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FROM THE EDITORS

Greetings,

It has been exactly ten years since we launched the first issue of the *Ilahiyat Studies* with a vision to become an internationally accredited academic platform to disseminate knowledge accumulated by researchers in different fields of Islamic and religious studies. We are happy to see that the feedback we have received thus far has been extremely positive and encouraging. It is this sense of fulfillment that makes us as a team going.

This issue of *IS* features three articles and a book review. In their qualitative research "Formation and Consequences of the Conversion Process: A Qualitative Study of Adult Converts," Ali Ayten, Hatice Kılınçer, Nuriman Ulu, Nihal İşbilen, and Hafize Albayrak focus on the intra-religious conversion process with its three-step stages: pre-conversion, during conversion, and post-conversion. The article discusses the various factors that influence the conversion process such as family values, religious education, and environmental variables like encountering role models and traumatic life events. The findings indicate that those participants who lacked religious education complained about bullying, feeling left out, and not understanding religiosity correctly. Whereas both female and male participants claimed that the intra-religious conversion process supported their personal, spiritual, and religious development and maturity, several female participants stated that they distanced themselves from religion due to the negative image of women in the religious-cultural context.

Mohammad Abu Shareea's article, "How Could Early Christians Be Wrong? The Role of *Fahm al-Salaf* in the Biblical Hermeneutics of Ibn Taymiyyah and Michael Servetus," presents a detailed analysis of the centrality of the argument about the early authorities' understanding of scripture within the Biblical hermeneutics of Ibn

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Taymiyyah and Michael Servetus from a comparative perspective. The topics of this hermeneutics include linguistic analysis, scriptural usage and historical contexts of a term, scriptural harmony, and early authorities' understanding of the Scripture. The study concludes, first, that the logical conclusions of Servetus's hermeneutics should have led to Joseph Priestley's concept of God. Second, if Ibn Taymiyyah had access to the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers, then he would have argued for the Ebionites. Finally, a critical question could be presented by Christians to the Muslim audience regarding the divinity of Jesus is the argument from *tawātur maʿnawī*.

In his politically oriented article, "Understanding the Discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah on the Military Coup during the Arab Spring in Egypt," Muhamad Rofiq Muzakkir attempts to propose an alternative explanation to the existing scholarship about the factors behind the failure of Egypt to transform into a democratic country after having experienced the major moment of the Arab Spring. The main thesis of the article is that the theological discourse of the *ʿulamāʾ* and their commitment to one of the currents of Islamic political thought in the premodern period contributed to the miscarriage of the Arab Spring. To prove his case, the author focuses on the discourse of the previous grand muftī of Egypt on the military coup against the democratically elected president, Muḥammad Mursī. He traces ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the coup through several medieval Muslim scholars' views on the usurpation of power, namely, al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah, concluding that the tendency to conform with tradition led ʿAlī Jumʿah to formulate his undemocratic discourse.

As always, we thank our readers, authors, and anonymous referees for their invaluable contributions.

Editors

Kemal Ataman & Turgay Gündüz

Marmara University, Istanbul-Turkey
kemal.ataman@marmara.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5107-8367

Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa-Turkey
tgunduz@uludag.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8019-4009

ARTICLES

Formation and Consequences of the Conversion Process: A Qualitative Study of Adult Converts

Ali Ayten, Hatice Kılınçer, Nuriman Ulu, Nihal İşbilen & Hafize Albayrak

How Could Early Christians Be Wrong? The Role of Fahm al-Salaf *in the Biblical Hermeneutics of Ibn Taymiyyah and Michael Servetus*

Mohammad Abu Shareea

Understanding the Discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah on the Military Coup during the Arab Spring in Egypt

Muhamad Rofiq Muzakkir

FORMATION AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONVERSION PROCESS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ADULT CONVERTS

Ali Ayten
Marmara University, Istanbul-Turkey
aliayten@marmara.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2787-2429

Hatice Kılınçer
Bingöl University, Bingöl-Turkey
hkilincer@bingol.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1360-7739

Nuriman Ulu
Harran University, Şanlıurfa-Turkey
nuriman.karayigit@marmara.edu.tr
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8669-336X

Nihal İşbilen
Marmara University, Istanbul-Turkey
nihalisbilen@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6398-8093

Hafize Albayrak
Marmara University, Istanbul-Turkey
phalbayrak@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0436-3787

Abstract

Religious conversion, which includes leaving one's religion for another religion or change within the same religion, is among the most popular subjects of the psychology of religion and the sociology of religion. This study analyzes via a psychosocial methodology the process before, during, and after a change in the faith of individuals born in an Islamic culture and who distanced themselves from religion for a certain period of their lives. The pool consists of twenty-seven participants. The study employs a qualitative research method and a structured interview technique. The interview is an abridgment

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of the form created by Köse (1996) designed to focus on the childhood and youth of participants, as well as on their family relationships, identity crises, and changes during or after decision-making processes. Content analysis is applied to the findings. Most participants, who indicated that they had not received formal religious education during childhood, expressed that situations such as getting beat up, being ostracized and come across superstitions led to their religious disgruntlement. Some female participants indicated that they distanced themselves from religion during their youth because of the negative image of women created by cultural and religious values. Participants, particularly males, indicated that they made decisions to recover from their addictions prior to intrareligious conversion process. In addition, intellectual motives come to the forefront in the process of intrareligious conversion; factors such as coming across as good believers and having a religious community are influential. Having made the decision to return to their faith, participants often reported that they enjoy peace and feel special and free.

Key Words: Religious conversion, interreligious conversion, intrareligious conversion, religious transformation, intellectual motive, religious coping.

I. Introduction

Religious conversion is one of the essential topics of the psychology of religion and the sociology of religion. The issue became a subject of study in the late 1800s and established its place among the earliest areas of concern for the psychology of religion. The earliest specialists in the psychology of religion, such as Edwin Starbuck, William James, Stanley Hall, and Robert H. Thouless, touched upon this problem in their works.[1] Early studies focused on intrareligious conversion in the United States of America. Later works, particularly after the 1950s, concentrated on transitions between different religions,[2] whereas spiritual change became a common

[1] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London: The Fontana Library, 1960), 194; Robert H. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 205.

[2] Victor Solomon, *A Handbook on Conversions to the Religions of the World* (New York: Stravon Educational Press, 1965).

subject in relation to religious conversion, as spirituality was incorporated within the psychology of religion in the 1980s.[3] The relevant literature[4] shows a wide spectrum of meaning for the concept of religious conversion. This concept is used for both momentary and gradual and both temporary and permanent changes. The concept of religious conversion may indicate becoming devout or retreating from religion within the same religious culture or even leaving the religion of a certain culture in order to join another religion. In other words, religious conversion may include returning to religious life in the sense that an individual returns to the religion that he/she neglected to practice for a while, conversion from another religion to Islam, abjuration of Islam for another religion, becoming deist through adoption of God but denial of religion, or even becoming an atheist, that is, the denial of religion and God.[5] In addition, concepts such as *intrareligious conversion* and *interreligious conversion* are used in the literature[6] to clarify the direction and extent of religious conversion. Nevertheless, the concept of religious conversion fell short of expressing the entire change experienced by individual with regard to religious and sacred space and his/her quest for meaning. Accordingly, the concepts of *spiritual conversion* and *spiritual transformation* were added to the relevant literature, particularly after the 2000s.[7] Certain studies have been carried out in Muslim societies about religious conversion; nevertheless, the majority of studies are based on Judeo-Christian societies. Studies within the Judeo-Christian tradition address religious conversion in the context of both intrareligious and interreligious aspects, whereas studies in the Muslim world or by

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3 Robert A. Emmons and Raymond F. Paloutzian, "Din Psikolojisi: Dün, Bugün ve Yarın," in *Din Psikolojisi: Dine ve Maneviyata Psikolojik Yaklaşımlar*, ed. and trans. Ali Ayten, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: İz, 2012), 13-18.

4 Ali Köse, *Conversion to Islam: A Study of Native British Converts* (London: Kegan Paul, 1996); Kate Zebiri, *British Muslim Converts: Choosing Alternative Lives* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

5 Ali Köse and Ali Ayten, *Din Psikolojisi,* 9th ed. (Istanbul: Timaş, 2019), 141; Hasan Kayıklık, "Bireysel Yaşamda Dinsel Değişim" in *Arayış, Değişim ve Din*, ed. Hasan Kayıklık (Adana: Karahan Kitabevi, 2017), 7-10.

6 Yaniv Fox and Yosi Yisraeli, eds., *Contesting Inter-Religious Conversion in the Medieval World* (London: Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315574028.

7 Emmons and Paloutzian, *Din Psikolojisi*, 13-18.

Muslim scholars in the West deal with the problem in terms of interreligious conversion.[8] In other words, the latter concentrated on Westerners who converted to Islam or even Turks who converted to Christianity. More precisely, religious conversion within Muslim culture is rarely examined;[9] besides, there is a lack of studies that comprehend the process before and after such conversion.

This study is about religious conversion. In other words, this study analyzes the evolution of changes in the faith of individuals in Islamic culture as an example of interreligious conversion. The return to religion is an individual experience; nevertheless, psycho-sociological processes such as relationships of the individual with family and social circle are influential in this process, where the life of an individual undergoes radical transformation and reconstruction of identity through substantial configuration. It is necessary to scrutinize the entire life of an individual since the process of conversion takes place under the impact of various factors that influence the individual's life and the maturation of these factors within that life. In this regard, the study provides a psychosocial analysis of the process from childhood until the present situation of the participants in order to understand how the process of conversion emerged and matured. Interview questions are determined to identify what happens during childhood, adolescence, the decision-making process to convert, and later on. Questions are gathered under three groups, namely, the psychosocial and spiritual changes before, during, and after the process of conversion. Accordingly, the research seeks answers to the following essential questions:

1) What kind of relationships did individuals who have undergone a religious conversion process have with their parents during childhood? How do they evaluate their family environment and parent attitudes? What kind of a childhood did they have in terms of conveyance of religious values? What was the general course regarding religious learning and living during adolescence?

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8 Bayram Sevinç, *Hıristiyan Olan Türkler ve Türk Misyonerler* (Istanbul: İz, 2006); Esra Özyürek, *Being German Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the New Europe* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015).

9 Sema Eryücel, "Religious Conversion in University Students," *Turkish Studies* 13, no. 17 (2018), 123-140, https://doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.14159.

2) What did they experience in the process of deciding to make intrareligious conversion? Did they undergo any traumatic or mystic experience? Were any individuals or groups influential to the decision-making process? How long did the decision-making process take, and what were the significant incidents during this period?

3) What psychosocial and spiritual changes were experienced following the process of intrareligious conversion? What were the reactions of the inner circle of the individual? What difficulties did the individual undergo in the process of achieving a new identity after conversion? Which positive and negative emotions were experienced after conversion? What changes has the individual made in his/her life in regard to religious belief?

II. Methodology

The survey employs an interpretive phenomenological approach within the scope of a qualitative method for the exploration of the interpretation of various experiences about individual processes of intrareligious conversion. A structured interview is used as a data collection tool. The interview form developed by Köse[10] to study religious conversion processes of converted British was translated into Turkish and used by the researchers. Since the study discusses intrareligious conversion, certain questions are modified after consulting clinical psychologists and experts in the psychology of religion, in line with intended purpose. Questions in the interview consist of three essential sections. The first group includes questions about the relationship that the individual who returned to religion had with his/her family and religion during childhood and adolescence. The second group of questions deals with incidents, individuals, groups, and activities that influenced the decision-making process during religious conversion. The third group of questions seeks to investigate emotional changes, relationships with inner circles, and novelties in the individual's life following the process of intrareligious conversion.

Workgroup

A total of 27 participants were obtained by means of snowball sampling within the scope of the survey. Females composed 59.2% (*N*=16) of the population, while the remaining 40.8% (*N*=11) were

[10] Köse, *Conversion to Islam,* 208-210.

males. Ages ranged between 18 and 64, with an average age of (*M*=38.7). Almost half of the participants (*N*=14; 51.8%) had an education background equivalent to or above the university level, while the remaining were graduates of primary school (*N*=3; 11.2%), secondary school (*N*= 2; 7.4%) or high school (*N*=8; 29.6%).

Data Collection

The snowball technique was used to reach participants, beginning with immediate circles of researchers. Participants consisted of individuals who resided in Istanbul who have experienced intrareligious conversion at a certain period of their lives and have not changed (not undergone deconversion) since then. Another criterion was that a minimum of two years must have passed since conversion in order to better contextualize the process within the background and aftermath. In addition, participants were chosen from different age groups to reflect the generation gap and differences in the perception of religious conversion. Participant interviews were carried out face-to-face by researchers in a location set by the participant (cafeteria or workplace). Each interview took approximately one hour. Twenty-seven participants were considered a sufficient sample size since the survey attained theoretical saturation. Sound records, taken by courtesy of participants, were recorded on paper and rendered available for analysis by researchers. Texts were analyzed by researchers through manual coding and content analysis without the aid of qualitative analysis software. The three stages adopted for preparation of questions (preconversion, decision-making process, and post-conversion) were used in the same manner during analysis, and findings were interpreted in the same order.

Data Analysis, Reliability, and Validity

The survey employed an abridged form of interview that focuses on the family relationships of participants and their access to religious transfer during childhood and youth, identity and meaning crises, and changes during the decision-making process and after conversion. The collected data were handled in terms of credibility and transmissibility in order to ensure the validity of the interview questions. *Expert review* was used in order to enhance credibility. For higher transmissibility, expressions by participants were directly transmitted on relevant occasions, and a comprehensive description

was carried out. *Consistency* and *confirmation reviews* were made for reliability. Each researcher performed separate coding, and the results were eventually compared. In addition, the analysis and results of the survey were also reviewed by clinical psychologists and experts in the psychology of religion.

III. Findings and Interpretation

This section examines findings and relevant interpretations that were collected with a qualitative method and put to content analysis under three essential titles, namely, the changes before, during, and after the process of conversion.

