommunicate them²³. Yet, the excommunicating movements transformed and radicalized Qutb's idea of universal ignorance to their idea of mass excommunication. They deformed and radicalized another idea of Qutb as well. He said each Muslim, no matter where he is, must attempt to establish Islamic government.

The excommunicating ideology accuses the majority of Muslims of three grave sins: polytheism (*Shirk*), hypocrisy (*Nifaq*), and forbidden innovation (*Bid'ah*). Shias are in the first camp, Sunnis who are allied with the Western power are in the second, and Sunnis who promote democracy are in the third camp²⁴. These three sins cause one to leave Islam and thus the majority of Muslims deserve excommunication. However, the excommunicating militias perfectly represent both main features of Kharijite's ideology: *Takfir* (Excommunication) and *Hijrah* (Emigration). These extremist Islamists also return to the same Kharijite motto: "the make decision/judgment/command (*Hukm*) is for God only" when they are relating to Islam by talking of implication of Shariah regardless of time and space conditions. Wright writes that the principle of excommunication which justifies so much bloodshed within Islam had been born again in that prison hospital room where Qutb was (Wright, 2006, 29). For me, this implies the reactionary nature of current socio-political and extreme Islamists²⁵.

²³ Qutb also in discussion of 4:94 states there is no reason to consider who calls himself a Muslim non-Muslim (Qutb, 2007, 2:737 and also see al-Bihnasawi, 1994, 44-45).

²⁴ For instance, Dr. Fadl and Dr. Ahmed, the colleagues of Zawahiri in the Red Crescent hospital argued anyone who registered to vote merits death because democracy is against Islam for putting in the hands of people authority that properly belongs to God (Wright, 2006, 124).

²⁵ Wright also mentions how Shukri Mustafa and Zawahiri turned toward the excommunicating (*Takfiri*) approach when they faced capital punishment from the Egyptian government (p Wright, 2006, 124-125). All these signs taken together point to a lack of originality of thought in these trends. I would go further and add contemporary political Islam I discussed in the chapter on politics in Islam is not original but merely reactionary.

Regarding excommunication, although there is not an effective movement among Shia²⁶, there is a potential to provoke Sunni Muslims. Shias perceive historical tendency to disrespect the first three caliphs who are known as the Righteous Caliphs for Sunni. Among them the second caliph and one of the Prophet's wives are targeted because of historical events²⁷. This disrespect appears in the form of apparent cursing (wishing evil on someone, which is called *La'n* in Islamic term) and insulting as fake or hypocritical people. In reaction, there is a trend among Sunni scholars to count cursing the companions of the Prophet as blasphemy and the cursers themselves as non-faithful/infidel. Ibn Taymiyyah wrote in detail about the process of excommunication in Islamic jurisprudence. Although he attempts to distinguish between conceptual excommunication (saying something that is contrary to Islamic faith) and excommunication of a specified person as well as a distinction between moderate and radical Shia (called rejectionists), Ibn Taymiyyah specifically identifies as infidels those who curse the companions of the Prophet (if the curser believes the companion had left the faith) or Aisha (613-678), the wife of the Prophet (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1997, 3:1050-1108). These potentials for conflict between Sunni and Shia have always existed but have recently taken on a new life in the current political climate.

In summary, Kharijite, a group not affiliated with either Sunni or Shia Islam, introduced the first mass communication in the Islamic faith. It was purely religious by zealous people who have less knowledge of Islam, as we discussed in the previous chapter

²⁶ Although there is no clear mass excommunication through the Islamic Republic of Iran, many Islamic scholars individually to some extent are excommunicated and are considered as advocating a deformed Islam.

²⁷ For instance, it is a stereotype in Shiite accusing the second caliph guilty in attacking Fatimah, the beloved daughter of the Prophet right after the Prophet's death in order to get the allegiance of Ali for the first caliph. They also condemn Aisha, the Prophet's wife, in her war against Ali (Battle of the Camel at 656). Majority of Sunnis consider them honest and just companions and relatives of the Prophet.

reported by Ali ibn Abitalib. The second mass excommunication appeared by Wahhabi sect, in Sunni context, in modern times targeting Shias and many Sunnis including Sufis as polytheists. It also was motivated by religious puritanism, although in disagreement with orthodox Sunni-Islam. The third and latest version of mass excommunication appeared by some Islamist parties which targets both Sunni and Shia. It is completely a reactionary trend to both western colonialism and traditional Islam. They use religious tools to justify their ideology, in public, among Muslims; the excommunication and immigration appeals to the majority of religiously zealous Muslims. Their features can be discussed as follows: being upset with their current situation, looking for an ideal state under Islamic law, and a history of dreaming about a proper relationship between Islam and politics as I discussed above. Here the magic tools of excommunication and immigration are manifested from their history, religious identity, and ideals of purification. Among the most salient problems, the largest comes from adulteration of Islam with “others.”²⁸

Last Glance

As we saw in Shariah, there is a unique field for association between sacred and secular, state and mosque in Islam. The most important spot in the mosque that the imam uses to pray in front of people is called *Mihrab* (niche), an Arabic word for a place of fighting (against Satan). Since Islamic congregations and various

²⁸ The latest example of this extremist Islamist is ISIS. ISIS’s official journal calls Muslims to *Hijrah* (immigration) to the newly-established Caliphate saying, “Therefore, rush O Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrian, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis [...] The state is a state for all Muslims [...] O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing *Hijrah* (immigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because Hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory.” (DABIQ, 1435, 1:11; the third volume of the journal dedicated to the theme of Hijrah.)

councils and even political decisions used to occur there, it also refers to the battlefield where people fight against the enemy. So the mosque is simultaneously a place for fighting both against ethical evil and socio-political evil. Lack of attention to this unique association between sacred and secular causes misunderstandings of Islam and mistreatment of Muslims. In other words, when we are discussing religion we are not allowed to enforce one pattern of religion, whether Jewish, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, on all others.

Islamic political theology reflects a combination between faith and politics that depicts two different images: Sunni's one that acknowledges a view point close to common sense and Shia's one that acknowledges a more sacred viewpoint. The journey of their thoughts, however, reveals a great deal of overlap, making it impossible to claim any kind of purity. Studying their journeys demonstrates how actual events affect religious viewpoint; there is a twofold point: what the faithful can learn from reality and how faith leaves its firm form facing new demands.

Islamic political philosophy also places interest in the strong connection among human knowledge, ethical values, worldview and politics. Separating politics from ethical values and environmental issues can threaten the future of humanity. There is an emphasis on issues like free will, wisdom, and virtuous city in al-Farabi and Averroes' politics. They remind us how the kingdom of media and ideological propaganda distance people from their authenticity, make them busy with everydayness, and surround them with unreal demands so that they replace true situations with imaginary situations. They teach us to look at humanity as a whole as well as a micro-cosmos which is not allowed to be reduced to a cartoon. The balance among all human desires, powers, and needs is something we have to learn. In modern times, Islamic political thought has become more reactionary as a result of colonialism, a prolonged lack of original productivity, and being confronted with

modernity. This socioeconomic and intellectual backdrop has spawned numerous reactions from Islamists, Puritans, Revivalists, Fundamentalists, and Modernizers. However, advances in technology, societal transformation, and post-colonial experiences are allowing Muslim thought to create possibilities in politics in novel forms.

Suggested Resources

A Study in Islamic Tolerance: As Practiced by Muhammad and his Immediate Successors, Adolph L. Wismar, Gorgias Press, 2009.

And God Knows the Soldiers: The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses, Khaled Abou El Fadl, University Press of America, 2001.

Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads, and Modernity, Tariq Ali, Verso, 2002.

Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam, Qamar-ul Huda, United States Institute of Peace, 2010.

Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement, Roel Meijer (Ed), Columbia University Press, 2009.

Globalized Islam: the Search for a New Ummah, Oliver Roy, Columbia University Press, 2004.

Islam and Democracy in the Middle East, Larry Diamond, Mart F. Plattner and Daniel Brumberg (Ed.), Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, Harvard University Press, 2008.

Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honour World, Akbar S. Ahmed, Polity Press, 2003.

Islam vs. Islamism: the Dilemma of the Muslim World, Peter R. Demant, forwarded by Asghar Ali Engineer, Praeger Publishers, 2006.

Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity, William Montgomery Watt, Routledge, 1988.

Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Intellectual and Spiritual Debates in Islam

Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century, Ed by Suha Taji-Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi, I.B.Tauris, 2004.

Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice, Michael Bonner, Princeton University Press, 2006.

Modernist and Fundamentalist Debates I Islam: A Reader, Manssor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof, Palgrave macmillan, 2002.

Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam, Mohammad Abu-Nimer, University Press of Florida, 2003.

Political Thought in Medieval Islam, Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present, Antony Black, Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

The State on Contemporary Islamic Thought, A Historical Survey of the Major Muslim Political Thinkers of the Modern Era, Abdelilah Belkeziz, I. B. Tauris, 2009.

The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future, Vali Nasr, W. W, Norton & Company, 2006.

The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate, Wilferd Madelung, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

The Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism: An Anthology, Marvin Perry and Howard E. Negrin, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam, John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press, 2002.

Western Dominance and Political Islam, Khalid Bin Sayeed, State University of New York Press, 1995.

Epilogue:

Reflections on the Past and the Present

There is a beautiful poem of Rumi saying,

“Thou art not this body: thou art that Eye [vision]. If thou hast beheld the spirit, thou art delivered from the body.

Man (essentially) is eye: the rest (of him) is (mere) flesh and skin: whatsoever his eye has beheld, he is that thing.” (Rumi, 2002, 6:811-812)

Muslims and Christians look at the same thing differently and if they do not see the other’s view, they will not be able to build together a better future for humanity; they need to borrow the other’s eyes, at least for a while, to experience the variety and color of life, or God’s work. Having the book as the highest and sole authority, what Christians might perceive as a weakness in Islam, is considered the great treasure of Islam by Muslims. The variety of intellectual traditions in Islam suggests that various interpretations are available, particularly when the ever-standing miracle (the Quran) appears in the form of a book. In opposition to the majority Western view of Islam as having a fixed text limited to only one understanding, the rich diversity within both the religion and civilization of Islam shows that different valid interpretations are possible. This is what the first exegetes of the Quran understood in terms of these verses:

“Announce the Good News to My servants! Those who listen to the word and follow the best meanings in it: those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding” (39: 17-18)

The renowned exegete al-Zamakhshari confirms that this verse may be interpreted in this way: people are entitled to different critical interpretations of the word and follow what makes more sense to them. He continued that this might encourage people to compare between God's commands and then choose the one which is better. God many times gives various options and then suggests doing the better regarding ethical virtues. For example, while the Quran recognizes reciprocal treatment in many cases under Sharia law, it also highly appraises forgiveness. Also generosity and helping people is advised, the hidden benevolence is explicitly preferred (16:126; 2:237 & 271). Thus the reciprocal treatment or forgiveness, helping or not minding, and hidden or apparent assistance to the poor all are considered in the Quran but the critical faithful are advised to pick the better (al-Zamakhshari, 1998, 5: 297). Ibn Abbas, as al-Zamakhshari and Qurtubi reported, went further by explaining "the word" to mean all speech including good and evil, not just the Divine Word recorded in the Book. Some commentators believed these verses appraise faithful to compare between the Quran and the Prophet's word and then pick the best. It also states that these verses are revealed to the Prophet to acknowledge peoples like Salam and Abu Dhar who avoided worshipping evil (*Taghut*) and followed the best which they heard before the rise of Islam. Qurtubi, therefore, concludes that the verses appraise and apply to "rational faithful who use their reasons" (al-Qurtubi, 1965, 15:244). These and similar verses encourage us to think how the Quran and its commentators inspired Muslims to respect the diversity of reasonable approaches to the Quran.