A. The Period before Conversion: Childhood, Youth Experiences, and Familial Factors

As indicated above, it is necessary to examine childhood and youth experiences as well as religious orientation, in the family of the individual prior to conversion in order to better understand the process of religious conversion and returning to religion. Indeed, most relevant studies[11] deal with the process of conversion or the return to religion after childhood. Likewise, the survey comprises questions about childhood, familial factors, and youth experiences that are thought to influence the process of conversion.

1. Childhood Experiences and Familial Factors

During childhood, children are both physically and emotionally dependent on parents or caretakers. In addition, this is the stage when the individual is very sensitive to what is going on around

[11] Orhan Gürsu, "Travma, Din ve Psikoloji: Acıyı Bal Eylemek," *Türk Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi Uluslararası Multidisipliner Kongresi Bildiriler* (2018), 315-322; Heon Choul Kim, *Din Değiştirmenin Entelektüel Arka Planı* (Istanbul: Kaynak, 2003); Orhan Gürsu, "Günümüzde Tasavvuf Yoluyla İslam'a Yönelişin Sosyo-Psikolojik Analizi" (master's thesis, Bursa: Uludağ University, 1999); Zainab Ajoke Oshun, "Hıristiyanlıktan İslam'a İslam'dan Hıristiyanlığa Geçişin Psiko-Sosyal Sebepleri: Nijerya Örneği Üzerine Bir Araştırma" (master's thesis, Bursa: Uludağ University, 2010); Celal Çayır, "Türkiye'de Din Değiştirip Hıristiyanlığa Geçişin Psiko-Sosyal Etkenleri" (PhD diss., Bursa: Uludağ University, 2008); Süreyya Canbolat, "Türkiye'de 1986-2002 Yılları Arasında Hıristiyan Olan Müslümanlar Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Marmara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 27 (2004), 87-103.

him/her and when the first seeds are planted for possible future changes and transformations. Therefore, the following questions were posed to participants in order to understand which elements in childhood were influential on their return to religion: Whether their parents were alive, their relationship to their parents, the existence of grandparents, subjective perception about family environment, whether he/she received religious education, the source of such education – if any, the piety level of parents, the individual status about practice of religion, memories about religious life, and negative aspects that led to religious displeasure.

According to the responses about the lifestyle of the family during childhood, parents of 20 (80%) of the participants were alive and married, families of 6 (24%) of the participants occasionally hosted grandparents, and most participants did not push their imagination or memory about this issue. It is fair to say that at minimum, the better part of the participants had a nuclear family structure where both parents were alive and together and grandparents were seen upon occasional visits. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that their perceptions about religious life are rather molded by religious life and the orientations of parents.

In families where parents are alive and together, children are expected to have an optimistic approach about family life unless they are involved in traumatic incidents such as violence, alcoholism, or serious illness. Nonetheless, such expectations may be misleading given the possibly high rate of unhappy marriages that do not end in divorce. For the subjective perception of participants about family life, 9 (36%) participants mentioned a "warm, reliable, affectionate" family life, 1 participant did not want to talk about it, while one said he did not want to go back to childhood; in other words, 2 participants (8%) had an unhappy childhood, whereas the majority did not give any information about this issue.

An assessment of the responses about the piety status of parents showed typologies of traditional piety and faith piety. The majority of participants (68%) responded that their parents are "traditionally pious." In this respect, traditional piety means worship is performed in an imitational manner or even pursuant to environmental factors, not due to a high level of consciousness or education. On the other hand, the mother may be more pious than the father, or the father may be more of a perfectionist than the mother in regard to piety. For

some participants (38%), their parents were "seasonally pious;" namely, they fast only during Ramaḍān and are moderate towards religion but do not practice most types of worship. Some statements by participants about the piety of their parents are given below:

> My father was not a pious man; he just did not drink and fasted in Ramaḍān. Likewise, my mother only covered her head and fasted in Ramaḍān. We had nothing to do with religion except for Ramaḍān... They told me that my granny began performing *ṣalāh* only upon the reproach by a relative who said: "Your hair turned white, won't you still perform *ṣalāh*?" (Participant 5, Female).

> My father has performed *ṣalāh* regularly since I was 11. My mother began to hinder *ṣalāh* during the period when she changed the nappies of her kids, due to lack of religious knowledge... Now, she does not cover her head but performs *ṣalāh* and recites Yāsīn (Participant 12, Male).

> The piety status of my parents can be described as imitative and traditional (Participant 4, Female).

> As a child, I used to attend summer school at mosque at the age of 5-6, like every Muslim kid; otherwise, I have not been in any religious institution such as İmam-Hatip [High School], Qurʾān Course, etc. My parents are Kemalists; they do not practice religious rituals but are strict believers and merciful persons. They used to fast (Participant 25, Male).

> My parents are not pious at all. It is a Kemalist family... My family used to live together. In this regard, I have no complaint about my parents. A great family, always fulfilling their duties. They were in a decent financial situation. We lacked a lot about religion. My grandparents were around. We were living in the same block. They say that my grandparents used to perform *ṣalāh*, but I don't remember at all (Participant 14, Male).

According to answers about institution and source of religious education during childhood, participants did not undergo formal religious education but attend mosques or similar schools in summer or contented themselves with prayers taught by the family. For family, we can consider, in the order of intensity, despotic religious education, nonrepressive and moderate religious education by the father, or even indifference. The most common types of worship during childhood were occasional recital of the Qurʾān, fasting,

ṣalāh, and prayers. The concept of prayer was often mentioned as *reciting prayers* (for example, Participant 2, Female); therefore, they were probably prayers not created spontaneously but rather taught and memorized.

Absence or insufficiency of religious education may be one of the reasons behind abstention or distance of participants about religion. According to studies on religious conversion,[12] most participants have undergone limited or no religious education. Indeed, as the following examples show, the form of religious education and prevention of misperception about religion are important for the processes of religious conversion and returning to religion, as are high or low levels of religious education.

Presumably, participants who do not practice or remain distant from religion during a certain period of their lives may adopt such an attitude because they experience or witness an incident that causes displeasure about religion during childhood. Examples such as witnessing beatings in mosque or dismissal from mosque, hatred towards a religion teacher, superstitions practiced by the family or imposing religious education are presented below in the words of participants:

> I got no religious education; when I was a kid, we used to attend Qur'ān courses during summer holiday. Back then, hodjas used to beat children if we could not memorize a certain prayer. Their objective was not to teach religion but to alienate you from religion. They attained their purpose (Participant 14, Male).

> The mosque I attended had a disturbing environment. Repressive, if you like. There were some kind of persons who were shy. I was seven or eight years old; during *ṣalāh*, I was dismissed from mosque because of misbehavior such as giggling. I never returned to mosque until I was 25. It was a standoff, and I didn't want to go through the same thing again (Participant 21, Male).

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[12] Hayati Hökelekli and Celal Çayır, "Gençlerin Din Değiştirip Hıristiyan Olmasında Etkili Olan Psiko-Sosyal Etkenler," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 15, no. 1 (2006), 23-46; Eryücel, "Religious Conversion in University Students," 123-140; Hüseyin Peker, "Din Değiştirmede Psiko-Sosyolojik Faktörler" (PhD diss., Ankara: Ankara University, 1979); Yusuf Sinan Zavalsız, "Türkiye'de Hıristiyan Olan Müslümanlar: Psiko-Sosyolojik Bir Araştırma 1990-2010" (PhD diss., Istanbul: Marmara University, 2011).

I was very bad at memorizing. My religion teachers compelled us to memorize Qur'ān verses and failed those who couldn't. This is why I was always having difficulty with religion lessons ... Because of the stories my mother told, I thought Allah would turn me into stone if I did something wrong. In fifth grade, during a football game with friends, I said "... (insult) of Allah," rather than "stupid of Allah." I was very scared, as I thought I would turn into stone. But I didn't. Then, I lost my fear of Allah (Participant 16, Male).

When I was a kid, my grandfather had meningitis and became deaf. We had a relative, like an older brother. I asked him why my grandpa went deaf. He answered: Allah makes some people deaf to take *adhān* away from them. Thereupon, I was alienated from religion and Allah. What kind of an Allah was that? (I perform *ṣalāh* at the moment). That was a test, a test for grandpa and us (Participant 24, Male).

Completely negative. My religion teacher was the most fainthearted man in my life. I had a different perception of religion that merely consisted of *ṣalāh*. In the fifth or sixth grade, my father was very insistent about *ṣalāh*. If I was in a room visible to my dad through a window, I bowed down on to the prayer rug but did not actually perform *ṣalāh*. If I was somewhere he couldn't see, I just sat on the rug ... Besides, my dad did not allow me to wear trousers; but I think it was not something religious, rather because he thought trousers were masculine. I never wore trousers until I married; I still don't if I am to meet him. Likewise, he wouldn't let me wear pajamas (Participant 22, Female).

As seen above, the factors that alienate participants from religion arise from misguiding attitudes and misbehaviors of not only family members but also representatives of religion. Superstitions, which are passed down through religious discourse, can no longer answer the questions that children have today since the level of education has become much higher than it was in past generations. Punishments in the name of Allah and religious education that overlooks individual differences have led to alienation from religion or to non-adoption of religious culture.

2. Religious Experiences during Adolescence

To determine the religious intellectual development of participants during adolescence, questions were raised about whether they

questioned religion, if they did, what were the common subjects of such questioning; substance/alcohol addiction; compliance/ noncompliance with social norms; whether they experienced alienation in individual, social or religious contexts; participation in a political or religious group; and curiosity about other religions.

According to the responses about whether participants questioned religion during adolescence, most female participants (64%) made such inquiries because of gender discrimination in the religion or in the family because of religion. This fact brings along the perception of an unfair and punishing God and therefore a negative attitude towards religion. The following statements clearly demonstrate this fact:

> In my childhood, I apparently did not leave the perception of religion imposed by society; however, I never really lived the religion imposed by society. Indeed, the system, imposed as religion, meant obedience to a system of obeying the father until marriage and then obeying the husband. You were indoctrinated and imposed to satisfy their egos, not your own. My discontentment about religion is because nothing happens as it is told. I broke away from religion at about 13. It was all about a burning and punishing Allah, with everything *ḥarām* and sin, and such understanding was lauded principally by women. Questioning was often about gender. Why am I woman if all is a sin for them? (Participant 4, Female)

> I thought the family of my uncle were true believers, and I never wanted to be pious since I was disturbed by their behaviors. For example, they never schooled their daughter and were angry with my dad because I attended school; they treated women very badly. I had nothing to do with religion during adolescences. I never thought of becoming pious, since they were very rude, inconsiderate, and disrespectful to women (Participant 5, Female).

> I began to have a consciousness about religion during adolescence. My questions about religion were rather about gender. I thought, for example, "no matter how proper a subject I am to Allah, I can never go to heaven as a woman" (Participant 9, Female).

The problem for women in Islam, arising from gender discrimination, has been a much-debated issue[13] among those who

[13] Necla Arat, *Kadın Sorunu* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1980); Turan

adopt defensive, accusative, or idealizing discourse.[14] During adolescence, participants display a rather accusative attitude about gender discrimination. According to a study about individuals who converted from Islam to Christianity, most participants (80.3%) complained about gender discrimination in Islam.[15] The emphasis on gender discrimination brings along perception of a God who judges pursuant to unfair prerequisites; consequently, reconciliation for individuals who have such a perception of religion is either delayed or never takes place.

As for answers about alcohol or drug addiction during adolescence, most participants are smoking addicts and occasionally drink, whereas 20% had serious substance addiction in youth but gradually recovered upon conversion.

In light of relevant answers, participants who have undergone radical changes in their lives are more rebellious and have a more critical approach about social norms; nevertheless, the better part of participants did not experience alienation. Participants who report alienation saw themselves outside of society for reasons such as intolerance to injustice and criticism of the gap between religious discourse and practice:

> Noncompliance with religious norms was always there. Inconsistency emerged due to differences between what is said and done, which brought about alienation from society (Participant 4, Female).
>
> I was the rebel kid in the house, as well as in society. I could not tolerate cruelty, injustice, lies, and treachery (Participant 24, Male).
>
> I was obstinate. I could never tolerate injustice (Participant 22, Female).

Dursun, *Tabu Can Çekişiyor: Din Bu*, 3rd ed. (Istanbul: Kaynak, 1991); İlhan Arsel, *Şeriat ve Kadın*, 3rd ed. (Istanbul: Kaynak, 1989); Beyza Bilgin, "İslam'da ve Türkiye'de Kadınlar," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 36 (1997), 29-43, https://doi.org/10.1501/Ilhfak_0000000875; Bekir Topaloğlu, *İslam'da Kadın*, 19th ed. (Istanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2004); Caner Taslaman and Feryal Taslaman, *İslam ve Kadın* (Istanbul: İstanbul Yayınevi, 2019).

[14] Sıddık Ağçoban, "Kadın Olgusunun Kültürel Gelişimi ve İslam'da Kadının Yeri Üzerine Tartışmalar," *Uluslararası Kültürel ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2016), 14-24.

[15] Canbolat, "Türkiye'de 1986-2002 Yılları Arasında Hıristiyan Olan Müslümanlar Üzerine Bir İnceleme," 103.

Moral issues become more important during adolescence; the sensitivity among participants about inequity and injustice drove them to criticize social norms, to social alienation, in their own words. Nevertheless, given what they tell in general, the condition of participants does not truly correspond to alienation[16] that is closely related to concepts such as withdrawal, apathy, insensitivity, and normlessness; rather, they see themselves different from society since they criticize the religious and moral aspects of society.

Regarding the status of belonging to a religious or political group, the majority of participants (72%) did not join any religious or political group in youth; some of those who joined a religious group (20%) indicated that they soon left such a group due to the dissatisfactory level of religious consciousness.