The nature of being a book presupposes, in addition, that people can learn, examine, and communicate together about the book's truth. This idea is even the first revelation to the Prophet:

"In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Read in the Name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot of

blood. Read; and your Lord is the Most Bountiful. He who taught (the writing) by the pen; He taught man what he knew not." (96:1-5)

This internal emphasis on the book, pen, arguing, and communicating along with the external manifestation of Islam through various intellectual traditions and two major denominations, which were discussed in the six previous chapters, indeed, prove we can work with Islam through its unique nature. Putting aside the reductionist message and extremism, the multiple interpretations of institutionalized Islam during such a long era and over such a vast area gives us the following two possibilities within Islam. On the one hand, this shows that a fixed text or lack of central singular authority is not problematic. On the other hand, this shows that the journey of thought in Islam throughout all branches of knowledge outlines a scholarly cooperation between the secular and sacred in Islam. By secular I mean the human side versus the sacred or divine side. The former starts with, continues through, and makes decisions by reason (although there are different meanings of reason) and the latter is exclusively concerned with God's revelation. Islamic theology, philosophy, ethics, Sufism, Shariah, and politics contain both human effort and divine elements; though formulated by people, the ideas take into account God's revelations. The discourse and debate between these elements have been instrumental in cultivating human inquiries into spirituality and well-being. This union between secular and sacred is the true nature of Islam; this explains for example why justice is central in this faith, why Islam highlights the very individual characteristics of people for the Day of Judgment, why the Quran describes the delights of paradise as if they were simply a sublimation of earthly joy and pleasures, why sexuality is sacred in the Sunnah, why independent and rational arguments play a central role in theology, why philosophy attempts to equate the first intellect with Gabriel, why the Greek ethics joins the Quran and Sunnah's morals, why love in Sufism connects earthly and heavenly ones, why the fatwa can be

mistaken but rewarded in Shariah, and why the Sunni and Shia political dispute is over, respectively, secular and sacred aspects of governmental power.

This sophisticated and mixed nature of sacred and secular entities, however, presents at the same time an opportunity and a danger: an opportunity to re-understand Islamic texts and scholarship regarding new challenges and realities. This supports humanity, the earthly interests in both individual and social life, and highlights the distinction between perfect divinity and limited humanity; there is always a room for reform, progress and modification in terms of humanity. This mixture also brings the danger of misusing the holy texts for a political agenda; the reality which causes much suffering around the current world, with most of these tragic events even against Muslims themselves, through violent Islam. Since a clear separation between mosque and politics is not possible, at least in current Islam, there is a danger impacting each and therefore darkening both faith and politics. How to balance these two opposing sides is what shapes contemporary scholarly circles and influential movements within Islam. They divide into three groups: the traditional scholarship, the modernizing scholarship, and the reactionary responses. In practice and reality, they are not completely separated, sometimes even integrated with each other but each can be distinguished, regarding their position to this question, with the following features.

The Traditional Scholarship. By this I mean the institutionalized Islam in non-Salafi madrasas in Sunni and also in Shia. Examining the major traditional circles of scholarships in the Islamic world shows that jurisprudence and theology are central in scholarly circles and Sufism also is more or less appealing in al-Azhar of Egypt and Deobandi of India. In the Shia context also jurisprudence and theology are central in Najaf of Iraq and both along with philosophy and theoretical Sufism in Qum of Iran. With these scholars, ethics is mostly reduced to moral advice and they discuss

politics, more or less, in their theology or jurisprudence respectively in Shia and Sunni. Still, the jurisprudence in Shia has been increasingly growing during the last centuries, and in the 17th century Mulla Sadra produced a new school of philosophy. Besides these two exceptions, the other Islamic intellectual traditions unfortunately have not had a real development so that some scholars claim this intellectualism was infertile during its second half of its journey of fourteen centuries.

Although several criticisms confront this scholarship, it is nevertheless able to interact with the modern mind's concerns for various reasons. Through its historical journey this tradition has successfully passed many moments of crisis. That this tradition is very effective can be seen from its being influential and appealing to so many Muslims around the world. Since this tradition is incredibly diverse, its richness tends to attract an elite group of diverse talent. For example, while many ordinary Muslim scholars read jurisprudence or revealed theology, many elites put their hearts in Sufism, philosophy and rational theology. Some even use classic theology to respond to modern developments in philosophy and the humanities in the West, dealing with new theological ideas. To better understand the complexity of this issue, it is worth mentioning that if the traditional scholars tend to jurisprudence and modernizing scholars to Sufism, for example, traditionalists tend to be more practical and helpful. While a Sufi idea can only provide spiritual solace to a political prisoner, the traditional jurisprudence can offer a potential solution to gain their freedom. Throughout history, traditional scholasticism was able to adjust itself to changes. For example, we can see this from the changes in political theories. This tradition also had the chance to meet with different cultures and pave a path for dialogue. There are several examples: theology with Christianity, philosophy with Greek intellectualism, and Sufism with Hinduism. In each meeting, the Islamic version has tried to learn from the "other" while keeping its originality. In

addition, each part of this tradition more or less proved to be flexible in the face of opposing currents. For example, while jurists are not very open to philosophy, they themselves began a kind of philosophical investigation and method in their own system through the Principles of Jurisprudence. Moreover, the traditional scholarship demonstrated to some extent an ability of internalizing itself in the identity of Muslims. Muslims around the world identify themselves with some features of this tradition to show commonality with other faithful. This internalization has happened through a process of education and even indirectly so that one can say the passion for faith is internalized in Muslims. It declares that returning to the past is impossible and this is why the Salafi movements cannot gain the support of the population in Islam without investing so much money. For example, even in a less educated country like Afghanistan, I have personally witnessed that people consider the Taliban as not true Muslims. Finally, through the above mentioned features, the traditional scholarship acquired rich and firsthand knowledge from all the high and low points in Islam. Their knowledge of the Quran, Sunnah, diversity of scholarly methods and doctrines provides them the opportunity to interpret Islam in a way more suitable to all, the nature of Islam, the new ideas and concerns, and Muslims' characteristics.

Yet, there are many obstacles the traditional scholarship has to face because of its lacking a more constructive approach and its neglect of its rich history. Although there has always been a trend to bring branches of intellectualism in harmony with each other, in reality it did not happen much. Most theology and Shariah scholars do not read Sufism or philosophy and view them with a suspicious eye. The Imam Malik and Shafi'i's emphasis on both of these is rare in the Sunni context. The same is true in terms of Shia. Ayatollah Khomeini in his time of power was not able to continue his Sufi interpretation of the Quran via the governmental TV channel in Iran. The same disrespectful manner is common among Sufi and

Muslim philosophers toward jurists. The well-known figures like Rumi and al-Farabi illustrated their offensive views to jurists. This disharmony also resulted in some parts of this traditional scholarship being seemingly contradictory to the nature of Islam. The extreme focus on a very particular ritual performance, for example, the distinct pronunciation between “d” and “dh” in daily prayers for lay people, raises questions about the nature of Islam. The same thing is true when Ibn Arabi discusses Noah or Pharaoh in the Quran as a clear attempt to misinterpret the Quran to justify his own ideas. This depicts Islam more like a cartoon with false and out-of-proportion organs rather than a living and inspiring faith. The other problem with this tradition is politicization. As much as religious study from the inside attempts to understand and develop religious knowledge it may try to justify the present state among the faithful and faith institutions. So the mixture of secular and sacred and political aspects of Islam can provide Muslim traditional scholars with reason to justify their current conditions against the reformist conditions. Being afraid of Muslims’ faith in the future, of non-Muslims and historical background of colonialism may have a role in shaping polarization of Islam or the political use of Islam. Finally judging Islam in terms of geography and history is a very big question challenging the traditional scholarship. They use to refuse ideas because they come from the West or because they were not usual in the past. But still there are many Quranic verses condemning the people for arguing and believing merely based on their parents’ traditions. As it is said the Prophet’s message was looked at as a vanguard in his time. Also there are several verses saying that other people, from other nations and locations, may understand and practice the true Islamic values more than the current Muslims (4:133; 5:56; 14:19-20; 47:38).

One Quranic chapter is named Rome. It predicted the victory of Romans over the Persians by the support of God and also declared Muslims will rejoice in this victory (30: 2-4). The reason for

why Muslims rejoiced was either that Romans were more faithful than the Persians (Suyuti, 2002, 201) or because the emperor of Rome treated respectfully the Prophet's missionary letter while the Persian emperor treated it disrespectfully; in other words the Western power proved its openness to others but the Persians to no one (Qara'ati, Tafsir-i Noor, 1374: 7:179). However, it illustrates the Quranic respect for the Western power because of its secular or sacred values. As a result, the conservative approach among the traditional scholarship more greatly protects what is tradition, instead of walking further to explore new meanings of faith regarding newly emerged concepts and challenges. Their resistance to the modern day methods of study of the faith and religion also helps generations of a modern mindset either to leave the faith or try to interpret Islam with their own lesser knowledge of the sources and scholarship. For the connection between Islam and socio-political issues, the last point feeds the politicized Islam and extremist movements who recruit from emerging masses, to use Hanna Arendt framing.

The Modernizing Scholarship: In contrast to a traditionalist methodology, this scholarship takes the new demands, mind and methods very seriously. Its conceptual structure of rationalism, humanism, and socio-political values like democracy, human rights, justice, and equality is constitutive of this mindset. Many intellectual movements during the last century in Islam are still attempting to modify Islam according to current conditions. As much as the traditional and institutionalized Islam throughout history resisted change such as new mental and physical boundaries, the modernizing scholarship embraces these changes. In spite of this positive aspect, this tradition also suffers from many problems. Its reductionist nature appears in limiting Islam to certain very minimal aspects. This reductionism manifested itself in socio-political agendas in the earliest trends which still nourish many Jihadist and Islamist strains of thought. In some later trends several

very spiritual Sufi points were and are highlighted. For example they present Rumi and Ibn Arabi as exemplifying a perfect understanding of Islam while they forget the relationship between master and disciple in their Sufi perspectives. In this relationship, a disciple must leave his or her will and identity entirely with his master to even have the possibility of reaching a high spiritual state. In another trend the mere achievements of the modern sciences or modern philosophy are regarded as the criteria by which Islam has to be justified. Moreover, this tradition has not yet stood the test of time. It also faces the problem of satisfying Muslims' quest for an integrated and holistic harmony. This is why they fail to shape and impact the general people; a low rank scholar who graduated from a madrasa can cause much passion while a high rank scholar who graduated from non-madrasa cannot cause even a little social impact. The distance they keep from tradition creates a gap between them and people who were raised in it and continue to uphold it. Their theories reflect more of an academic setting than a mosque, and their rhetoric speaks more of education than of guidance and inspiration. Furthermore, their harsh criticism of the past conveys a sense of lack of loyalty to its origins.

The Reactionary Response: there are many reactionary responses within new trends in Islam which feeds radical Islam. They consist of three elements: vengeance to colonialism or current support of corrupt and dictator governments in Islam by Western powers; obsession to impoverished and backwards conditions in their regions; and rashness in jumping from the current to an ideal situation. Without producing a new idea, like modernizing scholarship, or reframing the traditional scholarship, they only produce passion and feelings. Their understanding of Islam is minimalistic and their suggestion is oversimplified. In Islamic faith it strongly tends to politicize faith and produce violence. For example the Quranic punishments for crimes, as they are discussed in the Shariah chapter, involve restricted conditions and are capable

of many dispensations through Ijtihad. But the reactionary trends think the problems in Islamic countries originate from the non performance of these punishments. They spend no time studying the examined historical scholarship behind these obligations and then rapidly perform them in a harsh form. Even the reaction to the lack of productivity of the last few centuries of traditional scholarship and the accusations against modernizing scholarship of being westernized and of lacking Islamic authenticity also help to further these trends. The lack of sophisticated examination makes them popular among the masses and gives them the opportunity to suggest a very superficial understanding of Islam. Unfortunately modern life in the free market through endless competition to gain more money in consumerism in the West allows no time for a deeper understanding of Islam and thus tends to foster the idea that superficial Islam is the only Islam there is; this inspires violence and terror in turn.