Problems about religion during late adolescence and early adulthood often match with those in adolescence; nonetheless, the cognitive level of inquiries increases, and participants not only criticize religious ways of living in society but also have difficulty comprehending the logic behind certain religious discourses. In addition to gender discrimination, inquiries about issues such as superstitions, sealing of heart, names of Allah, and divine justice also influence alienation from religion.

> The only issue that I possessed in youth was the extreme burden imposed on women. Women were always under pressure, and this made me feel uncomfortable. I asked: "Is this what religion commands me?," but I still consented and covered my head, thinking "Well, if it's a commandment." (Participant 8, Female).

> My inquiries began during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. I used to read about every subject. I became an atheist as I continued reading, and I kept reading as I became an atheist. During my time at war academy, the religious community called X took issue with me. They used to come together to purchase heaven. They had a house. They saw themselves completely different. Their manners alienated me from religion. ... This wasn't the true religion, but I perceived it in this way (Participant 25, Male).

[16] Faruk Karaca, "Din ve Yabancılaşma: İmkânlar, Fırsatlar ve Tehlikeler," *İlahiyat Akademi Dergisi* 2, no. 3 (2016), 45-54.

In consideration of answers about curiosity among participants regarding other religions, more than half have no interest, whereas 9 participants (36%) have sought information about other religions, particularly Christianity. Such indifference is explained by participants through the fact that they had nothing to do with any religion, including Islam, they have no doubt about the fact that Islam is the true religion, or even they believe other religions are distorted. Those who analyze other religions, Christianity above all, state that such a process of comparison drew them closer to Islam instead of alienating the, from it:

> I used to question a lot why the followers of other religions would go to hell even if they are very good persons; I still question and seek information about it. My interest in other religions was to learn their rituals. This is why I often visited churches in youth. When I thought about Jesus as he was and the people around him, I could not connect that impression with the atmosphere in churches. Perhaps I saw distortion of religion in this (Participant 9, Female).

> As I learn about Christianity, I understand Islam better and thus can reflect Islam in my way of living (Participant 11, Male).

> Once, there was a foreign TV series, where a girl prayed to Jesus. I remember imitating her and praying in the same manner while playing. "May God save Jesus," I prayed. Back then, I didn't know what Islam was. I searched about other religions; I like comparisons. I tried to learn their ways of worship (Participant 3, Female).

> I was interested in other religions in order to learn about them. I read the Old and New Testaments a bit. Their logic did not make sense to me. That chosen status of Jews, confession and clergy in Christianity, and Jesus as son of God were not for me in terms of logic and reason (Participant 12, Male).

In brief, inquiries during adolescence are rarely based on the question "Is there a God?"; rather, the essential factor behind alienation in this period is based on wrong attitudes about Muslims regarding religious ways of living and an erroneous transmission of culture, including gender discrimination. Moreover, the intellectual level of inquiries goes slightly higher, whereupon superstitions are filtered through logic and eliminated; accordingly, certain factors, such as reactions against differences between religious discourse and acts in society, weaken positive perception about religion.

B. Psycho-sociological Transformation during the Process of Conversion

This section concentrates on psycho-sociological transformations of individuals in the process of conversion (the process that includes the period when questioning and inquiries begin, the decision-making process, and the period just before conversion) within the scope of relevant literature and interviews. In this context, the problem is addressed in three subsections, including auxiliary elements in the process of conversion (how or by what means the individual explores religion, traumatic incidents, or similar affections), whether the individual had any mystic experience in the process, and the decision-making process, in order to zoom in on the psycho-sociological transformation in the process.

1. Auxiliary Elements in the Process of Conversion

Participants were asked how they rediscovered religion; about any auxiliary elements, individuals or groups in the process of conversion; about any incidents that lead to decision-making, and whether they had any traumatic experience in order to identify the elements influential in the process of conversion. According to their answers, it is possible to assert that the rediscovery of religion varies depending on the individual. Some participants were reacquainted with religion by means of a group, while some mentioned the importance of individual interaction. In addition, some participants reported that they underwent conversion by reading books, through contemplation, because of curiosity about religion or even in the wake of a traumatic event.

The following statements are presented as an example of how certain participants were influenced by a person or group within religious conversation circles or by listening to or being informed via such conversations through technological means (radio, television, social media, etc.):

> I rediscovered religion by means of the group I met (Participant 1, Female).

> Acquaintance with a devout person was influential to me. Radio shows had a deep impact on my religious conversion (Participant 4, Female).

> Radio shows and some individuals were influential on my process of finding the true path (Participant 1, Female).
>
> I had a pious neighbor. A literature teacher, whom I met by means of this neighbor, had also eventually found the true path and was working as sewing teacher. I went to her for sewing courses, and I was impressed (Participant 5, Female).
>
> ... I listened to lots of conversations; indeed, I always listen to daily religious conversations online (Participant 13, Female).

As shown in the foregoing examples about the rediscovery of religion, some participants rediscovered religion upon meeting a group, while some were influenced by friends or neighbors. In addition to coming together in the same environment, some participants reported that they made use of technological means and listened to various radio programs, followed online conversations and were influenced by them. In short, individuals in the process of seeking a meaning were exposed to virtual or real emotional affections that met their quest and demand for meaning in the process.[17] Recent studies emphasize that religion can be learned and lived online. Such technological developments pave the way for a different development and change beyond traditional schemes in regard to access to religious information and practicing religion.[18] This transformation is apparent in the processes of conversion. Indeed, as participants express, most individuals have been subject to exposures that can start, support, and finalize processes of guidance by means of traditional media and the internet.

Individuals may sometimes question the meaning of life for them in the face of certain difficulties that push them towards loss of meaning and control; they can even think they have lost a sense of control. In such periods of the coping process, an individual may follow two paths, namely, protecting or changing the meaning. In such a situation where it is impossible to preserve the meaning, the change of meaning may acquire a religious context. In such cases, the

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[17] Christopher Helland, "Online Religion as Lived Religion: Methodological Issues in the Study of Religious Participation on the Internet," *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 1, no. 1 (2005), 1-16.

[18] Lorne L. Dawson, "Researching Religion in Cyberspace: Issues and Strategies," *Religion on the Internet: Research Prospects and Promises*, ed. Jeffrey K. Hadden, Douglas E. Covan (London: An Imprint of Elsevier Science), 27.

individual reviews his/her life in religious and spiritual terms and may undergo a religious transformation process. In this respect, traumatic events may have a triggering effect on religious/spiritual transformation.[19] According to studies carried out in the West and Turkey about religious conversion, traumatic experiences are among stimulating elements for individuals with regard to religious conversion.[20] Participants indicate that feelings such as loneliness and unhappiness in the wake of traumatic events influence the process of conversion. There are certain studies that assert that religions are effective in weathering traumas and recovering from pathologies that may appear after trauma.[21] It is possible to say that the psychological state and existential inquiries of participants lead to a quest, whereupon they establish a closer bond with religion. In short, for some individuals, the process of conversion may become a part of the religious coping process. The following statements seem to approve this assertion:

> Traumas I went through led me to embrace the religion even more. Each negative impact from the environment revivified me, and I went into religion wholeheartedly (Participant 3, Female).

> As I came back from the army, I felt alone since my brothers were married and I could not feel comfortable at their homes; my parents were both dead. For a while, I was on my own, I moved away from everyone. I began to perform *ṣalāh* since He was all I had (Participant 21, Male).

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19 Ayten, *Tanrı'ya Sığınmak: Dini Başa Çıkma Üzerine Psiko-sosyal Bir Araştırma* (Istanbul: İz, 2012), 56.

20 Mona Alyedreessy, "British Muslim Converts: An Investigation of Conversion and De-Conversion Processes to and from Islam" (PhD diss., London: Kingston University, 2016), 91; Zavalsız, "Din Değiştirmenin Psiko-Sosyal Kodları," *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 12, no. 2 (2012), 193; Hökelekli and Çayır, "Gençlerin Din Değiştirip Hıristiyan Olmasında Etkili Olan Psiko-Sosyal Etkenler," 26; Eryücel, "Religious Conversion in University Students," 123-140.

21 Gürsu, "Travma, Din ve Psikoloji," 315; James K. Boehnlein, "Religion and Spirituality after Trauma," in *Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*, Laurence J. Kirmayer, Robert Lemelson, and Mark Barad, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 260, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511500008.018; Ayten, *Din ve Sağlık* (Istanbul: Marmara Akademi, 2018).

> ... Nothing satisfied me; I was always unhappy. My process of finding the true path began as I became familiar with Allah and resorted to Him, and when I was convinced, He was capable of moving me away from all sources of unrest (Participant 5, Female).

> I was not happy with my life and myself. During such a difficult period, I could not sleep until dawn after *saḥūr* [pre-dawn meal during Ramaḍān]. I opened the Qurʾān and came across the chapter al-Ḍuḥá, which I had never read or known before ... I read: "*Your Lord has not taken leave of you, nor has He detested you*;" I broke down into tears; it was all over for me at that moment. It was a moment like a non-Muslim reciting *shahādah* for the first time to convert to Islam (Participant 12, Male).

Throughout interviews, some participants reported that they wondered and read about religion to rediscover it on their way to conversion. Some participants compared Islam with other religions through curiosity and inquiry, whereas others rediscovered Islam by searching about a certain aspect of it. Relevant studies put forth that intellectual curiosity and questioning are among the essential motives behind religious conversion.[22] In this framework, it is possible to say that intellectual sense of wonder and inquiries start the process of conversion. The following statements by participants may serve as an example:

> Having questioned the Bible and Christianity, I chose Islam, another monotheistic religion. I live in a Muslim society, and this fact evidently had an impact; however, I chose this wonderful path in the wake of my own efforts and research and not under the influence of others (Participant 26, Male).

> The beginning of research at the end of inquiries and Turkish translation of the Qurʾān (Participant 11, Male).

> I discovered religion because of curiosity. I wondered and sought information (Participant 6, Female).

According to the interviews, those who reportedly rediscovered religion through the Qurʾān emphasized that they read Turkish

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[22] Ali Köse, *Neden İslam'ı Seçiyorlar: Müslüman Olan İngilizler Üzerine Psiko-Sosyolojik Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: İz, 2008), 126-130; Mecit Altun, "Müslüman Olan Almanlar Üzerine Psiko-Sosyal Bir İnceleme" (master's thesis, Adana: Çukurova University, 2012), 70.

translations [*maʾāl*] rather than the original Arabic version. This preference may be due to lack of knowledge to read in Arabic or even to better understand the Qurʾān in their process of conversion.

> I compared what I knew beforehand with what I learned from the Qurʾān. Its feature that distinguishes the truth from the falsehood (its being the criterion [*furqān*]) helped my heart to rest (Participant 7, Female).

> During my decision-making process, the Qurʾān was my only guide. What set me free and made me happy as a subject was verse 130 of al-Nisāʾ and verse 30 of al-Furqān. The verse with extensive meaning where Rasūl Allāh complains to his Lord about his people, namely, "*O my Lord, indeed my people have this Qurʾān as a thing abandoned*," is one of the main motives for me find the true path (Participant 9, Female).

> I read nothing except for the Qurʾān and books of ḥadīth. In that period, I completely read the translation of the Qurʾān. Beforehand, I used to cast a glance now and then, but I didn't know how to perform *ṣalāh* and had nobody to teach me; back then, there wasn't so much information on the web, either (Participant 21, Male).

2. Dreams and Religious and Mystic Experience

Within the scope of this study, interviewees were asked whether they had any mystic and/or religious experience. Participants reported that mystic and religious experiences are influential at the stage of rediscovering religion. Literature examination reveals individuals who converted to Islam in the wake of a religious-mystic experience.[23] Likewise, studies tell about individuals who start, accelerate, or end their process of conversion by means of a dream or mystical experience during the period of inquiry or putting things in order while having a life distant from religious culture.[24] Such experience has been a breaking point or milestone for participants who began to seek information and question religion and steered

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[23] İrfan Başkurt, "Yaygın Din Eğitimi ve Sosyo-Psikolojik Açıdan İhtida Hadisesi: Üsküdar, Kadıköy ve Beyoğlu Örneği," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 14 (2006), 176.

[24] Gülüşan Göcen and Büşra Gügen, "Türkiye'de Din Psikolojisi Alanında İhtida Üzerine Yapılan Araştırmaların İçerik ve Yöntem Bakımından İncelenmesi," *İslâmî İlimler Dergisi* 12, no. 3 (2017), 96.

towards religion through repentance under such influence. Interestingly, a general glance at the interviews herein shows that the time of mystic experience varies depending on gender. Female participants often report mystic experience after making the decision to make intrareligious conversion, whereas male participants rather undergo mystic experiences before conversion. In this context, a separate study about the impact of gender on the process of conversion may contribute to the literature. Relevant statements by participants are given below:

> I was watching TV with my wife. I heard a voice from deep inside my ears: "Get up and perform *ṣalāh*, get up and perform *ṣalāh*." Okay, I thought, I will. But I still heard the same voice: "Get up and perform *ṣalāh*." It was the small hours. Then, "No," the voice said: "Perform your morning *ṣalāh*." I recited Basmalah, and began thinking something is wrong, something is wrong, I probably did something wrong. Then, I found and opened a *ṣalāh* guidebook to learn how it is done, and then I did. I performed all five times of *ṣalāh*: at noon, in the afternoon, evening, and night. The following morning, the same voice was with me again; this went on each prayer time for fifteen days (Participant 14, Male).

> I was on drugs together with friends. On the morning of the same day, I had taken pills for attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, and something else. As I took all together, I began to hallucinate and had a bad trip. I was sure I would die. I wanted to resort to Allah, but my sins were swimming before my eyes. Yet again, I begged Allah for mercy. Religion teachers, who I hated, had told how forgiving Allah was. That day, I survived that trip and came round. Upon recovery, I had a sense of embarrassment, I felt duty-bound to Allah ... Finally, I recited *shahādah*, browsed the web for details of *ghusl* (complete ablution) and gratitude *ṣalāh*, and performed my prayer. I guess the relief at that moment was a hint for my present inner peace (Participant 16, Male).

> When I was in jail, I had a dream of our Prophet. After prison, I continued to live in the same way for a few months. Nevertheless, I always woke up at the hour of *ṣalāh*, and this gave me a burden on the heart. There was a hodja for a community in Istanbul. I asked him about the situation: "I had a dream, and I have been restless since then." Hodja asked about my dream, and I told him "I am an assistant to our Prophet; he takes me wherever he goes. But he has consigned

me nine gold coins, and I breach this trust. Thereupon, I am attacked by lions with manes. I am stuck. I look at our Prophet, and he smiles back to me." Hodja responded: "If a Muslim saint had such dream, his rank would go even higher. For ordinary people such as you and me, their sins are absolved. You will go to Heaven. Indeed, Satan cannot don the guise of our Prophet." I have beaten and broken the hearts of so many people, I have drunk a lot; what do I have to do with heaven?" "Well, what about the gold coins?" I asked. He answered: "Prophet had no gold. His gold is his Sunnah. You have stolen his Sunnah. What is Sunnah? It is *ṣalāh*." Then, I performed ablution and noon *ṣalāh*. Therefore, it was Allah Who sent the dream, as well as its interpreter (Participant 24, Male).

... I swim in clear waters, my face sunward, sunbeams up on my face, a peaceful swim ... Then, the water suddenly gets contaminated; turbid, disturbing. I don't mind and continue swimming ... After a few more fathoms, I don't care about polluted water anymore ... The water gets so dirty I cannot even swim, it becomes a kind of marsh ... The marsh gets so solid I cannot swim; it is dark all around ... At that moment, I elude this servile feeling and begin to swim sunward, fresher than ever ... I never thought about this dream which I had about three or four times. After conversion, however, as I decided to "rebuild my life," I can comprehend the meaning of these dreams. Alḥamd li-llāh… (Participant 11, Male).

I both had a religious experience and a dream. The dream came during the period of questioning. At my times of inquiry, I asked questions such as "Are there really phenomena such as resurrection? If there are, how can I accept them?" During this period of inquiries, a tree in our garden was struck by lightning, before blooming back in summer; reanimation of the dead tree guided me in understanding resurrection. In the same period, I used to have a dream where I was burning. I saw myself as two different persons. In one, I stood still as a purified person, whereas I was burning in the other. The burning me, exposed to fireballs, stretched her arm to the other me for help. The other replied: "I want to save you, but I will burn too once I touch you." Such and similar dreams and sayings lasted for a long while (Participant 4, Female).

The death of my father had a great influence on my performing *ṣalāh* five times a day. My experience at his grave was hugely influential. I don't want to tell more about this. That feeling in that moment was

> more real than anything else I lived on this world. I began to perform *ṣalāh* regularly under influence of that experience (Participant 12, Male).

As indicated above, some participants reported they began the process of conversion because of mystic experience, whereas some underwent a mystic and/or religious experience during the process. Having dreams is the most common experience. Dreams are perceived as "divine messages" or "warnings" by participants and influenced them in the process. A great majority of participants reported religious and mystic experience after the beginning and during the ongoing process of conversion; nonetheless, there are also participants who say they have not experienced any such event.

3. Decision-Making Period

Another question worth answering in the process of intrareligious conversion is the duration of the period required to become reacquainted with religion. For some participants, it took three hours to make a decision about intrareligious conversion, while some others took approximately three years. The duration of the process varies depending upon the individual. In consideration of all interviews as a whole, the bond between individual and religion, his/her experiences, way of perceiving religion, requirements and intensity of questioning may lead to a process that ranges between three hours and three years. Then, again, some participants clearly remember the duration, while some describe the process with more hesitancy.

> It took me three hours to decide to practice religion in my life. I can remember this very clearly ... (Participant 2, Female).

> The decision-making process lasted about a year. The first six months were dominated by intense inquiries, whereas I became gradually more assured in the following period (Participant 1, Female).

> The decision-making process lasted approximately three years; indeed, I had made up my mind, I was on a quest; I performed *ṣalāh* secretly, but I disclosed my decision at the end of third year (Participant 26, Male).

> Three days. I got lost in that book I was talking about (Participant 22, Female).

> Initial inquiries took about four or five months. This process extended to one year until assurance ... (Participant 8, Female).
>
> It did not take too long to decide. Indeed, the innate elements [*fiṭrah*] that are encoded into human nature and that call us to the true path were galloping whenever they saw truths; the same applied for me, and it didn't take long. One year, I may say, one year at the most (Participant 9, Female).

Given the psycho-sociological transformations during the process of conversion, some participants underwent transformation on the basis of individual experiences, while some were influenced by social circles. For studies on religious transformation and religious conversion, the model of religious conversion motives created by Lofland & Skonovd[25] has been employed in numerous studies. This model indicates that intellectual, emotional, experimental, and mystic motives come to the forefront during the religious conversion process.[26] Likewise, intellectual, emotional, and mystic motives emerge during the rediscovery of religion according to our study. A holistic reading shows that individuals rediscover religion and become involved in the process of conversion under the motivation of requirements about which they have the strongest feeling of deficiency. In light of the interviews, the first behavior following the decision-making process is *repentance and praying*. It is observed that following the process of conversion, individuals, first of all, tend towards the worship form of *ṣalāh*, probably to concretize the process to which they have committed themselves. In addition to *ṣalāh*, female participants have also attempted to veil themselves, while males tried other means such as abstaining from alcohol. The process after conversion is treated more comprehensively under the title below.

C. Psychosocial and Spiritual Changes after Conversion

Within the scope of relevant literature and interviews herein, the present section dwells upon difficulties and changed experienced by

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[25] John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, "Conversion Motifs," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 20,* no. 4 (1981), 373-385, https://doi.org/10.2307/1386185.

[26] Gögen and Gügen, "Türkiye'de Din Psikolojisi Alanında İhtida Üzerine Yapılan Araştırmaların İçerik ve Yöntem Bakımından İncelenmesi," 96.

individuals in social life after conversion. For this purpose, interviewees are asked questions to determine their experiences in the wake of conversion, such as feelings after the decision, possible changes in future plans pursuant to faith, and reactions of their family, friends, and inner circle about the decision.

1. Positive Feelings after Conversion

Participants were asked: "What did you feel after the decision?" in order to determine the positive and negative emotions of individuals in the wake of conversion. Participants often expressed that they felt better after the decision. Individuals indicated that they were became stronger, more peaceful and "in a permanent state of peace," so to speak. The following expressions exemplify the positive emotions of participants after conversion:

> I felt an indescribable peace and strong relief in my conscience (Participant 2, Female).
>
> I had a huge sense of peace and happiness. I was as light as a bird. I no more feared death. Indeed, I was now friends with the owner of death (Participant 5, Female).
>
> Having decided to follow the right path, I was, as the phrase goes, up in the clouds. I cannot say enough to describe that feeling of freedom. My Lord granted me a license to do anything, just watching His restrictions. I was the richest, happiest, and strongest I had ever been. From then on, any negative or positive incident, any person I met on the street or on the balcony or any conversation with others was a Qur'ān verse about creation and existence ... (Participant 9, Female).
>
> Relief, lift, permanent peace (Participant 11, Male).
>
> After the decision, I felt as if I was reborn (Participant 13, Female).

Certain social scientists define religion as individual orientation towards God in terms of spiritual functions and sincere encounters with Him. This encounter is a meeting in which the soul entirely participates. Accordingly, faith has a deep impact on individual emotions. Indeed, faith responds to various requirements, desires, hopes, anguishes, and grievances of the soul. Therefore, any hope, anguish, and grief in the soul of an individual make sense within

belief in God.[27] Processes of conversion emerge in an interconnected manner with numerous problems in individual life. Usually, individuals struggle with severe cognitive and affective inquiries, disappointments, and difficulties prior to conversion. To leave doubts behind and attain a state of relative stability and to feel how the Almighty responds to prayers and His mercy is with him/her have a positive impact on the individual in psychological and spiritual sense, and such benefits are reflected in life satisfaction and well-being of individuals. Nevertheless, such well-being is not limited to psychological aspects and includes spiritual aspects. Expressions such as "inner peace" and "permanent peace" made by participants point to this fact.

In the wake of conversion, positive emotions such as inner peace and happiness are common; likewise, self-confidence, feeling special, and feeling a sense of freedom can be observed. Some participants state that their love of and confidence in themselves were on the rise following the decision, whereupon they began to feel special and free. Such self-confidence and feeling special and free are precursors of eventual changes in the life of the individual. Having regained self-confidence, an individual gets the motivation required to change his/her life. He/she feels stronger than before. He/she is no more alone since Divine Might is with him/her by means of prayers. Past deeds and hitches obtain a new, different meaning. Thus, the individual undergoes an inner transformation and may also opt for changing his life in a concrete manner. Indeed, when participants decided to look at their lives through a different perspective, many negative emotions are replaced by positive ones, and they review life with regard to meaning, values, and goals. Examples of several statements by participants about their feelings of self-confidence and freedom, as well as their attitude towards making new decisions in life, are given below:

> I felt strongly confident after making up my mind. It was a significant sense of relief, purification, and assurance. My emotions were quite positive. I learned to take any event more patiently and tolerantly (Participant 4, Female).

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[27] Kerim Yavuz, "Din Psikolojisinin Araştırma Alanları," *Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5 (1982), 87-108.

I felt special and free. There was no obstacle between me and my Lord. I began to feel more confident in society as a woman. I moved away from superstition. I began to proceed in the company of revelation (Participant 8, Female).

My spiritual solitude came to an end after the decision. I was able to say "I have Allah" following any problem, difficulty, or grief (Participant 16, Male).

My view of life changed. I began to see nature and everything through a different perspective (Participant 15, Female).

Alcohol was now meaningless and void; it was perhaps about aging and maturing. I felt I lived in vain; when I went to bed, I thought: "I will die and I will die as I am." After the decision, I had spiritual satisfaction and happiness. "I am alone no more," I thought. Even before I began performing *ṣalāh* and still drank, I was aware Allah always saw me, even though I reproached Him in hard times; from then on, however, I began to feel much closer to Him (Participant 21, Male).

2. Doubt and Remorse after Conversion

When asked about how they felt after conversion, individuals often mentioned positive emotions and decisions serving as a foundation for positive changes in life. Participants were also asked if they had any doubt or remorse because of their decision to determine whether they actually experienced such feelings. In consideration of their answers, individuals had certain doubts and hesitancies about how religion is practiced and about the attitudes and behaviors of the devout; nevertheless, they had no doubt or regret about their decision or the essence of religion. Relevant views of participants are provided below:

I had no regrets. My change was a right one. I had no regret about this; getting back to my former self would be a return to mischief (Participant 8, Female).

I had no doubt or regret about my decision. I never asked if I did the right thing. I set my heart on this path, so to speak. Allah willing, I will not return (Participant 26, Male).

I was shy and hid from people; I questioned what I was doing. You have nothing to do with all these; look how you used to live and how you are living now. You have nothing to do with Sufism or piety, I

thought. However, once I tasted the love, all came to an end (Participant 14, Male).

All these communities pushed me to question how religion is understood, but I had no question about the existence of Allah or the essence of religion. Once I was on the course, I felt religion and the devout were two different things. Moreover, I felt Islam in the Qur'ān never hangs you out to dry; it ceaselessly reinforces your confidence and instills peace. I also felt that the religionists, on the contrary, generate disappointment. This contradiction is still ongoing, but I don't leave *ṣalāh* because of anger against the imām... (Participant 18, Male).

Pursuant to foregoing opinions, individuals who experience religious conversion do not have any doubt or regret. The situation may be explained through the natural structure of the process of religious conversion and returning to religion. That is, religious conversion is a process of serious questioning, hesitancy, inquiry, and decision-making for most individuals. The person prefers religious conversion as a response to various problems and states of affairs, as well as a search for meaning in life. In a sense, the return to religion is the final preference and final decision. Individuals did not make this decision easily and chose it as a final exit. This is probably why they are content with the decision and have no doubt or regret.

3. Faith-related Changes after Conversion

The questions, "What kind of changes have you made in your life?" and "Did anything change in your life plans in line with your faith?" were asked of participants in order to identify how individuals reflect their feelings and thoughts about life after conversion and what kind of future plans they made pursuant to faith. Participants indicated that after conversion, they noticed what is right or wrong in their lives, became more stable and tidier, made decisions in line with their belief, and abandoned former negative habits, addictions, and friends. Individuals who have a stronger desire to change were able to realize this radical change in a more rapid and definite manner. Those discontent with their past had a stronger motivation for rapid and radical change in their lives. Evidently, one of the most striking changes after the process of conversion is to become devout. Many participants reported that they underwent significant change with regard to learning religion, practicing and transferring such

knowledge to others, whereupon they influenced themselves and their environment in this respect:

> First, I made *ṣalāh* a routine for me; then I found out why I wore *ḥijāb*. This sort of thing. I care more about the environment I am in. I orientate my children in the same manner ... (Participant 15, Female).

> I clung on to worship, I tried to read the Qurʾān in Turkish regularly and strived to learn Arabic. I finished the entire Qurʾān in translation. My thoughts about my future spouse have changed; I now want a wife with religious sensitivities (Participant 11, Male).

> I tried to establish the place of *ṣalāh* in my daily life; I began to advise my family and environment in this respect. I am aware that whatever I have is from Allah. I can recover more easily. I changed my profession to become more helpful to others ... (Participant 23, Female).

Having had intrareligious conversion, participants reportedly underwent a period of self-development in terms of awakening, awareness, and responsibility. Accordingly, the period after conversion is considered a beginning for a new process of a kind of maturation and self-actualization in which uncompleted past goals can be achieved through a more positive perspective, mistakes can be repaired, and negative environment and addictions can be avoided. This change is more visible in female participants.