In conclusion, there are Quranic verses which recognize that God created diverse nations and peoples intentionally. They point out that attaining God's mercy through this diversity is the main purpose of creation (11: 118-119, also see Ibn Kathir 1999, 361-363). So, being different, in both physical and cultural states, is a part of God's mercy for people. The same diversity has appeared within Islam through multiple intellectual traditions. The history of Islam is marked by an abundance of intellectual and spiritual debates which have resulted in a flourishing of beauty and wisdom from each disciple. There is one more clear statement of the Quran saying that you are not allowed to count as non-Muslims those who consider themselves Muslims (4:94). Islamic intellectualism, from past to present, moves forward from this background. It also suggests the potential for both progress and regress in dealing with diversity and mercy. Learning from the incredible historical experiences of religious scholarship, facing new concepts and concerns about the modern mind and life, and renewing faith before

the Book and Sunnah all pave a new path for the future of Islamic intellectualism. It remains to be seen whether the current crop of Muslim intellectuals can make use of both original sources and the progress of Islamic thought to reinvigorate the modern man's search for truth, benevolence, and beauty.

Bibliography

- Abd al-Jabbar, Qadhi Imad ad-Din. [No Date]. *Fadhl al-Itizal wa Tabaqat al-Mutazilite*. Ed. Fwad Sayed, Tunisia: Dar al-Tunisia Il-Nashr.
- Abd al-Jabbar. 1998. *al-Usul al-Khamsah* Ed. Faisal Bair Awn. Safat: Kuwait University Press.
- Abd al-Raziq, Ali. 1925. *al-Islam wa Usul al-Hukm (Islam and the Foundations of Government)*. Cairo: Sarl al-Kitab al-Misri.
- Abd al-Raziq, Mustafa. 2011. *Tamhid l-Tarikh al-Falsafat al-Islamiyyah*. Intro. Muhammad Hilmi abd al-Wahhab. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Masri.
- Abidi, Ahmad [et alii]. 1373. *Hadith*. In *Tashai'ua: Sairi dar Farhang va Tarikh-e Tashai'ua*, Ed. Encyclopedia of Tashai'ua. Tehran: Saed Muhebbi.
- Al-Afghani, Sayed Jamal ad-Din. 1925/1304. *Tafsir-e Mufasssir In Iranshahr*. Vol. 3, No. 9, Tehran.
- Ahmadian, Abdullah. [No Date]. *Sunnat az Didgah-e Ahl-e Sunnat va Sair-e Hadith az Aghaz ta Tadwin-e Suhah-e Sitta*. In *Quarterly Neda-e Islam*. Zahidan. Vol. 1, No. 4.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan, 2023, *The Making of Shia Ayatollahs*, Lanham, Maryland: The Rowman & Littlefield.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 1386. *From Mawlana to Nietzsche*. Qum: Suluk-e Javan.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 1388. *Sunnat-e Rushanandishi dar Islam va Gharb*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 1389. *From the Tradition of Balkh to the Modernity of Paris*. Kabul: Nibras & Saed.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. *Taliban and Salafism: a Historical and Theological Exploration*. Open Democracy. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/sayed-hassan-akhlaq/taliban-and-salafism-historical-and-theological-exploration>. Accessed 27, June 2015.

- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 2013. *Identity and Immigration: A Quranic Perspective*. In *Building Community in a Mobile/Global Age: Migration and Hospitality*. Ed. John P. Hogan, Vensus A. George and Corazon T. Toralba, 83-106. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 2015. *The Guise of the Sunni-Shiite Use of Excommunication (Takfir) in the Middle East*. In *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 4.
- Akhlaq, Sayed Hassan. 2017. *The Tradition of Rationality in Islamic Culture*. In *The Secular and The Sacred Complementary and/or Conflictual?*. Ed. John P. Hogan and Sayed Hassan Akhlaq, 761-776. Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Ali ibn Abitalib. 2004. *Nahj al-Balaghah*. Ed. Subhi Salih. Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri and Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani.
- Al-Amarraji, Ahmad Shawki Ibraheem. 2000. *El-Moutazela in Bagdad and their influence on inietlectual and political life from the reign of Kaliph El-Mamoun until the death of El-Moutawkel Ala-Allah*. Cairo: Madbouli (the book is in Arabic but includes a summary in English).
- Al-Ameli, Sayed Jafar Murtaza. 1410. *Salma al-Farsi*. Qum: Jameeh Modarresin.
- Amidi, Saif ad-Din. 1971. *Ghayata l-Maram fi Ilm-e al-Kalam*. Ed. Hassan Mahmud abd al-Latif. Cairo: Lujnat Ihya al-Turath al-Islamiyyah.
- Amir-Moezzi, Ali. 1994. *The Divine Guide in Early Shiism: The Source of Esotericism in Islam*. David Streight (trans.). New York: State University of New York Press. 1994.
- Asadabadi [al-Afghani], Sayed Jamal ad-Din. 1358. *Maqalat Jamaliyyah*. Ed. Mirza Lutf-allah Khan Asadabadi. Tehran; Intisharat-e Islami.
- Al-Ashari, Abi al-Hassan Ali. 1990. *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilaf al-Musallin*. Ed. Muhammad Muhyy ad-Din Abd al-Hamid. Bairut: al-Maktabat al-Asriyyah.
- Al-Ashmawy, Muhammad Said. 1994. *Islam and the Political Order*. Washington: the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.
- Ayazi, Sayed Muhammad. 1374. *Tafasir-e Abadis*. In *Bayyinat*, Vol 2, No. 7:140-153. Qum: Muassesih Ma'aref Islami Imam Ridha.

- Bahrami, Nuhammad. 1377. *Ara-e Kalami va Tafsiri-e Adadis*. In *Pazuheshha-e Qurani*, 13 & 14: 304-335. Mashhad; Pazuheshgah-e Ulum va Farhang-e Islami.
- Al-Baihaqi, Hafidh. 1999. *Al-Madkhal ila al-Sunan al-Kubra*. Ed. Muhammad Dhiia al-Rahman al-Adhami. Riyadh: Adhwa al-Salaf (second print).
- Al-Bihnasawi, Salim. 1994. *al-Hukm wa Qadhiyyat Takfir al-Muslim*. Alexandria: Dar al-Wafaa.
- Bin Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad. 2010. *Moallifat al-Skeikh al-Imam Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab*. Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah.
- Al-Bukhari, Imam Abi Abdullah Muhammad. 2002. *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Bairut and Demascus: Dar ibn Kathir.
- Chittick, C. William. 2008. *Sufism; a Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- DABIQ, 1435. ISIS, Ramadan, Vol. 1. <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/09-2014/isis-isil-islamic-state-magazine-Issue-1-the-return-of-khilafah.pdf>. Accessed 27 June 2015.
- Dadbeh, Asghar. 1374. *Negahi be Ismailite va Nazariyahaye Kalami va Falsafi dar Maktab-e Ismailite*. In *Zaban va Adabiyat-e Farsi*. No. 9, 10 & 11: 51-88. Teharn: Kharazmi University.
- Esposito, John L. 2005. *Islam, the Straight Path*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fairihi, Davud. 1383. *Ravish-shinasi Andishe Siyasi Ibn Rushd*. In *Majale Danishkade Huquq va Uloom Siyasi*, 63:59-91. Tehran: Tehran University.
- Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr. 1995 *Ara Ahl al-Madinat al-Fadhilah wa Mudhadattiha*. Ed. Ali Bu Malham. Bairut: Dar wa Maktabat al-Hilal.
- Farasatkah, Maqsoud. 1377. *Sar-Aghaz-e Naw-Andishi-e Ma'asir: Dini va Ghair-e Dini*. Tehran: Shirkat-e Sahami Intishar.
- Fayz Kashani, Muhammad (Mulla Muhsen). 1376. *Mohjata al-Beyza fi Tahzib al-Ihya*. Ed. Ali Akbar Ghaffari. Qum: Moassisah Nashr Islami.
- Al-Ghamedi, Dalih bin Gham Allah. 2003. *Ma'wqif Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah min Arae al-Falasifa wa Manhajah fi Ardhiha*. Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'arif.
- Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid. 1964. *Fazaih al-Batiniyyat*. Ed. Abd ar-Rahman Badawi. Cairo: al-Dar al-Qawmiyyah li-Tiba'at wa al-Nashr.

- Ghazzali, Muhammad. 1993. *Revival of Religious Learnings (Imam Ghazzali's Ihya Uluma-id-Din)*. Trans. Fazl-ul-Karim. Karachi: Darul-Ishaat.
- Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid. 1993. *Faisal al-Tafriqah*. Damascus: Mahmoud Bijou.
- Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid. 2003. *al-Iqtisad fil Itiqad*. Ed. Insaf Ramadan. Beirut: Kotaiba.
- Ghazzali, Imam Muhammad. 1380. *Kimiya-yi Saadat*. Ed. Hussaini Khadiw jam. Tehran: Ilmi va Farhangi.
- Hanafi, Hassan. 2010. *New Directions in Islamic Thought*. Washington: Center for International and Regional Studies, George Washington University, Brief No.4.
- Al-Hanafi al-Hamawi, al-Sayed Ahmad bin Muhammad. 1985. *Ghamz Uyun al-Basair; Sharh Kitab al-Ashbah wa al-Nazair*. Bairut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Haeri Yazdi, Mahdi. 1388. *Hikmat va Hukumat*, <http://andischeh.com/wpfa/wp-content/ketab/ejtemaie/nazarat-sabz-haeirii.pdf>. Accessed 27 June 2015.
- Haeri Yazdi, Mahdi. 1375. *Naqdi ba Maqale-e Sairi dar Mabani Wilayat-e Faqih*. In *Faslname Hukumat-e Islami*, Vol. 1. No. 2: 223-233. Tehran: Dabirxhane Majlis Khobrigan Rahbari.
- Al-Hor al-Ameli, Muhammad bin Hassan. 1372. *Tafsil Wasael al-Shia*. Qum: Moassisah Al al-Bayt.
- Ibn Abd al-Bir, abi Umar Yosuf. 1994. *Jame Bayan al-Ilm wa Fadhliah*. Ed. Abi al-Ashbal al-Zuhairi. Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi.
- Ibn Abd al-Birr al-Andulisi, Abi-Umar Yusuf. 1997. *Al-Intiqah fi Fazail al-A'emmah al-Thalatha al-Fuqaha*. Ed. Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah. Aleppo: al-Matbuat al-Islamiyyah.
- Ibn Abd Rabbuh al-Andulisi, Ahmad bin Muhammad. 1983. *al-Iqd al-Farid*. Ed. Mufid Muhammad Qamihah. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Ibn abi al-Hadid. 2007. *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*. Ed. Muhammad Ibrahim. Beirut: Dal al-Amira and Baghdad: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi.
- Ibn Abidin, Muhammad Amin. 2003. *Radd al-Muhtar ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar Sharh Tanwir al-Absar*. Ed. Ahmad Abd al-Mawjud and Ali Muhammad Muawwadh. Riyadh: Dar Alim al-Kutub.