> I became aware of what is right or wrong in my life; I dismissed the wrong and reinforced the right. My plans and goals changed and developed in a religious context (Participant 1, Female).

> I began to make my own decisions. My academic education began. I was a primary school graduate; I am a faculty graduate now, and preparing for master's degree. My change contributed a lot to this process. Religion influenced my entire life (Participant 7, Female).

> Now I am a more determined and conscious subject capable of making her own decisions, displaying her will, and being submissive. I learned to produce and build myself; my life plans have changed; I began to school in order to relate the beauty of revelation. My thoughts and view of life have changed substantially (Participant 8, Female).

> My most radical decision was to move away from my former circle of friends. I no longer see any friends I used to have back then. Indeed,

> when I quit drinking at the age of 27, it was my circle of friends that pushed me in that environment back again; even though I wanted to draw away, I had a social circle that liked going to bar, drinking, and letting loose. In such an environment, you inevitably have a sense of belonging to this setup and become involved. I had to move away, and I changed my social life (Participant 21, Male).

Studies on interreligious conversion demonstrate that such conversion often brings along a change of identity. More precisely, when a British or German person converts from Christianity to Islam, he/she assumes a new identity. Therefore, interreligious conversions lead to more intense conflicts about identity, national identity above all.[28] Since this study deals with intrareligious conversion, there are no findings about identity conflicts. Rather, participants indicated that they became more devout after conversion; the process was comprehensive enough to have an impact on giving meaning to life, determination of lifestyle, appointment of social circle, clothes and habits. For them, the process led to a transformation in the sense of awareness and responsibility, nourished higher empathy towards others and supported self-actualization and maturation.

4. Reactions of the Inner Circle after Conversion

According to relevant studies, when the conversion takes place in an interreligious manner (e.g., converting to Islam in Britain or to Christianity in Turkey, etc.), the convert may be exposed to severe negative reactions. Such a negative reaction may come from a colleague, an unknown person in the street, or even close relatives or friends.[29] In line with the purpose of analyzing a return to religion, this study includes questions to measure the reactions by the inner circle of the individual to his/her decision to convert. According to the answers of the participants, they received various reactions from their inner circle. Some participants related that their family and friends had a positive attitude towards their decision and ensuing changes in life; this attitude supported the adaptation process to the change and new lifestyle after conversion. Support by relatives and friends ensures higher well-being for individuals during the difficult period of returning to religion that includes questioning and inquiry.

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[28] Köse, *Neden İslam'ı Seçiyorlar*, 126-130.

[29] Sevinç, *Hıristiyan Olan Türkler ve Türk Misyonerler;* Köse, *Neden İslam'ı Seçiyorlar*, 126-130.

Participants are grateful to their relatives for their positive emotions in the process.

> My older sister was very happy. May Allah bless her. I was asking her about whatever I was obsessed and unsure; she gave me quite reasonable answers. I guess nobody else was as happy as my dear sister that I found the right path. May my Lord grant her any reward any good deed and *thawāb* of mine (Participant 11, Male).

> Since I have a pious family, I faced no resistance; they welcomed the decision (Participant 12, Male).

> "You were a bandit, and now, you are a saint," mom said. I had no negative reaction from my inner circle (Participant 24, Male).

On the other hand, some participants, particularly females, had severe negative reactions from their inner circles and even parents; they reported being excluded, mocked, or insulted; there were efforts to put them off this decision. Individuals who are isolated by their social circle because of conversion went on to establish new friendships and a new social sphere. As determined by numerous studies on religious conversion, individuals seek a group and environment to embrace them in this new identity.[30]

> I was harshly criticized by my family and inner circle, such as "You are far behind the times," "Do you think you can deservedly do that?" "Never come to our house." (Participant 2, Female).

> They thought I went mad; they considered me to be a crazy person who went nuts because of excessive questioning. They were always reactive against me (Participant 4, Female).

> I was isolated by my parents, my husband, and his family, and most interestingly, by so-called pious persons whom I thought to be happy because I covered my head. Most people did not believe me for years, saying "she just flies adrift; this is a passing fancy." They thought I would remove my *hijāb* one day (Participant 5, Female).

> Since I lived fast, people were very surprised when they learned about my change. As I grew a beard, my mother said: "Are you a fool? You can do this when you are old." (Participant 14, Male).

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[30] Köse, *Neden İslam'ı Seçiyorlar,* 126-130; Özyürek, *Being German Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the New Europe.*

> My friends were shocked when I quit drinking at the age of 27; they could hardly accept the situation and tried to mislead me. They forced me to let loose; indeed, they were why I had gone astray. When I moved away from them, I quit it all (Participant 21, Male).

> I wore a loose-fitting dress and large headscarf. I wanted to go anywhere together with my mother, I felt free; but my mother didn't want to come with me. I created a sphere of my own. I had some older neighbors; they went to Friday *ṣalāh*, and I joined them. ... Relatives of my mom from the Netherlands wanted to marry me to their son, but they gave up, as I was veiled. "If such a microbe is here, you will never recover," they said (Participant 22, Female).

> My mother did not talk to me for one year, and my father still doesn't (Participant 27, Female).

According to certain participants, their return to religion was initially welcomed, but negative reactions began to build in the course of time because of relevant changes in line with faith and the desire to spread new ideas; others reported that some changes in their lives were taken positively and some negatively. In particular, women stated that they are isolated by inner circles because of changes in clothing or criticism against the traditional role of women in the wake of conversion. Men, on the other hand, reported their behaviors such as quitting drinking and growing a beard were not taken kindly. In contrast, some participants indicated that they initially received negative reactions from their inner circle due to their own extremism after conversion, but their environment gave a positive response to their eventual better-balanced religious life, and they reached a common ground in the end.

> At first, it was not that apparent since it was all about thought; nevertheless, I observed stances against me as I began to tell about it. For example, I asserted that women are special and specific subjects. Nevertheless, my husband objected: "A woman goes to heaven if she obeys her husband, performs *ṣalāh*, and fasts; you shouldn't go beyond this." (Participant 8, Female).

> They got used to this in the course of time; as my extremism diminished over the course of time, this attitude brought along togetherness instead of conflict; there was a kind of moderation. This led to relaxation; a moderate atmosphere was born, and they began to see me through a different perspective (Participant 18, Male).

> My wife did not take it kindly when I told her I would grow a beard. Later on, her reaction did not last long. She saw how serious I was; I was trying to practice Islam, I quit drinking, and she was very happy. My family was happy, too. They did not like my beard, however. It was not acceptable for them that I didn't shake hands with my aunt in-law, cousins, and aunts; thereupon, my relatives began to call me fanatical even though I tried to explain my situation ... (Participant 20, Male).

IV. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study analyzes the conversion, (*ihtidā'*, in their own words) of individuals who grew up in Muslim culture but lived (or thought they lived) outside of religion for various reasons during a certain period of their lives to include psychosocial factors that laid the foundation for the process of conversion and their experiences in the wake of conversion.

In terms of family environment, participants often had a nuclear family; two-thirds of interviewees did not respond to questions about their perception of family. Most of the respondents defined their family relations as "affectionate and peaceful." According to relevant studies, crises, unrest, ambiguity of roles, and the lack of a father figure within the family may lead to questioning other opinions and behaviors adopted in the family; consequently, they may be influential on the process of religious conversion.[31] However, this study did not reveal any such finding. This result can be interpreted in two ways: First, individuals may not want to provide a negative description of the relationship with parents because of present religious satisfaction. This may be an indicator of why most interviewees did not answer the question. Second, since this study exclusively includes individuals who have undergone intrareligious conversion, it can be considered that some factors other than those in interreligious conversion played a more decisive role during intrareligious process.

Most participants state that they had traditional religious education in childhood and assumed their parents were traditionally pious. Generally, participants considered religious education during

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[31] See Köse, *Neden İslam'ı Seçiyorlar,* 63-73; Köse and Ayten, *Din Psikolojisi,* 144-147.

childhood as a form of piety that was based on traditional public belief rather than authentic religion. This statement points to the change experienced by participants; in addition, it may be seen as an effort to make a distinction between their past and present situation and to lay stress on the transformation of identity. Some participants, on the other hand, thought they underwent an oppressive religious education in their family and considered this education as the main reason behind their distant attitude towards religion for a certain period of time. Some others indicated that they were late in internalizing religion because of negative attitudes and misbehaviors of individuals who provided religious education or who allegedly represented religion. Particularly, female participants expressed that they were alienated from religion because of the negative image of women in their culture, which is blended with religious values. For a few participants, the return to religion was actually an encounter and coming together with religious values that he/she never had in the family environment during childhood.

Among the participants, some reported that they had religious and existential inquiries during adolescence, and some were totally indifferent to religion during the same period. In general, however, individuals returned to religion during adolescence or late adolescence/early adulthood. In the literature, adolescence is described as the period of returning to religion; the cases extending to early adulthood are considered as though society grants the individual a delay to adopt social and cultural roles. This phenomenon is called *moratorium* by Erikson.[32]

Some participants developed bad habits during adolescence. Smoking, drinking, and drug use were more common among men, although not completely absent among women. Addictive substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs can be used as a means of coping with difficulties. Such tendencies can be evaluated as a sign of the severity of an identity crisis and as a coping process suffered by individuals during adolescence. Participants reported that they quit such bad habits after deciding on religious conversion. Returning to religion also meant liberation from bad habits and addictions for them. It is understood that participants with such problems definitely quit drinking and drugs and tried to stop smoking. In this context, it is

[32] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994).

possible to assert that the process of returning to religion is preferred by individuals as a method of coping with problems. In addition, certain participants steered towards religion during their process of coping with traumas, and the return to religion was completed with an inquiry about religion. In the literature, the best example of this transformation is the case of Malcolm X.[33]

Some participants contemplated a lot in order to clarify their decision of conversion, whereupon the process took years; some others, however, made up their mind upon contemplation for only a few hours. This difference may be associated with the point where individuals start the process of conversion. Indeed, even though returning to religion is primarily based on individual-specific aspects, it is also a long-lasting psychosocial process. Returning to religion often emerges upon maturation of a long-lasting journey that begins in childhood or even infancy, if attachment theory is considered. Participants start their process of religious conversion through various experiences. Dreams, mystic experiences, encounters with good devotees, contact with religious groups, and traumatic experiences are found to influence the religious conversion process. Nonetheless, intellectual motive, which is based on religious inquiry and analysis, comes to the forefront among the participants herein. This fact may be explained by their high levels of education (50% hold bachelor degrees).

During the decision-making stage, the converts underwent significant changes and transformations in life. Participants were asked how these changes affected their lives. Participants often had positive feelings after the decision; conversion provided their lives with order, purpose, and meaning. Apparently, participants rapidly modified their lives pursuant to religious commandments and prohibitions, and they initially began to practice *ṣalāh* in daily life. Males decided to modify their appearance. On the other hand, women opted to wear different clothing after the decision. Modifying their clothes made the conversion process apparent and observable by their social circles. Thus, positive and negative reactions became more explicit. It is found that women were particularly subject to more negative reactions and had difficulties in the process because of their apparel.

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[33] Mehmet Atalay, "Malcolm X: Krizlerin Potasında Bir Aksiyoner," in *Arayış, Değişim ve Din,* ed. H. Kayıklık (Adana: Karahan Kitabevi, 2017), 145-188.

Religious conversion makes one rebuild oneself, since an individual undergoes a multidimensional change and transformation in the process. Pursuant to this process, the individual goes through numerous changes, including, above all, apparel, circle of friends, lifestyle, and social environment. In the present study, participants emphasized that they went through such radical changes; they discovered and adopted religion as a system that organizes their lives and directs their thoughts and behaviors. For the current mood after returning to religion, participants stressed feelings of peace, happiness, and self-confidence, as well as feeling special and free. Negative feelings such as remorse were often expressed within the scope of delaying the conversion process and the years spent in vain. Some participants affirmed this allegedly wasted time, evaluating it as a period that carried them to the true path and that had to be experienced.

In some cases, returning to religion is a preference for which seeds are planted and the foundation is laid in childhood and which is adopted during adolescence and early adulthood in order to find an alternative to materialist and secular society. In this study, participants reported radical changes in the beginning stages. They often steered towards conveying religious message and guidance to others in order to see their transformation in other individuals. Such a tendency had an impact on the social circle of individuals, their family above all. This process became normalized as the individual adopted and internalized the new identity and overcame the fear of reversion.

According to this study, gender is found to be a factor with regard to the time and type of mystic experience and the assessment of the role of sexist discourses on alienation from religion. In this respect, experience during and after religious transformation may be treated in future studies in consideration of gender variables. The impact of acceptance of social gender roles and patriarchal social structure on the religious conversion process may be addressed in different studies. In particular, it is possible to carry out quantitative-qualitative surveys on individuals who grew up in urban versus rural environments in order to identify differences in assessment regarding patriarchal discourses about women. The influence of relationships with parents during childhood on the religious conversion process is demonstrated in this study, as well as in other relevant surveys. The issue may be reconsidered in relation to attachment theory. Presumably, the type of attachment to the essential caretaker is

influential on religious conversion processes. Any such survey, particularly including Muslim examples, will provide the literature with significant contributions. In addition, a natural process of radicalization takes place during religious conversion; individuals may make radical decisions in order to dispose of their former identity and become accustomed to the new one. Studies about the relationship between the abovementioned natural radicalization process and sociological radicalization processes might shed further light on this subject.

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HOW COULD EARLY CHRISTIANS BE WRONG? THE ROLE OF *FAHM AL-SALAF* IN THE BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS OF IBN TAYMIYYAH AND MICHAEL SERVETUS

Mohammad Abu Shareea
University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh-United Kingdom
muhammad.abushareea@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1762-6352

Abstract

This study comparatively examines the centrality of the argument about early authorities' understanding of scripture within the biblical hermeneutics of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) and Michael Servetus (d. 1553). It concludes that both figures aimed to examine mainstream Christianity through similar ante-Nicene biblical hermeneutics. The topics of this hermeneutics include linguistic analysis, scriptural usage of a term, historical contexts of a term, scriptural harmony, and early authorities' understanding of scripture. However, they had different interpretations of the whole Christian tradition for two main reasons. First, they had two different faith commitments, namely, Ibn Taymiyyah was a Muslim and Servetus was a Christian. The second reason is their different scopes of examining the Christian tradition when approaching the testimonies of the ante-Nicene fathers, which is understood in this study as *fahm al-Salaf*. Accordingly, the study argues for three conclusions. First, the logical conclusions of Servetus's hermeneutics should have led to Joseph Priestley's concept of God. Second, if Ibn Taymiyyah had access to the writings of the

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ante-Nicene fathers, then he would have argued for the Ebionites. Third, that a critical question could be presented by Christians to the Muslim audience regarding the divinity of Jesus is the argument from *tawātur maʿnawī* (thematic recurrent mass transmission).

Key Words: Hermeneutics, philosophical theology, *fahm al-Salaf*, ante-Nicene fathers, Ibn Taymiyyah, Michael Servetus.

I. Introduction

Across the intellectual history of the three Abrahamic faiths, the Abrahamic theologians have applied various methods to understand their scriptures. One of the turning points across this fruitful history started at the time of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (d. 50) whose legacy is being known as the first to attempt to unite human knowledge and divine revelation, and he can legitimately be called "the first theologian"[1] since he aimed at proving that the Bible is congenial to contemporary philosophy.[2] In other words, this was the reason behind creating the field of theology as we know it today. David Aaron writes, "I would argue that theology, in the sense that it would come to be known in Judaism and Christianity, was quite specifically a creation of the late Hellenistic Era."[3] This did continue through the writings of Muslim philosophers, including the theologians known generally as adherents of *kalām* or *mutakallimūn*, who are overlooked by some modern philosophical writings due to the lack of comprehensive study of the Muslim philosophical theology, such as the writings of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233). Peter Adamson

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1 Julius Guttman, *Philosophies of Judaism: The History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), 32. Harry Wolfson argues that Philo is the founder of the classical view of the relationship between reason and revelation "that both are the gift of God, and that therefore there can be no conflict provided reason is properly used and revelation properly interpreted." See Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947), I, 141-143.

2 Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018), 85, 189.

3 David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery* (Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill, 2001), 18.

states that "if history had gone differently and there had been no hard-line Aristotelians writing in Arabic, I have no doubt that historians of philosophy would consider the output of the *mutakallimūn* to be the 'philosophical' tradition of the Islamic world."[4]

This rereading of the Abrahamic scriptures has its place due to the various factors that have been shaping biblical exegesis for a long-standing period, such as engaging scripture with the dominant philosophical approach of that era. For instance, both Philo of Alexandria and Rudolf Bultmann (d. 1976) share the notion that we cannot simply reject the authority of Greek philosophy or modern science if it contradicts the apparent meaning of scripture, and thus the first step, according to them, is to accept that there could be further meanings meant by scriptural text using allegorical or figurative interpretation.[5] That is why one of the most influential factors that has played a significant role in shaping exegetical methods is the intellectual background from which the thinker is coming. That is, most thinkers who have engaged intellectually with various philosophical and theological traditions will face an intellectual challenge while approaching scripture since there could be conflicting views on one topic with two sources of knowledge, such as the concept of God. For instance, both Origen of Alexandria (d. 253) and Jahm ibn Ṣafwān (d. 128/745-746) come from the same

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[4] See Peter Adamson, "If Aquinas is a Philosopher then so are the Islamic Theologians" (published in association with Oxford University Press an Aeon Strategic Partner, ed. Nigel Warburton, https://aeon.co/ideas/if-aquinas-is-a-philosopher-then-so-are-the-islamic-theologians, accessed February 10, 2017).

[5] Bobby Jang Sun Ryu notes regarding Philo's rationale to apply the allegorical interpretation: "The driving force behind the Allegorical Commentary, concatenative exegesis aids Philo in his desire to apply Mosaic material to a wider range of ideas and issues not necessarily implicated – at least in the first instance – by the primary biblical text under review." See Bobby Jang Sun Ryu, "Knowledge of God in Philo of Alexandria with special reference to the *Allegorical Commentary*," (PhD diss., Oxford: University of Oxford, 2012), 71. As for Bultmann, Brent A. R. Hege states that he "recognizes the impossibility of simply repristinating the mythical world-picture of the New Testament because the modern scientific age has no room within it for recourse to the spirit world of the New Testament." See Brent A. R. Hege, *Myth, History, and the Resurrection in German Protestant Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 43.

intellectual background, that is, Neoplatonism, which apparently contradicts the apparent scriptural concept of God, and thus, because they integrated Neoplatonism with Christianity and Islam, respectively, through figurative interpretation, anthropomorphism was banished from the two religions.[6]

Such methods developed through the writings of theologians are considered as established ways of understanding scripture and thus to be the reason behind the emergence of systematic creeds concerning the theological verses relying on the ecumenical councils through the Christian context or the concept of *ijmāʿ* (the consensus of Islamic scholars) through the Muslim one. In other words, they became the appropriate understanding of scripture according to the mainstream Christian and Muslim theologians. Therefore, the one who goes beyond this understanding could be considered as a heretic within the Christian tradition or *mubtadiʿ* (innovator) within the Muslim tradition. One of the mentioned established creeds in the Christian context is the Nicene Creed, which is the official expression of Trinitarian doctrine across the Christian world after the first council

6 See *Richard M. Frank, "The Neoplatonism of Ǧahm ibn Ṣafwân," Le Muséon: Revue d'Études Orientales* 78, no. 3-4 (1965), 395-424; Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with reference to the Church Fathers* (London: Luzac, 1964), 58; W. R. Inge, "The Permanent Influence of Neoplatonism upon Christianity," *The American Journal of Theology* 4, no. 2 (1900), 334. Interestingly, both thinkers had seen this integration of Neoplatonism into their tradition as a reaction to the pagan polemics. John M. Dillon notes that "Origen begins abruptly, not with a positive statement of God's nature, but with an answer to an accusation, plainly from a Platonic source, that Christians regard God as having a corporeal nature. In combating this accusation, he has to face a series of passages of Scripture which seem to attribute to God material substance or characteristics." See John M. Dillon, "The Knowledge of God in Origen," in *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Roel van den Broek, Tjitze Baarda, and Jaap Mansfeld (Leiden, New York, København & Köln: E. J. Brill, 1988), 220-221. As for Jahm, it did happen because of his well-known story about the debate with the Indian philosophical school of thought known as al-Sumaniyyah. See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ʿalá l-zanādiqah wa-l-Jahmiyyah fī-mā shakkat fībi min mutashābih al-Qurʾān wa-taʾawwalathu ʿalá ghayr taʾwīlibī*, ed. Daghsh al-ʿAjmī (Kuwait: Ghirās li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ wa-l-Diʿāyah wa-l-Iʿlān, 2005), 194-199; Dong Xiuyuan, "The Presence of Buddhist Thought in Kalām Literature," *Philosophy East and West* 68, no. 3 (2018), 944-948, https://doi.org/10.1353/pew.2018.0080.

of Nicaea in 325 AD, which was a response to Arianism. Arianism examined central Christian doctrines about the divinity of Jesus, and thus, the Nicene apologists turn Arianism into "a self-conscious sect," as Rowan Williams notes.[7] In the Islamic context, the same case was made through the topic of the transcendence of God being incorporeal, which is the main implication of Kalām to demonstrate it relying on the hermeneutical approach known as *al-Qānūn al-kullī fī l-taʾwīl* (The comprehensive law of interpretation), developed by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and applied comprehensively by al-Rāzī, which states that resolving conflicts between reason and the literal wording of revelation is by interpreting revelation in a figurative way, namely, how it is related to the anthropomorphic verses.[8]

Both creeds have dominated Christian and Islamic thought.[9] However, there have been significant attempts to re-examine their authority, and one of these attempts was made by two influential medieval thinkers, Ibn Taymiyyah[10] and Michael Servetus;[11] Ibn

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7 Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2001), 83.

8 Frank Griffel, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2011), I, 344. The influential philosophical theologian Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī states while discussing the definition of being a believer in the Muslim context that the vast majority of the apparent meanings of scripture is "*mukhālif*" (not meant). See Abū l-Ḥasan Sayf al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Mahdī, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyyah, 2004), V, 19.

9 Oliver Leaman, "The Developed *Kalām* Tradition, Part I," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 85; Jon Hoover, "Ḥanbalī Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 634.

10 Ibn Taymiyyah is known for his significant critique of the logicians, which led to an "extraordinary potential of his empiricist methodology." See Wael B. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1. As for Servetus, he is known for being an expert in other fields such as medicine and geography. See Jerome Friedman, *Michael Servetus: A Case Study in Total Heresy* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A, 1978), 13; John F. Fulton, *Michael Servetus: Humanist and Martyr* (New York: Herbert Reichner, 1953), 46.

11 Both Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus struggled through their lives because of their theological views. As for Servetus, he was standing out there as a man who could not accept changing any of his views to the last moment although it could be a

Taymiyyah's project is understood as a criticism of the intellectual perspective of al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī regarding the concept of reason since it has the main impact on the issue of God's transcendence.[12] For Servetus, his main position is insisting on the fact that the later consensus on the doctrine of the trinity, namely, the Nicene Creed, is not authoritative if it is examined through the light of the first generations of Christianity in addition to the Bible. Carl Odhner writes, "he realized that the source of the corruption was a false idea of God, introduced as early as the Council of Nicaea, when "the Godhead was divided into three persons with one nature, and Christ divided into two."[13] This commonality is the main reason behind analyzing the two thinkers since any reader of the title of this article would declare at the first sight Tertullian's well-known question, "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens?!" since there is no apparent

way for considering him as one of the leaders of the Reformed tradition due to his theological expertise which Juan de Quintana, the confessor to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles and a teacher of Servetus, describes as: "he is a young man of very great talent and a great sophist, but cannot imagine that a book so replete with Scripture knowledge and so polished in style, can really be the production of one of his years." See Alexander Gordon, *Addresses, Biographical and Historical* (London: The Lindsey Press, 1922), 22. However, as what the Bible says; "*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*" (Mark 8:36). Thus, his last words at the stake were his well-known prayer; "Jesus, thou Son of the eternal God, have pity on me." See Roland H. Bainton, *Hunted Heretic: The Life and Death of Michael Servetus* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1953), 207-214. As for Ibn Taymiyyah, it is narrated that he read the Qurʾān around eighty times when he was jailed for the seventh time after they prevented him from writing anymore, and through this last one he reached the verses "*Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and rivers, in a seat of honour near a Sovereign, Perfect in ability*" (Q 54: 54-55) which is the end of *al-Qamar* (The moon) chapter, and thus what comes after it is the chapter *al-Raḥmān* (The merciful). See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Dimashqī, *al-ʿUqūd al-durriyyah min manāqib Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah*, ed. Abū Muṣʿab Ṭalʿat ibn Fuʾād al-Ḥalwānī (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadīthah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 2002), 290-291.

[12] Veysel Kaya, "Reason and Intellect", in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), II, 189.

[13] Carl Theophilus Odhner, *Michael Servetus: His Life and Teachings* (Philadelphia: Press of J. B. Lippincott Company, 1910), 10-11.

rationale behind comparatively analyzing the two thinkers, as they are not contemporaries, such as the study of Muammer İskenderoğlu entitled *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Thomas Aquinas on the Question of the Eternity of the World* (Brill, 2002).[14]

The answer to this question about reading these two thinkers within the same context is the argument that they are pioneers of the notion of examining established creeds, as their projects had mainly relied on reexamining scripture based on arguments from early authorities' understanding of scripture. That is, they aimed at

[14] It is worth mentioning here for those interested in Christian-Muslim studies that Muammer İskenderoğlu, the author of the section on al-Rāzī's views on Christianity through the encyclopaedia. *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200-1350)* had presented several works of al-Rāzī for his views on Christianity except his work *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl* (The pinnacle of the Intellects through Understanding the Principles). İskenderoğlu argues that al-Rāzī's "most detailed discussions of issues related to Christianity come in his commentary, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*." See Muammer İskenderoğlu, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200-1350)*, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2009), IV, 61-62. I argue that the only work in which al-Rāzī presents a systematic detailed discussion of Christianity is his work *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, since he had done his best to put forth all possible understandings of the problematic topics in Christianity, such as the trinity, and even tried to defend some of its aspects against some Muslim polemics. In addition, he had "Kalamized" the trinity, which means to interpret this concept through one of the widely accepted Muslim philosophical-theological notions in which he concludes by saying "And I likely see that the Christian concept of the Hypostases is similar to Abū Hāshim's *aḥwāl* (modes)." See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Fūdah (Beirut: Dār al-Dhakhāʾir, 2015), I, 541. Abū Hāshim's *aḥwāl* (singular, *ḥāl*, translated as "mode" or "state") is a theological theory invented by the notable Muʿtazilī scholar, Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (d. 321/933) as an interpretation of God's attributes. Harry A. Wolfson writes, "Once he (Abū Hāshim) had developed this theory of modes as a general theory of prediction, he applied it to the problem of divine attributes, arriving at a new view opposed at once to that of the Attributists and to that of the Antiattributists." See Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 168; Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Malāḥimī, *Kitāb al-muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Martin J. McDermott and Wilferd Madelung (London: al-Hudá, 1991), 277.

answering a critical question: If you have such consensus on a given creed across the vast majority of theologians through these two traditions, then how could someone re-examine them? In other words, what is the central argument that could compete with the consensus of later theologians on a certain issue?[15] Here comes the role of *fahm al-Salaf* (early authorities' understanding), which includes both the original – ordinary – audience and early theologians. This is found clearly through the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus. Herman J. Selderhuis notes that "all of Servetus's writings rely very heavily on the Bible. It could be said that the Bible, together with a detailed knowledge of the ante-Nicene fathers, was at risk of turning into a lethal weapon in Servetus's hands."[16] For Ibn Taymiyyah, it is hard to find one page through his works that does not refer to at least one figure of the first three generations of Islam, as relying on these figures is one of his central arguments in addition to his reliance on the later dispute among the adherents of Kalām, especially the notion that "we necessarily know it by reason" to indicate it is relative and thus it could not be an authority as he regarded it.[17] Thus, this argument has both theological and philosophical implications, namely, what is related to the philosophy of language in which the text is necessarily understood through the terminology used by the original audience. These early readers serve as the departure point for any further interpretation of scripture and a gate to the limits of meaning in the context of their terminology in addition to the fact that in some cases, they "could

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[15] This is a dispute among the Muslim thinkers regarding the issue of having a later consensus regarding a certain topic, although there was a dispute regarding it in early Islam. See Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-fuḥūl ilá taḥqīq al-ḥaqq min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, ed. Abū Ḥafṣ Sāmī ibn al-ʿArabī al-Atharī (Riyadh: Dār al-Faḍīlah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2000), IV, 539.