- Ibn Arabi, Muhyiddin. 1911. *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq: A Collection of Mystical Odes*. Trans. Reynold A. Nicholson. London: Royal Asiatic Society.
- Ibn Asakir, Abi al-Qasim Ali ibn al-Hassan. 2000. *Tarikh Madinat Dameshq*. Ed. Muhib ad-Din Abi Saed Umar bin Gharat al-Umari. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.
- Ibn Kathir al-Qurashi al-Demeshqi, Abi al-Fida Islamil. 1999. *Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim*. Ed. Sami bin Muhammad al-Salamah. Riyadh: Dar Rayyiba.
- Ibn Khaldun. 1984. *al-Umquddimah*. Tunisia: al-Dar al-Tunisia II-Nashr.
- Ibn Rushd. 1998. *Commentary on Plato's Republic (Kitan al-Siyasa)*. Trans. into Arabic by H.M. Al-Ubaidi and F. K. Al-Thabi. Beirut: Dar al-Talta.
- Ibn Rushd, Abu Walid Muhammad. 1997. *Fasl al-Maqal fi Taqrir ma bain al-Shariah wa al-Hikmat min al-Itisal*. Ed. Muhammad al-Jabiri. Beirut: Markaz Darasat al-Wahdat al-Arabia.
- Ibn Rushd, Abu Walid Muhammad. 1998. *al-Kashf an Manahij al-Adillah fi Aqaid al-Millah*. Ed. Muhammad al-Jabiri. Beirut: Markaz Darasat al-Wahdat al-Arabia.
- Ibn Sina. 1968. *al-Isharat Wa-t Tanbihat with Commentary of Nasir ad-Din Tusi*. Ed. Solyman Donya. Cairo: Dar al-Maaref.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi ad-Din. 1986. *Minhaj al-Sunnat al-Nabawiyyah*. Ed. Muhammad Rashad Salem. Cairo: Muas'sisat Cordoba.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi ad-Din. 1997. *Al-Sarim al-Maslul ala Shatim ar-Rasul*. Ed. Muhammad al-Halwani and Muhammad Shawdari. Riyadh: Dar Ibn Hazm.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi ad-Din. 2005. *ar-Radd ala-al-Mantiqiyyin*. Ed. Abd al-Samad Sharaf ad-Din. Beirut: al-Rayan.
- Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi ad-Din. 1408. *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*. Ed. Abd ar-Rahman Umayra. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Ibn Tufail, Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi. 2005. *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*. Ed. Ahamd Amin. Baghdad: Ittihad Press.
- Imami, Muhammad Jafar. 1385. *Shan-e Nuzul Ayat Quran*. Introd. Makarim Shirazi. Qum: Madrasah al-Imam Ali bin Abi Talib.
- Iqbal, Muhammad. 1989. *The Construction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

- Iqbal, Muhammad. 1366. *Kulliyat-e Ash'ar*. Ed. Mahmud Ilmi. Tehran: Javidan.
- Jafari, Sayed Muhammad Mahdi. 1373. *Tafsir*. In *Tashai'ua: Sairi dar Farhang va Tarikh-e Tashai'ua*. Ed. Encyclopedia of Tashai'ua. Tehran: Saed Muhebbi.
- Al-Jahiz, Abu Uthman Amr. 1998. *al-Bayan wa al-Tabyan*. Edited by Abd as-Salam Muhammad Harun. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji.
- Javadi, Muhsen and Atrak, Hussain. 1386. *Nazareye Akhlaqi Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar Mutazilite*. In *Philosophical-Theological Research Quarterly*, Vol 9, No 1: 53-95. Qum: University of Qum.
- Kadivar, Mohsen. 2005. *The Theories of State in the Shiite Figh*. Tehran: Ney Publishing House.
- Kamali, Muhammad Hashim. 2010. *Shari'ah Law, an Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Book.
- Al-Kharraz, Khalid ibn Juma. 2009. *Mawsuat al-Akhlaq*. Kuwait: Ahl al-Ather.
- Khomeini, Sayed Ruhollah. 1371. *Hukumat-e Islami ya Wilayat-e Faqih*. Tehran: Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works. <http://archlibserver.imam-khomeini.ir/site/catalogue/fulltext/574121/4416887>. Accessed 27 June 2015.
- Al-Kulayni, Muhammad bin Taqub. [No Date]. *al-Kafi*. Tehran, Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah.
- Lapidus, Ira M., "The Golden Age: The Political Concepts of Islam," in *524 Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1992.
- Madelung, Wilferd. 1997. *Succession to Muhammad, a Study of the early Caliphate*. Cambridge: Cambridge Press.
- Mahmoud, Abdul-Halim. 1989. *al-Tafkir al-Falsafi fi il-Islam*. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif.
- Al-Mahmoud, Abd ar-Rahman Salih. 1995. *Mawqif Ibn Taymiyyah min al-Ashairite*. Riyadh: al-Rushd.
- Majidi, Hassan and Shafi'i Omid, 1392. *Siyasat dar Hikmat Amali Ibn Rushd*. In *Justarhae Siyasi-e Ma'asir*, Vol. 4, No. 2:145-169. Tehran: Pazhohishga Uloom Insani va Mutaleat Farhangi.
- Al-Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir. 1388. *Bihar al-Anwar*. Qum: Ihya al-Kutib al-Islamiyyah.

- Mohajerani, Ata'ollah. 1387. *Barrasi-e Sair-e Zendegi va Hikmat va Hukumat-e Salman Farsi*. Tehran: Itila'at.
- Mutahhari, Murtaza. 1382. *Kulliyat-e Uloom-e Islami*. Tehran: Sadra.
- Mutahhari, Murteza. 1385. *Yaddasht-hae Ustad*. Tehran: Sadra.
- Mutahhari, Murteza. 1390. *Jazibeh va Dafia Ali*. Tehran: Sadra.
- Mutahhari, Murtaza, 1374, *Majmo-e Athar Shahid Mutahhari*. Tehran: Sadra.
- Al-Muai'yidi, Majd ad-Din bin Muhammad. 1997. *al-Tuhuf fi Sharh al-Zuluf*. Sana'a: Maktabat Badr.
- Mu'ammam, Ali Yahya. 1995. *al-Abadi fi Mawkab al-Tarikh (al-Halqata al-Aula: Nash'at al-Madhab al-Abadi)*. Cairo: Maktabat Wahavah Il-Tiba'at wa al-Nashr.
- Muhseni, Muhammad Asif. 1381. *Mashra't Bihar al-Anwar*. Qum: Azizi.
- Muhseni, Muhammad Asif. 1390. *Shia and Sunni che farqi Darand?* Kabul: Harakat-e Islami Afghanistan.
- Mullah Abu Bakr and others. 1888. *Taqwim al-Din*. Kabul: Dar al-Saltanah.
- Muntazeri, Hussain Ali. 1387. *Hukumat-e Dini va Huquq-e Insan*. Qum: Saraii.
- Muslim, Abu Hussain. 2007. *English Translation of Sahih Muslim*. Ed. Abu Tahir Zubair Ali Za'i. Trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Riyadh: Darussalam.
- Na'ini, Nuhammad Hussain. 1388. *Tanbih al-Ummah wa Tanzih al-Millah*. Trans. Jawad Warai, Qum: Bustan-e Kitab.
- Narraqi, Mahdi Abudar. 1365. *Sharh al-Ilahiyyat min Kitab al-Shifa*. Ed. Mahdi Muhaqqiq. Tehran: McGill Institute of Islamic Studies Tehran Branch and Tehran University.
- Nasafi, Aziz ad-Din. 1998/1377. *Kitab al-Insan al-Kamil*. Ed. Marijan Mole. Tehran: Kitabkhane Tahuri and Institut Franais d'Iranologie de Teheran.
- Nasafi, Aziz al-Din. 2002. *Persian Metaphysics and Mysticism; Selected Treatises of Aziz Nasani*. Introduced and Trans. Lloyd Ridgeon. UK: Curzon Press.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 2002. *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. New York: HarperOne.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 2007. *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present*. Lahore: Shuhail Academy.

- Al-Nawawi, Abu Zakaria Muhiy ad-Din. 1929. *Sahih Muslim bi Sharh al-Nawawi*. Cairo: al-Matba'at al-Misriyyah Bi-l-Al-Azhar.
- Noorbakhsh, Sima. 1390. *Noor dar Hikmat Suhrawardi*. Tehran: Hermes.
- Paya, Ali. *Islamic Philosophy: Past, present and Future*. in Philosophical Traditions. 2014. Royan Institute of Philosophy Supplement: 74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 265-321.
- Qara'ati, Mohsen. 1374. *Tafsir-e Noor*. Tehran: Markaz-e Frahang-i Darshaye az Quran.
- Al-Qurtubi, Abi Abdullah Muhammad. 1965. *al-Jame al-Ahkam al-Quran*. Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah.
- Qutb, Sayyid. 2003. *Fi Zilal al-Quran*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- Al-Rasheed, Madawi. 2007. *Contesting the Saudi State; Islamic Voices from a New Generation*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Al-Rasheed, Madawi. 2010. *A History of Saudi Arabia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Renard, John. 2009. *The A to Z of Sufism*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.
- Renard, John. 2011. *Islam and Christinity*. California: University of California Press.
- Reyahi, Muhammad Hussain. 1386. *Salman: Telayedar-e Ma'rifat va Haqjooyii*. In *Quarterly Akhlaq*, Isfahan: Daftar-e Tablighat Islami, Vol. 7. pp. 53-89.
- Rumi, Jalal ud-din. 1381/2002. *The Mathnawi of Jalal ud-Din Rumi*. Trans. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson. Tehran: Research Center of Booteh Publication Co.
- Rumi, Jalal ud-Din. 1384. *Kulliyat-e Shams Tabrizi (Diwan-e Kabir-e Shams)*. Ed. Badi al-Zaman Forozanfar. Tehran: Tilaya.
- Salehi Najafabadi, Ayatullah Nematollah. 2012. *Jihad in Islam*. Trans. Hamid Mavani. Montreal: Organization for the Advancement of Islamic Knowledge and Humanitarian Services.
- Salihi Najafabadi. 1382. *Shahid Javid*. Tehran: Omid Farda (17th edition).
- Al-Sarraj al-Tusi, Abi Nasr. 1960. *al-Luma'a*. Ed. Abd al-Halim Mahmoud and Taha abd al-Baqi Surur., Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha.
- Shafi'i, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris. 2005, *Diwan il-Imam il-Shafi'i*. Ed. Abd ar-Rahman al-Mastawi. Beirut: Dar El-Marefah.

- Shariati, Ali. *Majmo-e Athar*. Tehran: Hussainiyyah Irshad. Shariati Home. <http://www.shariatihome.com>. Accessed 27, June 2015.
- Al-Shashi, Nazam ad-Din Abi Ali. 2003. *Usul al-Shashi*. Beirut: Sar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
- Sirriyeh, Elizabeth. 2003. *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*. London: Routledge Curzon.
- Smith, Huston. 2005. *Islam, a Concise Introduction*. Lahore: Suhail Academy (it is published in association with *Islam, Religion, History and Civilization* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in one volume)
- Soroush, Abdul al-Karim. 1384. *Az Shariati*. Tehran: Sirat.
- Shubbar, Sayed Abdullah. 1427. *al-Akhlaq*. Ed. Jawad Shubbar. Qum: Dawi al-Qurba.
- Soroush, Abdul al-Karim. 1368. *Jame Tahzib bar Tan-e Ihya*. In *Farhang*, Vol. 4 & 5: 1-100. Tehran: Pazhuhishgah-e Uloom-e Insani va Mutale'at-e Farhangi.
- Stone, Daniel. 2001. *The Polish-Lithuanian States, 1386-1795*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Al-Suyuti, Jalal ad-Din. 2002. *Asbab al-Nuzul*. Beirut: Mawsuat al-Kutub al-Thiqafiyyah.
- Al-Tabarsi, Abi Ali a-Fadhl. 2006. *Majma al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran*. Beirut: Dar al-Mortada.
- Tabataba'i, Sayed Muhammad Hussain. 1388. *Ali and Divine Philosophy*. Qum: Daftar-e Tablighat Islami.
- Tabataba'ii, Sayed Muhammad Hussain. 1997. *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*. Beirut: Moassisa-i al-Alami Il-Matbu'at.
- Taftazani, Sad al-Din. 1998. *Sharh al-Maqasid*, Ed. Abd ar-Rahman Umaira. Beirut: Alam al-Kotob.
- The New American Bible*. 2007. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- The Noble Quran*. 1417. Madinah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran.
- Tareen, Sherali. 2020. *Defending Muhammad in Modernity*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Al-Tirmidhi, Abu Isa Muhammad. 1996. *al-Jami al-Kabir*. Ed. Bashshar Awwad maruf. Beirut: Dar al-Gharb a-Islami.

- Al-Tusi, Abi Jafar Muhammad. [No Date]. *al-Tibyan Fi al-Tafsir al-Quran*. Ed. Ahmad Habib al-Ameli. Introd. Agha Buzurg Tehrani. Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Tusi, Nasir ad-Din Muhammad. 1373. *Awsaf al-Ashraf*, Ed. Sayed Mahdi Shams ad-Din. Tehran: Vizarat Farhang va Irshad Islami.
- Wright, Lawrence. 2006. *The Looming Tower: al-Qaeda and the Road of 0/11*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1383. *Falsafiyi Mashsh'a ba Gozide Jame az Motun (The Peripatetic Philosophy with a comprehensive selection of main texts)*. Qum: Bustan-e Ketab.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1384. *Erfan-e Nazari*. Qum: Bustan-e Ketab.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1384. *Pazhoheshi dar Nisbate-e Din wa Irfan (An Inquiry Concerning the Relationship between Religion and Mysticism)*. Tehran: Pazhohishgah-e Farhang wa Andisheh-e Islami.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1386. *Zabane-ye Shams va Zaban-e Mawlawi [The Fire of Shams and the Tongue of Rums]*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1386/2007. *As-Suhrawardi's Hikmat al-Ishraq: a Report on Hikmat al-Ishraq, plus Comparison and Critique along with the Original Text of Hikmat al-Ishraq*. Qum: Bustan-e Ketab.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1387. *Muqaddeme'i bar Falsafe Siyasat dar Islam*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1387. *Tafsir-e Rooz*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Yasrebi, Sayed Yahya. 1389. *Transcendental Wisdom*. Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Al-Zamakhshari, Jar Allah. 1998. *Al-Kashshaf*. Ed. Adil Ahmad Abd al-Mawjud and Ali Muhammad Muawwadh. Riyadh: Maktabat al-Abikan.

Index

A

- Aam, 223, 230
Abbasid, 45, 59, 77, 79, 105, 156, 285
Abd al-Huzayf Allaf, 90
Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, 96, 172
Abd al-Qadir Awdah, 288
Abd al-Raziq, 269, 287, 288
Abd al-Wahhab, 99, 300, 302
Abd-Allah ibn Ubay, 243
Abdel-Halim Mahmoud, 95, 296
Abdul al-Karim Soroush, 123
Abdullah Jawadi Amuli, 57
Abed al-Jabiri, 266
Abraham, 53, 70, 218, 243
Abrahamic, 166, 217
abrogation, 41, 47
Abu Abd al-Raham Sulami, 49
Abu al-Hassan al-Amiri, 135, 277
Abu al-Muzaffar Isfaraini, 47
Abu al-Qasim Qushairi, 49
Abu Ayyub Ansari, 162
Abu Bakr, 47, 59, 65, 156, 238, 284, 287
Abu Bakr Jassas, 47
Abu Darda, 45, 68
Abu Daud, 59
Abu Dhar, 68, 74, 310
Abu Hanifah, 62, 66, 103, 121, 222, 229, 235, 240
Abu Hatam al-Razi, 199
Abu Ishaq al-Nazzam, 90
Abu Ishaq al-Zajaj, 46
Abu Jafar al-Nuhas, 46
Abu Mansur Maturidi, 47, 103
Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khayr, 173
active intellect, 192
Adab, 143, 145, 147
Adam, 71, 160
Addah, 266
Adliyyah, 103
Afghanistan, 19, 47, 61, 64, 78, 103, 104, 174, 182, 200, 203, 257, 286, 314
Africa, 64, 200, 255
Ahadiyyat, 163
Ahd, 239, 283
Ahkam Imza'i, 265
Ahl al-Bayt, 61
Ahl al-Hadith, 89, 91, 93, 95, 132
Ahl al-Hadith wa al-Mushabbiha, 64, 91
Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Hadith, 64, 91
Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamma'a, 64
Ahmad Narraqi, 137
Aisha, 304
Ajam, 263
Akhbari, 63, 81, 93, 220, 228, 229
Akhlaq, 22, 24, 34, 68, 77, 87, 93, 100, 103, 113, 114, 116, 135, 136, 141, 142,

Intellectual and Spiritual Debates in Islam

- 143, 144, 145, 160, 169, 186, 189, 191,
199, 216, 245, 277, 286, 301, 302
- al- 'amr bil ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-
munkar, 87, 93
- Al Saud, 300
- al-Adliyah Wa al-Ghayraham, 89
- al-Afghani, 49, 50, 52, 55, 75, 85, 99,
102, 112, 113, 114, 116, 118, 119, 122,
123, 208, 212, 217, 252, 269, 286, 287,
288, 290
- al-Aklil, 143
- al-Asfar al-Arba'ah, 203
- al-Azhar, 38, 177, 200, 265, 287, 296,
312
- al-Baqilani, 95
- al-Bayan, 43, 56
- Albert Hall City of Kolkata, 112
- al-Bukhari, 59
- Al-Bukhari, 271
- al-Dirayah, 24, 61
- Aleppo, 201
- al-Farabi, 110, 135, 181, 182, 191, 192,
193, 198, 206, 208, 275, 277, 278, 293,
306, 315
- Alfaz, 261
- al-Fiqh al-Akbar, 86, 218
- al-Furqa al-Najiya, 296
- al-Hakim, 16, 89, 188, 192
- Alhamdulillah, 36
- al-Haq, 141, 158, 162
- al-Haqayeq, 141
- al-Haqiqah, 158
- al-Harun, 187
- al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah, 203
- Ali ibn Abitalib, 44, 60, 65, 66, 67, 71,
76, 156, 187, 253, 285, 298, 305
- Ali Shariati, 69, 119, 122
- Ali Sistani, 78
- alienation, 178
- al-Ishraq, 201
- al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Quran, 43
- al-Jahiz, 44
- al-Jama'a, 64, 91
- al-Jawahir, 55
- al-Jurjani, 95
- al-Kafi, 60
- al-Kashf, 48
- al-Khoei, 32, 43
- al-Kindi, 135, 181, 182
- al-Kulayni, 60, 68, 74, 244
- Allamah Jamal al-Din al-Hilli, 104
- al-Ma'mun, 45, 78, 105, 187
- al-Mada'in, 71, 72, 73
- al-Mansur, 59, 113, 187
- al-Mu'tasim, 105
- al-Mufid, 90
- al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usul, 261
- al-Mustazhir, 285
- al-Muwafaqaat fi Usul al-Shariah, 234
- al-Nasai, 60
- al-Qanun fi al-Tibb, 193
- al-Rasheed, 300
- al-Rijal, 24, 61
- al-Risala al-Qushayriyyah, 161
- al-Riwayah, 24
- al-Sahabah, 96
- al-Salaf, 95, 98
- al-salamu alaykum, 36
- al-Shahadah, 111
- al-Shahrzuri, 203
- al-Shariah, 158, 234
- al-Sharif al-Radi, 46

- al-Shatibi, 234, 266
 al-Sira al-Nabawiyah, 132
 al-Suyuti, 42, 43, 248
 al-Tabari, 46
 al-Tabiun, 96
 al-Tafsirat al-Ahmadiyyah, 228
 Al-Taj, 143
 al-Takfir wal-Hijrah, 301
 al-Tamhid fi Ulum al-Quran, 43
 al-Taqdir, 88
 al-Tariqah, 158
 al-Thalabi, 49
 al-Tijan, 143
 al-Tirmidhi, 60, 186
 al-Tusi, 103, 153, 270
 al-Urwa al-Wuthqa, 117
 al-Wathiq, 105
 Amal al-Salih, 132, 143
 Ammar ibn Yasir, 75
 Anamnesis, 192
 Andarznamah, 143
 annihilation, 137, 138, 151, 157, 160,
 163, 164, 168, 204
 Ansar, 69, 253, 302
 anthropomorphism, 91, 94, 95
 anti-rational, 95, 97, 109, 140, 177, 267
 Apophatic, 191
 Apostasy, 246
 apostate, 199, 248
 aqa'id, 87, 216
 Aql, 134, 215, 227, 231
 Arab spring, 206
 Arabian, 40
 architecture, 41
 Arif, 153, 171
 Aristotelian, 48, 136, 181, 186, 192, 197,
 198, 202
 Aristotle, 23, 116, 135, 136, 145, 182,
 189, 190, 192, 193, 196, 199, 209
 asbab, 41
 ascetic, 121, 140, 171
 Ash'ari, 47, 89, 93, 94, 95, 134, 195, 236
 Ashkelon, 67
 Asia, 47, 81, 103, 208, 255
 Asif Muhseni, 61, 78
 Asl, 60, 232
 Averroes, 32, 40, 48, 96, 110, 135, 173,
 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 189, 195, 196,
 197, 201, 209, 261, 278, 306
 Averroism, 110, 199, 211
 Avicenna, 48, 96, 110, 137, 171, 173,
 181, 182, 189, 193, 194, 198, 202, 206,
 207, 222, 278, 293
 Awliya, 49
 Awrad, 140
 Awsaf al-Ashraf, 137
 Ayat, 35, 228
 Azerbaijan, 64
 Aziz al-Din Nasafi, 166
- B**
- Ba'ath, 255
 Baghdad, 39, 91, 95, 106, 187, 237, 299,
 301
 Bahr al-Ulum, 170
 Balkh, 299
 Baqir, 61, 77
 Bara'at, 232
 Barakah, 38
 Basra, 91, 299
 batin, 41, 201
 Batinites, 201

Bay'ah, 273
Bayazid, 157
Bergson, 119
Bid'ah, 96, 99, 102, 216, 217, 284, 303
Bidayat al-Mujtahid, 261
Bidel, 174
Bihar al-Anwar, 61
Bilal, 153
bin Saud, 300
Bismillah, 35, 131, 160
British, 117, 119
Brotherhood, 70, 100, 288
Buddhism, 64
Byzantine, 187

C

Cairo, 38, 39, 102, 200, 239, 287, 301
Caliphate, 24, 59, 66, 92, 105, 200, 201, 222, 270, 287, 305
Calligraphy, 41
Cambridge, 66, 199
capital individualism, 123
Catholic Liberation Theology, 122
Catholicism, 64, 207, 220
Central Asia, 166, 203
China, 186
Christ, 37, 38, 39
Christian, 28, 34, 38, 96, 115, 176, 187, 190, 199, 272
Christianity, 31, 37, 38, 64, 70, 79, 105, 115, 116, 156, 210, 259, 280, 306, 313
Christians, 35, 38, 39, 42, 70, 71, 88, 106, 115, 200, 211, 241, 273, 300, 309
Claudius Ptolemy, 191
colonialism, 12, 28, 51, 56, 85, 111, 117, 118, 119, 122, 124, 206, 286, 295, 305, 306, 315, 317

Commentator, 197
comprehensive Shariah, 52, 222, 270
Concordance of the Opinions of Plato and Aristotle, 192
constitutionalism, 269, 282, 283
Continued the statement in the history of Afghanis, 115
Cordoba, 182
Crusades, 208
Ctesiphon, 71, 72
customary, 15, 215, 232, 283

D

Daesh (ISIS), 255
Damascus, 39, 70, 301
Dante, 119
Dar al-Harb, 239
Dar al-Islam, 239
Dar al-Kufr, 239, 245
David, 205, 270
Day of Judgment, 34, 187, 311
democracy, 56, 120, 122, 207, 249, 252, 266, 289, 294, 303, 316
Deobandi, 177, 239, 312
Dervish Dance, 176
Descartes, 113
despotism, 85, 118, 122, 284, 289
Dhat, 163
dialogue, 12, 13, 18, 20, 23, 27, 51, 118, 120, 126, 148, 181, 187, 205, 208, 211, 239, 250, 258, 266, 313
dialogue among civilizations, 12, 126, 187, 208, 211, 250
Difa'i, 245
Diogenes, 135
Divan-i Kabir, 175

Diyat, 93

Diyya, 242, 246

domestic development, 114, 117

double truth, 197

E

ecumenical, 62, 68, 78

egalitarianism, 54, 282

Egypt, 39, 64, 99, 112, 119, 126, 177, 201, 208, 212, 217, 265, 286, 287, 289, 312