[16] Irena Backus, "Theological Relations: Calvin and the Church Fathers," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Henry J. Baron et al. (Grand Rapids, Mich. & Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 133.

[17] See Binyamin Abrahamov, "Ibn Taymiyya on the Agreement of Reason with Tradition," *The Muslim World* 82, no. 3-4 (1992), 257, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1992.tb03556.x; Carl Sharif el-Tobgui, "Ibn Taymiyya on the Incoherence of the Theologians' Universal Law: Reframing the Debate between Reason and Revelation in Medieval Islam," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 18 (2018), 69, https://doi.org/10.5617/jais.6521.

dialogue with the author to find out what he or she meant"[18] if there are sources of their writings available, and thus to avoid the rejection of the meanings of the whole scripture through allegorical interpretation.[19]

Accordingly, this is the first study to examine the two figures in order to have a comparative analysis of the two contributions through the context of the Christian tradition specifically because Servetus does not have expertise on the Islamic tradition beyond his brief reference to the Qurʾān to support his views that the trinity is not found elsewhere.[20] Noel Malcolm states that "only at the beginning of the modern anti-Trinitarian tradition had there been a serious attempt to draw on the evidence of Islam itself. In 1533, Miguel Servet (Servetus) had quoted from the Koran to suggest that Muhammad had preserved an authentic, non-Trinitarian belief about the nature of Jesus."[21] This could be understood in a broader sense through the use of Islam in Christian intrafaith dialogue, namely, the Reformed tradition of using Islam as a "foil to critique Christians," which is the method Calvin employed as Joshua Ralston notes[22] or generally comparing the prophet Muḥammad with the Pope negatively, which

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[18] David B. Frank, "Do We Translate the Original Author's Intended Meaning?," *Open Theology* 2, no. 1 (2016), 665, https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2016-0051. In my view, accepting the argument from the original readers' understanding is essential, as it will prevent the ambiguity of having no criterion for examining the readings, which E. D. Hirsch calls the "chaotic democracy of readings". See E. D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 5.

[19] Even Philo himself was afraid of allegory; Montgomery J. Shroyer notes that Philo "warns against the extreme allegory which forsakes laws entirely and accepts only the spiritual values involved." See Montgomery J. Shroyer, "Alexandrian Jewish Literalists," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 55, no. 4 (1936), 265, https://doi.org/10.2307/3259122.

[20] Michael Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity: an English translation of Christianismi restitutio, 1553 by Michael Servetus (1511-1553)*, trans. Christopher A. Hoffmann and Marian Hillar (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 48-51.

[21] Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford & New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 317.

[22] See Joshua Ralston, "Islam as Christian Trope: The Place and Function of Islam in Reformed Dogmatic Theology," *The Muslim World* 107, no. 4 (2017), 758, https://doi.org/10.1111/muwo.12220.

is found through the Reformed writings.[23] On the other hand, Ibn Taymiyyah was approaching this topic as an intellectual historian by tracking the impact of such methods on religions generally. For instance, he expands his attitude towards the scholastic creed in the Islamic context to be applied to the Nicene Creed in the Christian one by saying through the introduction to his voluminous work *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, "And this theological law is similar to the one invented by Christians – Nicene Creed – who have altered the Torah and the Gospel to be compromised with it."[24] He further expands this to include the Jewish context, of which he writes, "The same as the Muʿtazilites, the Jewish theologians are found interpreting the Torah figuratively through Kalām."[25] Therefore, analyzing the case through the Christian tradition is more credible because of Ibn Taymiyyah's expertise on the Christian tradition compared with Servetus's lack of information regarding the Islamic, as he did not write a work on Islam as Ibn Taymiyyah did on Christianity, namely, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*, which is the largest refutation of Christianity in the Islamic tradition.[26] Servetus's work *Christianismi Restitutio* (The restoration of Christianity)[27] is not written for a Muslim audience but for Christians, and it was the reason for his death because it opposes the "Romish

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[23] Andrew Colin Gow and Jeremy Fradkin, "Protestantism and Non-Christian Religions," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 286.

[24] Abū l-ʿAbbās Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim, 2nd ed. (Riyadh: Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Suʿūd al-Islāmiyyah, 1991), I, 7.

[25] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān talbīs al-Jahmiyyah fī taʾsīs bidaʿihim al-kalāmiyyah, aw naqḍ taʾsīs al-Jahmiyyah*, ed. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Qāsim (Mecca: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥukūmah, 1971), II, 9.

[26] Hoover, "Ibn Taymiyya," in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200-1350)*, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2009), 839.

[27] All the copies of *Christianismi Restitutio* have perished except three copies in Vienna, Paris, and Edinburgh. See David Cuthbertson, *A Tragedy of the Reformation: Being the Authentic Narrative of the History and Burning of the "Christianismi Restitutio," 1553* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912), 33.

Church[28] and the reforms of the Protestant doctor" as William K. Tweedie states.[29]

Having mentioned this introduction for the rationale of this study, I further argue that its importance could be understood as an addition to Martin Whittingham's article[30] in the field of Christian-Muslim studies. The reason behind mentioning this article is that both articles share one notion that is usually overlooked through the comparative study of Christianity and Islam, which is the engagement of the classical Muslim intellectual arguments that have been used by Muslim theologians to understand Islam with the Christian tradition to conclude various understanding of both traditions. While Whittingham aims at analyzing a case that is usually found in the works of Kalām and *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), which is the concept of *tawātur*, and applies it to the crucifixion of Jesus, I aim through my study to engage a Muslim intellectual argument, that is, *fahm al-Salaf*, with the Christian tradition since it has been used by the Christian thinkers, as Michael Servetus mentioned before. This would lead to presenting new discussions regarding central issues between Christians and Muslims regarding the divinity of Jesus, as both the new information found in the Christian tradition made availability of the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers and the classical Muslim intellectual arguments will be combined in order to present a new challenge for the intellectuals of both traditions to contend. Therefore, the question "How could early Christians be wrong?" will be examined through three perspectives: those of Ibn Taymiyyah, Servetus, and Christian-Muslim researchers.

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[28] Note that the term "Romish" was used as a derogatory label for Roman Catholic beliefs and practices.

[29] Albert Rilliet, *Calvin and Servetus: The Reformer's Share in the Trial of Michael Servetus, Historically Ascertained*, trans. with notes and additions W. K. Tweedie (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1846), 68-69; Marian Hillar, *The Case of Michael Servetus (1511-1553): the Turning Point in the Struggle for Freedom of Conscience* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 248.

[30] Martin Whittingham, "How Could So Many Christians Be Wrong? The Role of *Tawātur* (Recurrent Transmission of Reports) in Understanding Muslim Views of the Crucifixion," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19, no. 2 (2008), 167-178.

II. On the History of Christian-Muslim Polemical Writings

Christian-Muslim dialogues and debates started as early as the emergence of Islam itself since the Qurʾān itself integrates Christian doctrines through many chapters in which they are related to one of the major doctrines of Islam because the Qurʾān does not present the topics systematically but rather through engaging more than one topic for a certain purpose.[31] For instance, al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), one of the renowned scholars on the harmony of the Qurʾānic chapters and verses, states that chapter three of the Qurʾān (Āl ʿImrān), in which Jesus is mentioned as a prophet of God, is an applied aspect of the verse "*O mankind, worship your lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous*." (Q 2:21) by denying the divinity of Jesus in order to have the pure concept of worshipping of God.[32] This "reformative," to use Josef van Ess's word,[33] nature of the Qurʾān has shaped the Muslim approaches towards studying the world traditions in terms of including them through their works by analyzing them in parallel to other philosophical and theological notions. For instance, Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī starts the examination of Christianity through the topic regarding what is impossible to be ascribed to God, namely, the incarnation. He writes: "Know that there is an agreement between the world traditions that it is impossible for God to incarnate except Christians, Nuṣayrīs and al-Isḥāqiyyah of al-Shīʿah, and some anthropomorphists."[34] In addition, the Qurʾānic warnings for Muslims not to make the same mistakes of the previous religions had also shaped the intrafaith dialogue since the Muslim theologians had used it against the other Islamic sects by proving that they had adopted the same notions as the Jews or Christians. Accordingly, it could be said that the Qurʾān was the inspiring source for the Muslim theologians to examine Christianity through the lens of their works.

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31 Faḍl Ḥasan ʿAbbās, *Qaṣaṣ al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, 3rd ed. (Amman: Dār al-Nafāʾis, 2010), 80-81.

32 Abū l-Ḥasan Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-l-suwar* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1984), IV, 197.

33 See Christian Meier, "The Origins of Islam: A Conversation with the German Islamic Scholar Josef Van Ess," *Fikrun wa Fann: A Publication of Goethe-Institut,* November 2011, translated by Charlotte Collins, http://www.goethe.de /ges/phi/prj/ffs/the/a96/en8626506.htm, accessed June 3, 2019.

34 See al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār,* II, 51, 235.

This line of thought developed through Muslim interactions with Christians themselves; although it was a challenge for the Christian theologians since they were facing a new religion that presented so many polemics against the main tenets of Christianity and was supported by a political power in addition to having an alternative story of the Christian tradition that does not devalue the great reputation of Mary and Jesus. It was a challenge for the Muslim theologians to define the Islamic concept of God since they are facing encounters from a Christian theology that had been philosophized through its engagement with Greek philosophy such as Stoicism and Platonism,[35] and thus the inherited philosophical objections against the scriptural conception of God are applicable on the Islamic context, too. That is why it is argued that the beginning of the great philosophical and theological debate over the concept of God in Islam started with such interactions,[36] as the first two real disputes that were not influenced by any other tradition are the issues of freewill and the grave sinner.[37]

The Christian encounters were on two levels: scriptural and philosophical. The scriptural perspective relies on the Qurʾānic Christology since Jesus was described there by many seemingly ambiguous terms as the spirit and the word, which are found mainly through the earliest surviving text in Arabic by a Christian entitled

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[35] See Peter C. Phan, "Developments of the Doctrine of Trinity," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8.

[36] See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ fatāwá Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim (Medina: Mujammaʿ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibāʿat al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 2003-2004), V, 20. One may find some statements related to this topic, such as Abū Jahl's: "Muḥammad claims that God is one, however, he worships more than one because he describes God by 'Allāh' and sometimes by 'al-Raḥmān' (the Merciful)" (Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Tafsīr al-taḥrīr wa-l-tanwīr* [Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-l-Nashr, 1984], IX, 185-6), but they did not have an impact regarding this topic since they are not as philosophical as the Christian perspective.

[37] Muḥammad ʿAbduh, "*Risālat al-tawḥīd,*" in *al-Aʿmāl al-kāmilah li-l-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbduh*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAmārah (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1993), III, 378.

"On the Triune Nature of God,"[38] and thus some Christian theologians have developed it and argued that Jesus is the Word of God and is eternal, unlike in the Muslim tradition, in which the word of God is the Qurʾān.[39] One of the earliest Christian attempts to use such arguments is by John of Damascus (d. 749), who states: "For the orthodox Saracen believer at that time the proper answer would be 'uncreated,' because they believed that the Qurʾān was eternal. However, in the dialogue, the Christian is demonstrating to the Saracen that even their scripture affirms that Christ is the Word of God. Therefore, if Christ is the Word of God, and the Word of God is uncreated, then Christ must also be God because only God is the uncreated one."[40] The philosophical perspective focuses on the philosophical bases of the Muslim conception of the oneness of God, namely, the issue of the relationship between God and His attributes, using such strategies as the "attribute-apology," which quickly came under Muslim attack. One of the renowned Christian theologians who applied such an approach is ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (d. 850). Sidney Griffith writes, "ʿAmmār intended to commend belief in Christianity, in the scholarly idiom of the day, to the intellectuals who were the adepts of the Islamic ʿilm al-Kalām."[41] This is similar to the position of

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[38] Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 121. I remember seeing at the New College Library (University of Edinburgh) one of the manuscripts for an ancient Bible in which the title written on the first page in Arabic is *Lā ilāha illā ʾllāh wa-l-Masīḥ ibn Allāh* (There is no God but Allah and the Jesus is the son of God), which indicates the impact of Muslim terminology on those who were living across the Islamicate world.

[39] F. E. Peters, *The Monotheists: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Conflict and Competition, volume II: The Words and Will of God* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 225; Sara Leila Husseini, *Early Christian-Muslim Debate on the Unity of God: Three Christian Scholars and Their Engagement with Islamic Thought (9th century C.E.)* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014), 179.

[40] Daniel Janosik, *John of Damascus, First Apologist to the Muslims: The Trinity and Christian Apologetics in the Early Islamic Period* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 153.