Ekhwan al-Safa, 200, 277

Elkhart, 178

empirical science, 121

empiricism, 195, 196, 203

Enlightened Despot, 287

enlightened Islam, 125

enlightenment, 72, 197, 202

Enlightenment, 101, 196

Enneads, 192

epistemology, 135, 191, 198, 204

equality, 121, 122, 148, 233, 283, 284, 291, 294, 316

Ernest Renan, 116

eschatology, 204

esoteric, 48, 66, 68, 181, 197, 199

Ethiopia, 272

ex nihilo, 186

excommunicating, 198, 297, 300, 301, 303

excommunication, 60, 81, 253, 269, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305

exhortation, 87, 93, 107, 116, 274

exoteric, 68

extremist Islam, 206, 295, 301, 303, 305

F

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, 47, 195

Falaq, 48

Falsafah, 185

Fana, 137, 139

Faqih, 60, 80, 218, 219, 227, 238, 280

Far'a, 232

Farab, 182

Farah, 257

Fardh, 222

Faryab, 182

Fasl al-Maqal, 197

Fatimah Zahra, 71

Fatwa, 61, 185, 219, 226, 238, 260, 262, 263

Fayz, 201

Fayz Kashani, 139, 140, 145, 170

Fazaih al-Batiniyyat, 285

Fi Dhilal al-Quran, 51

fideism, 125

fiqh, 24, 45, 86, 87, 97, 105, 158, 188, 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 235, 239, 246, 261, 265, 266, 281

first cause, 114

First Teacher, 193

Five Pillars, 111

Forms, 192

free will, 47, 53, 55, 70, 77, 88, 89, 90, 103, 105, 107, 108, 129, 131, 133, 134, 148, 248, 256, 276, 292, 306

freedom, 88, 121, 122, 192, 209, 242, 264, 266, 274, 277, 278, 283, 284, 286, 287, 291, 313

French, 113

Fuqaha, 227, 252

Fuqaha Sab'a, 227

Fusus al-Hikam, 160, 166, 169, 177

G

Gabriel, 35, 42, 120, 182, 192, 311

Gaza, 237

Ghadir Khumm, 68

Ghayb, 110, 266

Ghazwa, 245

global, 20, 21, 22, 126, 129, 146, 178,
206, 211, 302

Gnostic, 23, 153, 171, 173

Gnosticism, 22, 23, 151, 152, 154, 157,
160, 169, 171, 173, 175, 183, 203, 211

Goethe, 119, 174

golden age, 44, 100, 102, 106, 118, 126,
195

Granada, 182

Greece, 144, 199, 202

Greek, 23, 45, 113, 121, 129, 130, 137,
187, 189, 195, 205, 207, 211, 311, 313

guardianship, 226, 269, 270, 271, 282,
284, 292

Gulen Movement, 177

Gulistan, 144

H

H. Gharawi Isfahani, 173

Hadith, 46, 58, 59, 61, 63, 74, 91, 93, 97,
117, 121, 142, 153, 188, 216, 218, 222,
226, 228, 257, 259, 284, 296

Hadith-i Ahad, 229

Haeri, 269, 293

Hafiz, 170, 174

Hajj, 111, 140, 221, 226

Hakim, 173, 188

Hal, 163

Halal, 140, 222, 226, 234, 240, 284

Hallaj, 175

Hamid al-Din Kirmani, 200

Hanafi, 47, 69, 81, 125, 215, 217, 229,
235, 240, 245, 247, 254, 301

Hanbali, 65, 103, 215, 237

happiness, 39, 40, 54, 75, 163, 192, 211,
235, 248, 251, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278

Haq, 182, 241, 261

Haqayeq, 200

Haram, 93, 140, 185, 217, 222, 226, 230,
231, 233, 255, 264, 284

Harb, 240, 245

Haris Muhasibi, 157

Hassan, 69, 70, 76, 77, 125, 149, 155,
169, 236, 244, 279

Hassan al-Banna, 288

Hayy ibn Yaqzan, 195

Hebrew Scripture, 34

Hegel, 119

Herat, 161, 299

heresy, 96, 201, 216, 296

Hermeticism, 199

hierarchy, 74, 110, 168, 202, 220, 275,
278

Hijab, 165, 221, 267, 295

Hijab al-Akbar, 165

Hijaz, 62, 91

Hijrah, 60, 300, 301, 303, 305

Hikmah, 22, 216, 266

Hikmat, 96, 104, 188, 202, 293

Hilf al-Fudul, 130

Himmah, 159, 163

Hindu, 34, 178

Hinduism, 156, 306, 313

Hindus, 88

House of Wisdom, 208

household, 66, 69, 74, 272
 Hudud, 93, 215, 242, 246, 248, 274, 282, 283
 Hukm, 232, 254, 298, 303
 human reason, 46, 87, 89, 90, 109, 110, 133, 145, 195, 210, 262, 266, 288
 Human Rights, 241
 humanism, 40, 54, 173, 177, 197, 209, 316
 humanistic, 53, 54, 55, 94, 191, 224, 249, 250, 263, 264, 292, 302
 humanities, 56, 98, 100, 125, 313
 Hunayn Ibn Ishaq, 187
 Husn, 89, 103, 149, 202
 Hussain, 74, 76, 77, 78, 80, 144, 148, 170, 205, 292
 Huzaifa, 73, 155

I

Ibadat, 235
 Ibn Abbas, 43, 44, 142, 155, 253, 310
 Ibn Abi Jomhooir Ihsaii, 203
 Ibn Arabi, 96, 156, 157, 160, 166, 168, 169, 171, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 315, 317
 Ibn Babuya, 60
 Ibn Jawzi, 65
 Ibn Kamuneh, 203
 Ibn Khaldun, 62, 65, 189
 Ibn Maja, 60
 Ibn Massarah, 195
 Ibn Masud, 44, 153
 Ibn Nadim, 191
 Ibn Qayyem, 96, 97
 Ibn Rushd, 184, 185, 186, 196, 199, 279
 Ibn Sarraj Tusi, 153
 Ibn Sina, 171, 193, 195

Ibn Taymiyyah, 32, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 103, 171, 207, 265, 300, 304
 Ibn Tufail, 181, 182, 195
 Ibrahim Adham, 155
 Ibu Ali Miskawayh, 135, 136, 145, 189
 identity, 21, 51, 70, 71, 82, 125, 138, 143, 169, 183, 189, 206, 216, 240, 248, 250, 251, 289, 305, 314, 317
 Ideologize, 123
 ideology, 51, 68, 122, 123, 146, 241, 255, 256, 259, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303, 305
 idolatry, 99
 idolism, 122
 Ihtiyat, 232
 Ihya al-Ulum al-Din, 139
 Iji, 95
 Ijma, 121, 227, 228, 231, 232, 238
 Ijtihad, 93, 102, 121, 218, 224, 225, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 287, 291, 318
 Ijtihad Mutajazzi, 266
 Ikhlas, 137, 157, 253
 Ikhtira'a, 185
 Ikhtiyar, 133
 Iktisab, 134
 Illat, 232, 266
 illumination, 139, 190, 201, 204
 Illuminative, 108, 203, 209
 Illuminative Wisdom, 181, 201, 202
 Ilm al-Akhlaq, 87, 132
 Ilm al-Fiqh, 87
 Ilm al-Kalam, 87
 Ilm Muamilah, 139
 Ilm Mukashifah, 139
 Imam Abu Hanifah, 86, 101, 236, 245
 Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 62, 91, 95, 99, 105, 229, 237, 238

- Imam al-Bukhari, 91, 98
 Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni, 134
 Imam Ali, 63, 68, 74, 80, 86, 103, 148, 155, 186, 238
 Imam al-Ridha, 78
 Imam Baqir, 60, 235
 Imam Ghazzali, 73, 95, 139, 161, 195, 199, 269, 280, 285, 296
 Imam Hussain, 60, 76, 77, 148
 Imam Ibn Abidin ash-Shami, 301
 Imam Malik, 59, 62, 80, 172, 237, 314
 Imam Sadiq, 60, 80, 235, 237, 238
 Imam Shafi'i, 47, 67
 Imamah, 200, 222
 Imamate, 24, 47, 65, 66, 74, 75, 92, 270, 277, 278, 280, 287, 293
 Iman, 137, 256
 Immanuel Kant, 196
 Inabah wa Tafakkur, 162
 Inayat, 185
 India, 50, 52, 64, 104, 112, 117, 174, 177, 203, 208, 209, 212, 265, 286, 312
 Indian subcontinent, 103, 119, 200
 Indonesia, 32
 inductive intellect, 120, 121
 infallible Imams, 31, 32, 58, 62, 63, 75, 77, 80, 104, 122, 218, 251, 281, 291
 Insha'allah, 36
 institutionalized Islam, 102, 119, 123, 311, 312, 316
 intention, 137, 138, 140, 149, 203, 217, 256
 intrafaith, 99
 intuition, 53, 108, 119, 120, 145, 149, 151, 157, 160, 167, 169, 172, 181, 202, 290
 Iqbal, 52, 85, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 208, 212, 217, 266, 269, 290
 Iran, 19, 47, 64, 70, 102, 104, 119, 122, 124, 126, 174, 177, 182, 200, 203, 208, 217, 265, 282, 286, 291, 304, 312, 314
 Iranian Islamic Revolution, 100, 122
 Iraq, 62, 64, 70, 71, 91, 102, 104, 182, 255, 265, 305, 312
 Iraqi, 40, 255
 Irfan, 151, 154, 157, 160
 Irtidad, 242, 246, 247
 Isaac Newton, 196
 Isfahan, 70, 299
 Isharat wa al-Tanbihat, 193
 Islam and the Foundations of Governance, 287
 Islamic Humanities, 100
 Islamic Jurisprudence, 24, 226
 Islamic Revolution, 124
 Islamic Sciences, 16
 Islamic socialism, 122
 Islamism, 118, 208
 Islamist, 99, 101, 123, 215, 259, 265, 269, 295, 301, 305, 316
 Ismaili, 66, 142, 181, 199, 200
 Israel-Palestine, 206
 Istanbul, 38, 299
 Istihsan, 233, 236, 237, 262
 Istishab, 233
 Istita'at, 133
 Ita'at, 54
 Ithna Ashari, 66, 67, 75
 Itiqad, 256

J

- Jafar Subhani, 57
 Jafari, 49, 66, 215, 238
 Jahiliyyat, 51, 301
 Jalal al-Din Dawani, 75, 203

Jama'at al-Muslism, 301
 Jamaat-e Islami, 51
 Jami, 174, 270
 Jawarharlal Nehru, 119
 Jesus, 31, 75, 160, 169, 218, 243, 251, 258, 272
 Jewish, 38, 190, 199, 211, 241, 273, 306
 Jews, 35, 42, 88, 106, 200, 300
 Jihad, 156, 215, 218, 222, 240, 244, 245, 250, 255, 257, 260, 273, 274, 279, 300
 Jihad-i Nafs, 244
 Jihadist, 123, 316
 John Locke, 196
 John Milton, 119
 John Rawls, 196
 Joseph, 28, 271, 280
 Judaism, 116, 280
 Judgment Day, 54, 62, 67, 87, 136, 196, 260
 Juma, 76
 jurist guardianship, 281, 291
 justice, 47, 51, 64, 68, 75, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 105, 115, 117, 123, 125, 130, 131, 134, 135, 136, 142, 145, 148, 194, 195, 196, 206, 212, 242, 270, 274, 282, 286, 287, 288, 295, 311, 316

K

Ka'ba, 176
 Kabul, 235
 Kafir, 199, 302
 Kalam-i Jadid, 112
 Kantian, 131, 290
 Kasb, 134
 Kazakhstan, 182
 Khabar, 63, 81, 229

Khalifa Movement, 119
 Khalifah, 65
 Khalq-i Mudam, 168
 Khandaq, 71
 Khaniqah, 153
 Kharabati, 159
 Kharijites, 60, 215, 253, 254, 269, 297, 298, 299, 301
 Khas, 164, 223, 230
 Khawf, 159
 Khirqah, 153
 Khomeini, 32, 177, 208, 217, 226, 269, 280, 291, 292, 293, 314
 Khums, 222
 Khwaja Abudllah Ansari, 96, 159, 161, 172
 Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, 136, 142, 145, 171
 Kierkegaard, 178
 Kimiya-yi Saadat, 324
 King Abd al-Rahman Khan, 102
 Kitab Tajrid al-Itiqad, 104
 Kufa, 75, 91, 182, 235
 Kufur, 240, 299, 300
 Kulliyat al-Khmas, 234

L

La'n, 304
 Lahore, 52, 67, 119, 266, 290
 Lebanon, 64
 legislation, 51, 234, 237, 263, 291, 294
 London, 286
 Luqman, 130
 Lutf, 54

M

Ma'ad, 87

Mabad al-Tabi'a, 188

macro cosmos, 201

macro human, 167

Madaarij Salikeen, 172

Madani, 35

Madhhab, 228, 235

Madrasah, 200

Madrasahs, 47, 51, 55, 95, 104, 193, 212, 239

Mafhum, 230

Mafsidah, 233, 241

Mahayana, 64

Mahdi, 60, 75, 117, 136, 170

Mahmud Shaltut, 49, 265

Mahr, 242

Mahram, 221

Maimonides, 110, 190

Majlisi, 61, 186

Makki, 35, 139, 161

Makruh, 222, 230, 231

Malakah-i Adalat, 137

Malaysia, 125

Manazil al-Sa'erin, 161, 172

Mandub, 217, 222

Manichaeism, 199

Mansoor Hallaj, 157

Mansukh, 223

Mantuq, 230

Maraghi, 56

Marefat, 43

Marja, 76

Martin Luther, 116

Masalih, 234, 237, 262

Masalih Mursalah, 234, 237, 262

Maslihat, 226

mass communication, 304

Master, 174, 178

Mathnawi Manawi, 158, 169

Maturidi, 47, 85, 103

Maududi, 51, 124, 301

Mawla, 68

Mecca, 32, 35, 67, 69, 70, 78, 87, 111, 121, 140, 162, 200, 221, 222, 226, 234, 236, 244, 253, 272, 299, 302

Medieval Age, 205

Medina, 32, 35, 42, 65, 69, 70, 73, 78, 92, 99, 132, 162, 186, 227, 237, 238, 243, 245, 253, 272, 273, 299, 302

metaphysics, 50, 113, 178, 188, 189, 191, 192, 193, 194, 200, 202, 204, 207, 210

Mevlevi, 170

micro-cosmos, 167, 201, 306

Middle East, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 97, 103, 166, 208, 244, 255, 301

Middle Eastern, 13, 103, 166, 244

Mihna, 105

Mihrab, 305

Mikhail Gorbachev, 177

militias, 123, 215, 269, 303

Miqdad ibn Aswad al-Kindi, 75

miracle, 38, 40, 41, 44, 51, 55, 154, 184, 220, 223, 259, 309

Mirza Jawad Maliki Tabrizi, 170

Misbah al-Shariah, 80, 148

modern mind, 125, 172, 212, 267, 289, 313, 316, 318

modern world, 119, 199, 211, 265, 291

modernism, 118

- modernity, 14, 50, 106, 111, 177, 206, 266, 286, 307
 modernization, 12, 19, 117, 129
 Mohjata al-Beyza fi Tahzib al-Ihya, 323
 Mongols, 156, 200
 monotheism, 99, 102
 Montesquieu, 174
 mores, 258
 Moroccan, 40, 212
 Morocco, 125, 266
 Moscow, 286
 Moses, 39, 40, 52, 76, 160, 218, 243, 251, 258
 Mosul, 70
 Mu'amilat, 234
 Mu'amilat wa Adat, 235
 Mu'min, 245, 248
 Mu'tazila, 45, 47, 49, 62, 63, 66, 67, 85, 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 101, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 117, 125, 133, 134, 191, 227, 228
 Mu'tazilism, 125, 126
 Muawiyah, 77, 298
 Mubah, 185, 222
 Mubayyan, 223
 Mubin, 55
 Mufti, 49, 61, 76, 219
 Muhajir, 69, 302
 Muhajirun, 253
 Muhammad, 16, 22, 35, 37, 43, 46, 57, 58, 61, 65, 66, 73, 77, 80, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 98, 99, 103, 104, 111, 119, 120, 123, 130, 142, 153, 160, 170, 173, 208, 212, 217, 218, 220, 224, 227, 236, 237, 238, 243, 244, 245, 248, 251, 258, 266, 271, 272, 273, 280, 282, 290, 300
 Muhammad Abduh, 55, 57, 119, 287
 Muhammad Ghazzali, 57
 Muhammad Hussain Gharawi Naini, 282, 283, 284
 Muhammad Jawad Mughniya, 56
 Muhammad Kazim Khorasani, 282
 Muharib, 246
 Muhkam, 223
 Mujmal, 223
 Mujtahid, 123, 218, 219, 229, 238, 263, 282
 Mujtahid Shabestari, 123
 Mulla Sadra, 48, 93, 104, 170, 181, 182, 203, 205, 293, 313
 Mullah, 327
 Munajati, 159
 Munich, 286
 Muntazeri, 240, 247, 269, 292
 Muqayyad, 223, 230
 Muraqibah, 163
 Musalman, 72
 Mushabbiha, 95
 Muslim Brotherhood, 51, 124, 208, 269
 Mustafa Malikeian, 123
 Mustahab, 222, 229, 231
 Mustaqillat Aqliyyah, 231
 Mutahhari, 119, 201, 230, 252, 254, 263
 Mutakallimun, 89, 97, 105, 108
 Mutashabih, 223
 Mutawatir, 228
 Mutlaq, 223, 230
 Muwatta, 59
- N**
- Na'ini, 282, 284, 327
 Nabuwwat, 87, 168
 Nadb, 185

Nafaqah, 242
Nahj al-Balaghah, 186
Najaf, 239, 312
Najran, 273
Naqshbandi, 170
Narraqi, 136, 193
Nas, 48, 261
Nasikh, 223
Nasir Khusraw, 136, 200, 201
naskh, 41
national Islam, 125
nationalism, 56, 118, 125
natural sciences, 125
Nazr, 283
Neoplatonic, 190
Neoplatonism, 156, 192
neo-spiritualism, 178
New Testament, 34, 35, 272
new-Islamic theology, 112, 117, 124, 125, 135
new-Mu'tazilism, 85, 124, 125
new-theology, 52, 85, 100, 112, 120
Nicomachean Ethics, 135
Nietzsche, 119, 174, 260
Nihilism, 115
Nijat, 193
Nishabur, 299
Niyyat, 137, 149, 257
Niyyat Qurbat ilallah, 257
Noah, 218, 315
non-Muslims, 14, 20, 21, 23, 27, 99, 106, 118, 126, 130, 176, 186, 187, 239, 243, 244, 248, 250, 251, 252, 255, 266, 274, 289, 295, 297, 299, 302, 315, 318
Noor, 55, 270, 316
Nusaybin, 70

O

objectives of Shariah, 121, 235, 251, 260, 262, 264, 266, 295
Oneness of God', 48
ontology, 135, 169, 193, 194, 198, 204, 210
orthodoxy, 74, 88, 175
orthopraxy, 74, 88, 184
Ottoman, 38, 112, 301
Oxford, 199, 287

P

Padua, 199
Pakistan, 51, 52, 64, 101, 104, 119, 208, 217
Paris, 199, 286
people of Hadith, 46, 63, 85, 96, 236, 237, 238
people of Hijaz, 237, 238
people of Iraq, 237
people of justice, 89, 90, 91, 93, 103, 104, 105, 107, 133, 135
people of justice and the rest, 85, 89, 110, 111
people of Medina, 69, 274
people of narration and anthropomorphism, 64
people of opinion, 236, 237
people of The Book, 106
people of the porch, 155, 156
perfect human, 74, 168, 278
peripatetic, 48, 108, 135, 181, 190, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 212
Persia, 71, 72, 144, 199, 201
Persian, 26, 38, 64, 71, 73, 113, 141, 143, 144, 156, 162, 181, 202, 209, 211, 316
Persian Gulf, 64

Pir, 153, 167
 Plato, 23, 116, 135, 136, 145, 182, 189,
 190, 192, 202, 208, 210
 Platonic, 181, 192, 209
 pledge alliance, 281
 Plotinus, 192
 pluralism, 42, 125, 169, 176, 177, 207,
 263, 296, 299
 political Islam, 98, 119, 125, 270, 288,
 303
 polytheism, 96, 99, 116, 300, 303
 Porphyry, 192
 profanity, 243
 prophecy, 40, 90, 168, 187, 191, 206
 prophethood, 35, 47, 55, 86, 90, 116,
 130, 132, 277, 281, 290, 293
 prophetic, 65, 118, 132, 190, 191, 192,
 270, 278, 288
 Pythagoreanism, 199

Q

Qabd wa Bast, 163
 Qadha wa Qadar, 88
 Qadhi, 62, 90, 91, 133, 145, 170, 196, 227
 Qadhi Abd al-Jabbar, 62, 90, 91, 145
 Qadhi Said Qumi, 170
 Qadiriyyah, 96, 170
 Qat'a al-Tariq, 246
 Qazf, 246
 Qiblah, 200
 Qira'a, 24
 Qisas, 93, 246
 Qital, 245
 Qiyas, 227, 232, 236, 237
 quiddity, 189, 193, 194
 Qum, 177, 239, 312

Qurb, 164
 Qurtubi, 270, 310
 Qushayri, 161, 176, 178
 Qut al-Qulub, 161
 Qutb, 51, 203, 301, 302, 303
 Qutb al-Din Shirazi, 203

R

Rabia, 157
 Ramadan, 36, 111
 Rashid Reza, 56, 57
 Rashidun Caliphs, 284
 ratiocination, 190, 202, 204
 Rational Sciences, 188
 rationalism, 40, 53, 94, 95, 125, 149, 155,
 177, 178, 197, 203, 316
 rationality, 51, 54, 55, 64, 89, 95, 104,
 116, 125, 209, 215, 258, 262, 276, 297
 Rawdha, 77
 Rawdhat al-Shuhada, 77
 Rebutiyyat, 164
 Remembrance, 192
 revealed sciences, 16, 24
 Riba, 222
 Ridha, 78, 137
 Rija, 159
 Risalah-i Nicharia, 114
 Riwayah, 58
 Riyadhat, 140
 role model, 58, 69, 130, 131, 154
 Rousseau, 196
 Rumi, 32, 33, 80, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159,
 161, 162, 165, 168, 169, 174, 175, 176,
 177, 178, 309, 315, 317

S

- Sabab, 266
- Sabb al-Nabi, 243
- Sabeans, 35
- Sabr, 163
- Sabzevar, 122
- Sad al-Din Taftazani, 95
- Sad Maydan, 162
- Sadi, 144, 145
- Sadiq, 61, 73, 77, 80, 148, 238
- Safavid, 63, 79, 122, 228
- Safih, 233
- Sahabah, 75, 96, 101, 155, 227
- Sahih, 59, 60, 217
- Sahw, 164
- Saint Petersburg, 286
- Salaf, 98, 100, 101, 124, 227
- Salafi, 101, 171, 220, 237, 259, 312, 314
- Salafism, 85, 95, 98, 99, 101, 102, 118, 124, 177, 207, 212, 265, 300, 302
- Salafist, 62, 81, 97, 99, 101, 107, 211, 227, 238, 265
- Salah al-Din Ibn Ayyub, 201
- Salam, 42, 75, 119, 310
- Salat, 74, 111, 139, 200, 217, 221, 231, 263
- Salman, 31, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 153
- Sama, 140, 153, 176
- Sami Atif al-Zain, 57
- Sasanian, 72
- Saudi, 32, 64, 70, 71, 91, 212, 238, 273, 286, 300
- Sawm, 111, 140, 200, 221
- Sayed Ahmad Karbalaii, 173
- Sayed Ahmad Khan, 117
- Sayed Haydar Amuli, 170, 176
- Sayed Ismail Balkhi, 78
- Sayed Yahya Yasrebi, 40, 53, 162
- Sayyed al-Murtaza, 90
- scripturalism, 91, 94, 95, 99, 105, 110, 111, 124, 125, 255, 279
- scripturalist, 95
- Second Teacher, 193
- sectarian, 68, 101, 124, 269, 302
- self, 21, 41, 48, 50, 51, 72, 73, 74, 87, 90, 95, 102, 103, 104, 111, 114, 115, 118, 120, 123, 130, 133, 134, 137, 140, 141, 143, 146, 162, 165, 169, 173, 178, 190, 192, 202, 244, 256, 258, 264, 271, 274, 286, 290, 293, 294, 300
- self-sufficient, 48, 90, 95, 103, 104, 190
- Seljuq, 95, 285
- Servanthood, 54
- Shadhili, 170
- Shafi'i, 47, 67, 80, 86, 215, 237, 279, 314, 326, 328
- Shah Waliullah of Delhi, 208
- Sham, 170, 299
- Shams, 160, 162
- shan-i nuzol, 41
- Sharh Futuh al-Ghaib, 96, 171
- Shariah, 12, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 33, 43, 47, 52, 54, 57, 59, 63, 75, 80, 81, 87, 92, 93, 96, 100, 123, 124, 125, 129, 132, 134, 136, 139, 145, 146, 147, 151, 152, 155, 156, 158, 159, 170, 171, 177, 178, 184, 185, 196, 197, 198, 209, 211, 215, 216, 217, 219, 223, 224, 231, 233, 234, 236, 238, 239, 243, 245, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 259, 260, 261, 263, 264, 265, 266, 270, 272, 275, 278, 282, 284, 288, 289, 291, 294, 297, 302, 303, 305, 311, 314, 317
- Sharif al-Murtaza, 47

Shath, 164
 Shathyyat, 157
 Shaykh, 38, 78, 90, 95, 144, 153, 167, 177, 204, 228, 296, 300
 Shaykh al-Islam, 97, 237
 Shaykh al-Tabarsi, 49, 271
 Shaykh Fazlullah Nuri, 282
 Shaykh Tantawi Jawhari, 55
 Shaykh Tusi, 47, 49, 60
 Sheikh al-Islam, 323
 Shibli Nomani, 112
 Shifa, 193
 Shiraz, 182, 203
 Shirk, 99, 299, 303
 Shukri Mustafa, 301, 303
 Shura, 222, 294
 Sinope, 135
 Siyasah, 22, 23, 24, 144
 social Islam, 69
 social sciences, 113, 173
 social values, 50, 51, 115, 123, 146, 274
 socialist, 69, 125
 Socrates, 116, 135
 solidarity, 51, 57, 101, 121, 122, 147, 148, 240, 250, 286, 291
 Sorbonne University, 122
 Soviet Union, 177
 Spain, 182, 195
 spiritual democracy, 122, 269, 291
 spiritual traveler, 141
 spiritualism, 110
 successors, 61, 65, 96, 155, 201, 270, 285
 Sudan, 117
 Suffah, 153
 Sufyan al-Thawri, 155

Suhrawardi, 181, 182, 195, 201, 202
 Suhrawardiyya, 170
 Sukr, 164
 sultanate, 95, 277, 280, 282
 Suluk, 137, 160
 Sunnat Allah, 35
 Syed Ahmad Khan, 50, 52
 Syria, 64, 71, 201, 255, 301, 305
 Syriac, 113

T

Ta'at, 266
 Ta'azir, 246
 Ta'if, 71
 Ta'wil, 43, 48, 55, 120, 197, 200, 223, 258
 Tabatabaai, 170, 205
 Tabi al- Tabi'un, 96
 Tabi'un, 61, 101, 155, 227
 Tabuk, 271
 tabula rasa, 54, 191, 196
 Tafhim al-Quran, 51
 Tafkik, 81
 Tafsir, 24, 40, 46, 49, 53, 55, 270, 316
 Tafsir al-Ayyashi, 46
 Tafsir al-Manar, 55
 Taftazani, 280
 Taghut, 310
 Tahafut al-Fulasifah, 199
 Tahafut al-Tahafut, 199
 Tahdhib al-Akhlaq, 135
 Tahhaddi, 41
 Tahrif, 41
 Takfir, 60, 300, 301, 303
 Takhtea, 263
 takhyir, 232

- Taklif, 133, 134, 241
- Taliban, 101, 208, 255, 257, 314
- Tamat, 164
- Tamlikiyyah, 283
- Taoism, 178
- Taqdir, 114, 133, 146
- Taqwa, 87, 129, 130, 133, 136, 137, 149
- Tarjuman al-Ashwaq, 175, 325
- Taswib, 198, 263
- Tawakkul, 146, 154, 163
- Tawbah, 137, 159, 162
- Tawhid, 48, 64, 86, 87, 90, 107, 116, 121, 122, 137, 173
- Tayammum, 225
- textbook, 80, 193, 282
- textualism, 210, 220
- the arc of descent, 167
- the arc to ascent, 167
- the Bhagavad-Gita, 34
- The Book, 48, 49, 104, 130, 176
- The Brethren of Purity, 200, 277
- the Constitution of Medina, 93
- the First Cause, 48
- the Gospels, 34
- the house of wisdom, 187
- the merciful breath, 166
- the movement of translation, 187
- the people of justice and Oneness, 64
- the Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, 22, 184, 188, 213, 227, 228, 229, 261, 282
- The promise and the threat, 94
- the Prophet, 16, 22, 24, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 42, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50, 53, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 106, 107, 109, 111, 117, 120, 130, 131, 132, 136, 140, 142, 153, 154, 157, 158, 160, 162, 165, 182, 184, 186, 192, 201, 202, 216, 218, 220, 223, 225, 226, 227, 228, 231, 236, 243, 245, 247, 248, 251, 253, 258, 270, 271, 272, 273, 277, 278, 280, 283, 284, 287, 288, 289, 291, 292, 293, 296, 298, 299, 300, 302, 304, 310, 315, 316
- The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, 52, 120, 290
- The Six Major Hadith Collections, 59
- The Stages of Wayfarers, 96, 159
- the United Nations, 144
- the West, 19, 27, 50, 75, 88, 95, 101, 114, 124, 125, 181, 182, 190, 195, 197, 199, 205, 207, 208, 211, 244, 255, 286, 291, 295, 303, 313, 315, 316, 318
- Theophilos, 187
- theosophy, 96, 190, 202
- Thomas Aquinas, 110, 190, 207, 210
- Thomas Hobbes, 196
- tolerance, 19, 109, 147, 173, 176, 177, 178, 200
- totalitarian, 52, 123, 283, 284
- Transcendental Wisdom, 93, 108, 181, 203, 204, 293
- Transoxania, 166
- Turkey, 70, 71, 103, 177, 286
- twelve Imams, 60
- Twelver-Shia, 75, 77, 104, 107, 170, 238

U

- Ubbad, 155
- Ulema, 284
- ultimate truth, 195, 197, 200, 202, 206, 252
- Ulu al-Amr, 289
- Umar, 59, 65, 75, 76, 155, 156, 271, 284

Umar II, 59
 Umayyad, 59, 77, 105, 156
 Ummah, 115, 123, 132, 145, 240, 255,
 270, 274, 280, 282, 288, 289
 Ummi, 39
 Umor Hisbiyyah, 282
 unity of being, 80, 169
 unity of God, 40, 94, 116
 Upanishads, 34
 Urf, 215, 218, 232, 236, 237, 258, 262,
 266, 284
 Usul al-Din, 86, 87, 97
 Usul al-Fiqh, 184, 188, 227, 232, 237,
 258, 261, 265
 usury, 222
 Uswah, 58
 Uthman, 37, 65, 69, 76, 285
 Uwais al-Qarani, 155

V

Vahid, 229
 Vizier, 285

W

Waez Kashifi, 77, 144, 145
 Wahhabi, 81, 101, 300, 305
 Wahhabism, 81, 99, 101, 102, 124, 177,
 254, 269, 300, 301
 Wahy, 56, 58, 97, 108, 182, 281
 Wajd, 140, 164
 Wajib, 185, 217, 222, 229, 231, 233, 264,
 284
 Wakil, 294
 Wali, 271
 Waqt, 164
 wayfarer, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 167,
 169, 170, 175

welfare, 69, 113, 237, 277
 Western, 14, 18, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, 36,
 50, 55, 76, 85, 100, 101, 111, 116, 120,
 124, 126, 152, 153, 181, 190, 196, 203,
 207, 208, 209, 212, 239, 242, 246, 250,
 252, 286, 287, 309, 316, 317
 Westerns, 115, 205, 286
 Wikalat, 294
 Wilayat, 54, 164, 270, 280, 282, 283, 293
 women's rights, 11, 56, 207, 209, 242,
 251, 266
 Word of God, 38, 86, 88, 94
 World War I, 119
 worshiper, 171

Y

Yahya ibn Adi, 135
 Yasrib, 70
 Yazid ibn Muawiyah, 77
 Yemen, 64, 200, 273

Z

zahir, 41, 201
 Zakariya Razi, 135
 Zakat, 93, 111, 139, 222
 Zanj, 182
 Zann, 288
 Zawiyyah, 153
 Zaydi, 66
 Zikr, 140
 Zina, 246
 Zoroastrian, 70, 178
 Zoroastrianism, 199
 Zuhd, 154
 Zuhhad, 155

“With a keen and sensitive eye always on the complex and conflictive current global situation, Dr. Akhlaq presents a thorough introduction to Islamic Intellectual history. This work, really a handy-handbook, leads the reader to the inside of Islamic intellectual and cultural history. The author opens the pages of the Quran and unfolds the Sunnah of the Prophet for today’s world. The terminology and background, from both the Sunni and Shia perspectives, is clearly presented on Islamic theology, ethics, spirituality (Sufism), philosophy, law, and politics. With considerable exposure to Western philosophy and Christianity, he takes on the delicate task of discussing the thorny pressing questions including: Shar’ia law, Caliphate, jihad, and excommunication. Dr. Akhlaq’s work will make a strong contribution to the needed inter-religious global dialogue.”

Dr. John P. Hogan, Senior Fellow - Council for Research in Values and Philosophy Washington, DC (Former faculty – SAIS, Johns Hopkins Univ.; Loyola Univ., Baltimore; Wuyi Univ. Jingmen, China)

“Thought provoking, erudite, and yet highly accessible, *Intellectual and Spiritual Debates in Islam*, offers a welcome remedy to the West’s woefully inadequate understanding of Islam’s remarkable contributions to society and civilization. Dr. Akhlaq’s seminal contribution masterfully explores Islamic culture and its profound achievements within the contexts of the secular and sacred, be they Sunni or Shia. I highly recommend this authoritative treatise to both specialists and non-academics seeking to better understand the wonders of Islamic culture over time and its current, yet often dangerously misunderstood salience.”

Dr. Charles P. Blair, Senior Lecturer, Advanced Academic Programs, Johns Hopkins University

“This book provides a powerful argument justifying greater understanding of the debates currently active in Islam. The author provides a remarkably broad, thorough approach to Islamic ideas, which exposes the dangerous fallacy of the simplistic, essentialist approaches used by those who denigrate the values and contributions of Muslims. This thoroughness takes the form of a full, rich discussion of issues that rarely enter the common understanding of Islam, such as ethics and Sufism. Furthermore, the second great value of this book comes from the accessible discussion of topics that frequently remain only in the arena of active interest for specialists, such as theology, philosophy, and jurisprudence. Consistent with the author’s objective of stimulating dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding, this work brings all of these topics into a final application, in the world of practical politics. This gives the work strong relevance for the reader who seeks to understand his neighbor, and the world in which we all live. In sum, the broad approach, readable style, objectivity, humanitarian objectives, and cross-cultural insight of this book make it an extremely valuable contribution to the scholarship on Islam and the influence of Muslim scholars in the world of ideas.”

Dr. Jonathan K. Zartman, Air University, USA, editor of *Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions, and Regime Change*

SAYED HASSAN AKHLAQ is a Professorial Lecturer at The George Washington University and coeditor of *The Secular and the Sacred: Complementary and/or Conflictual?.* He has written on Comparative Philosophy, Political Islam, Ecotheology, and Interreligious Theology.



ISBN: 978-606-37-1890-8