[41] Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 85; Wageeh Y. F. Mikhail, "ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-Burhān*: A Topical and Theological Analysis of Arabic Christian Theology in the Ninth Century" (PhD

Saadia Gaon (d. 942), who wrote his *al-Amānāt wa-l-iʿtiqādāt* (The Book of Beliefs and Creeds) using Islamic terminology and is considered the founder of Judaic-Arabic literature.[42]

It is worth mentioning an important point regarding the Christian-Muslim dialogue, which is the usage of the Islamic terminology by Christians writing in Arabic who were living in what is known as the Islamicate[43] world. Sidney Griffith notes, for instance, about the Melkites that "like other Arab Christian writers of the period, they wrote primarily for the benefit of their own Arabophone confessional community, to clarify their creedal allegiances vis-à-vis other Christians and to respond to the challenge the Qurʾān and the 'Call to Islam' posed for their coreligionists."[44] Therefore, it was a challenge for both Muslims and Christians to choose the proper terms for their doctrines since each term would indicate a different meaning, as is the issue with the terms *ibn* and *walad*, since they both have different meanings in the Qurʾān. Another example includes the problematic nature of the term *ṣifah* (attribute) when it is compared with the concept of hypostases and so forth. The complexity of this issue is not limited to that era of translating the Christian doctrines into Arabic and to choosing the best term that suits the notion through the Christian faith; it is found currently in the discussion regarding Christian writers in other languages when translators try to find the exact meaning that is meant by the author, such as what Karl Barth

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diss., Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2013), 149; ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-burhān wa-kitāb al-masāʾil wa-l-ajwibah: Apologie et Controverses*, ed. Mīshāl al-Ḥāyik (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1977), 46-56.

42 Daniel J. Lasker, "The Jewish Critique of Christianity under Islam in the Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 57 (1990-1991), 124, http://doi.org/10.2307/3622656; Saʿīd ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī, *Kitāb al-amānāt wa-l-iʿtiqādāt*, ed. Samuel Landauer (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1880).

43 The term "Islamicate" was coined by the historian Marshall Hodgson (d. 1968). It means "the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims." See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 59.

44 See Griffith, "The Melkites and the Muslims: The Qur'ān, Christology, and Arab Orthodoxy," *Al-Qanṭara: Revista de Estudios Árabes* 33, no. 2 (2012), 425, http://doi.org/10.3989/alqantara.2012.004.

meant when he used the German term *Seinsweise* (modes of being), which was the reason behind being accused of adopting modalism,[45] which is the same case for Thomas Aquinas because of his notion of "subsistent relations" rather than persons.[46]

Accordingly, the Christian theologians have presented various philosophical and scriptural polemics against the main tenets of Islam, including the oneness of God, and noting some critical phrasing in the Qurʾān regarding the nature of Jesus, such as the Word of God and a spirit from Him. These polemics have led to a reshaping of the understanding of some Islamic doctrines. That is why, for instance, it is argued that the Muʿtazilīs' denial of God's attributes had a Christian origin.[47] The Muslim theologians had two types of responses to these polemics. First, they refuted the Christian polemics through writing works criticizing the main tenets of Christianity, such as al-Rassī's (d. 246/860) *al-Radd ʿalá l-Naṣārá* (A refutation of Christianity).[48] Second, they developed an intrafaith dialogue on the concept of God and His attributes by comparing Christian doctrines with the doctrines of some Islamic sects to declare the infidelity of these sects since they have the same doctrines as the Christian ones. As mentioned before, making this comparative analysis between the Christian doctrines and some doctrines of the Islamic sects is basically relying on using Qurʾānic warnings about having multiple Gods through intrafaith dialogue to support the philosophical argument with a theological one, especially with regard to the issue of God's attributes.

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45 George Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Trinity, and Some Protestant Doctrines after Barth," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 302.

46 Michael C. Rea, "The Trinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, ed. Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 411; Dominic Legge, *The Trinitarian Christology of St Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 111.

47 Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, 62.

48 ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Sharafī, *al-Fikr al-Islāmī fī l-radd ʿalá l-Naṣārá ilá nihāyat al-qarn al-rābiʿ/al-ʿāshir* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-l-Nashr, 1986), 135-136; Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Islamic Christ," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Troy A. Stefano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 193.

Ibn Taymiyyah examined the Christian tradition by following in the footsteps of the Muslim writers who focused on finding relationships between the doctrines of some Islamic sects and the Christian doctrines in order to prove these doctrines regarding the concept of God are wrong. Therefore, his work *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ* could be considered an encyclopedia of comparative studies, as he discussed the genealogy of the Christian doctrines while comparing them with the notions from these Muslim sects. Servetus could be said to have been following in the footsteps of ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī rather than those of John of Damascus because of his attempt to commend Christian faith while referring to Judaism and Islam, which is why Calvin denounced Servetus as an anti-Trinitarian and why he was killed for heresy.[49] Martin Bucer (d. 1551) declared that Servetus "deserves to be cut in pieces and to have his bowels torn out of him."[50] Therefore, Servetus's challenge to mainstream Protestantism is one of the phases of what became known as the "radical reformation,"[51] and it is a contribution to Socinianism.

III. Ibn Taymiyyah's and Servetus's Hermeneutics

Having mentioned this brief overview of the place of Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus in the development of Christian-Muslim polemics, I will begin analyzing the biblical hermeneutics of Servetus

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[49] See William G. Naphy, "Calvin and Geneva," in *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 317. Robert Willis describes Calvin's attitude towards Servetus's work by saying: "It is not difficult to imagine the alarm that must at once have taken possession of Calvin's mind when he saw the errors, the heresies, the blasphemies, as he regarded them, which in bygone years he had vainly sought to combat, now confided to the printed page and ready to be thrown broadcast on the world." See Robert Willis, *Servetus and Calvin: A Study of an Important Epoch in the Early History of the Reformation* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1877), 233. For more about Calvin's role in Servetus's death, See Mack P. Holt, "Calvin and Reformed Protestantism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 222.

[50] See Richard Wright, *An Apology for Dr. Michael Servetus: Including an Account of His Life, Persecution, Writings and Opinions* (Wisbech: F. B. Wright, 1806), 98.

[51] A term coined by George Hunston Williams to be distinguished from the "Magisterial Reformation" of Luther and Calvin. See Sigrun Haude, "Anabaptism," in *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 238.

and Ibn Taymiyyah through their attitude towards the Nicene Creed because it is the main reason behind the false interpretation of the Bible according to them. Servetus aimed at expanding the Reformation to include foundational topics in Christian thought, namely, the Nicene Creed, which is a part of the intellectual line of Unitarism: "Throughout the fourth and fifth decades of the sixteenth century, Servetus travelled around the Protestant cities of Europe attempting to engage leading Reformed theologians in debates about the Trinity, which he believed, in its classical formulation at least, to be a corruption of the Biblical witness and contrary to reason."[52] However, there is an important point to be noted here, as is it usually overlooked due to the use of certain terms as the trinity without specifically defining what is meant by it. George Williams notes regarding Servetus's theological position that "he did not propose to reject the doctrine of the Trinity but rather to correct the errors of the scholastic and Nicene formulation. He would replace the philosophical argument undergirding the Trinity, which identified the substance of the three Persons with the more primitive, Biblically defensible argument of the unity of rule."[53] To achieve this end, he attacked the course of Trinitarian speculation by contrasting the late scholastic theories with the earliest biblical formulations.[54] Through his introduction of his last controversial work, *Christianismi Restitutio*, his project was very clear, which was to stand against the false interpretation of the Bible regarding the trinity, of which he writes, "Jesus himself, the human being, is the gate and the path, from which I shall with good reason take my starting point since the case will be presented concerning him and in order that I may refute the Sophists (Trinitarians)."[55] Ibn Taymiyyah states that the reason behind the false interpretation of the Bible is the Nicene Creed:[56] "Christians

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[52] Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall, *The Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI & Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 75.

[53] George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1962), 322.

[54] Bainton, *Hunted Heretic,* 31.

[55] Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 5.

[56] He uses the Arabic term *al-amānah* for the Nicene Creed which means *trust.* However, sometimes he uses the term *qānūn* (law). This could be understood while taking in consideration the point I mentioned regarding the terminological of Christians and Muslim to present the Christian doctrines in Arabic. See his

have adopted doctrines which are not found in the gospels nor the books of ancient prophets; the reason behind that is the Nicene Creed adopted by three hundred eighteen Christian scholars against Arianism at the time of Constantinople."[57] Furthermore, he states that Christians claim the infallibility of this consensus[58] since the main Christian sects such as the Nestorians and Jacobites[59] accepted it. In addition, he states that although Christians agreed upon accepting the Nicene Creed, they would declare each other to be infidels while interpreting it.[60]

The second part of Servetus's and Ibn Taymiyyah's hermeneutics has the methods they adopted for interpreting the Bible. Because they rejected the authority of the Nicene Creed, they had to find a new "criterion" for shaping the Christian doctrines found in the Bible. However, before presenting them, I shall present a brief analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah's attitude towards the Bible because as a Muslim, his case differs from that of Servetus. Ibn Taymiyyah's approach to the Bible cannot be understood without contextualizing it within the sacred texts of Islam. That is, Ibn Taymiyyah, like any other scholar, has an intellectual aim that he applies while approaching any topic. Therefore, one of his methods is comparing perspectives, whether within the Islamic context itself or from other contexts, regarding the Nicene Creed and Islamic scholasticism. In the case of the Bible, Ibn Taymiyyah makes an analogy regarding the Prophetic narratives and the corruption in the Bible. He states that although there is corruption in the Bible, this will not prevent us from knowing the proper interpretation since the rest of the books in the Bible demonstrate a clear notion regarding the concept of God, and this is also the case with the Prophetic narratives whenever a controversial narrative appears to contradict the others.[61] Ibn Taymiyyah relies on the Old Testament for his argument since its authority for him is much stronger than that of the New Testament; he clearly presents his attitude towards it through his affirmation of Avicenna's statement

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detailed refutation of the Nicene Creed; Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 227-235.

57 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 340-341; V, 73.

58 *Ibid*., II, 399.

59 *Ibid*., IV, 275.

60 *Ibid*., II, 167; III, 190.

61 *Ibid*., II, 442; III, 22.

that it is impossible to claim that *al-Kitāb al-ʿIbrī* (The Hebrew book – Old Testament) was fully corrupted by saying: "And what Avicenna had stated regarding the impossibility of fully corrupting the Old Testament is definitely true since the Prophet – Peace be upon him – had presented certain types of corruption, namely, ascribing *naqāʾiṣ* (deprecation) to God such as God's rest after creating the heavens and the earth."[62] This point is essential to understand the general attitude of Ibn Taymiyyah towards the corruption in the Bible. He claims that the Bible is not fully corrupted. There are only a few words that have been changed in the Bible; the real corruption is the misinterpretation of the text. Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah's central argument through his work is not to prove that the biblical verses have been changed. Instead, he aims at proving that the Christian interpretation of the Bible, namely, the interpretation after the First Council of Nicene, contradicts the Bible itself and the ancient books of prophets.

In conclusion, his perspective could be traced back to two factors of his intellectual project. First, it is informed by his epistemological attitude towards accepting the Prophetic narratives that do not have the same authenticity as the Qurʾān. This had shaped Ibn Taymiyyah's method to focus on biblical criticism rather than arguments from reason. For instance, instead of denying the Christian claim that Jesus was raised on the third day, he claims that this apparition may have been a devil since this had happened so many times to other people throughout history.[63] He is saying this since it is related to his attitude towards the controversial issue of accepting the single report (*khabar al-wāḥid*) in terms of doctrines because he does accept it, and thus he cannot simply reject the Christian narrative regarding seeing Jesus raised on the third day due to the intellectual challenges that he will face while approaching Islam itself. The second factor is Ibn Taymiyyah's scope of *muḥālāt al-*

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[62] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ,* V, 78. Ibn Taymiyyah states that some early Muslim scholars, such as Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), rejected only its interpretation as being "God's rest" without rejecting the text itself since it means according to Ibn Qutaybah that God had left the creation. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 418-419. As for Ibn Taymiyyah, he accepts the anthropomorphic language of the Old Testament except for the *naqāʾiṣ* (deprecation of God) such as God's rest after creating the heavens and earth. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ,* V, 83-85.

[63] Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 317-318.

ʿuqūl (the impossible for human reason), which is limited mainly to the three classical laws of thought.[64] This has led Ibn Taymiyyah to defend the anthropomorphic language in the Old Testament, which is the same position as that of Joseph Priestley (d. 1804) towards anthropomorphism, as will be presented at the end of this study.

I have tracked Taymiyyah's and Servetus's approaches to biblical verses through their works on Christianity in addition to Ibn Taymiyyah's approach to Islam, and I found that they both adopted five methods to interpret the Bible: linguistic analysis, scriptural usage of a term, historical contexts of a term, scriptural harmony, and early authorities' understanding of scripture. This is not say that these are the only methods found in their works; it means that they are the methods that are related to this study only and that I was applying one of the rules of Kalām, that is, *al-dāl ʿalá l-wuqūʿ dāll ʿalá l-imkān* (its existence is a proof for its possibility to exist).[65] Although this rule is meant in a different context regarding the prophethood of Muḥammad, it can be used here for demonstrating that two or more examples are sufficient to serve as a criterion for understanding the methodology of a certain thinker, which is the case for Servetus and Ibn Taymiyyah.

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[64] There is a dispute among Ibn Taymiyyah's use of the term *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ*. In my view, it is arguably the three classical laws of thought (the law of contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, and the principle of identity) since he always starts his evaluation of the ideas with these laws and accuses the other intellectuals as adherents of Kalām or as the Bāṭinīs, who rejected the law of the excluded middle, as Ibn Taymiyyah states. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Iṣfahāniyyah*, ed. Saʿīd ibn Naṣr ibn Muḥammad (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2001), 143-144. Note that the term *al-ʿaql al-ṣarīḥ* was used by many Muslim thinkers as the philosopher al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) but they differ regarding its definition. Both *ʿaql* and *ṣarīḥ* are general terms that could be understood in accordance with their usage in writing and in the reader's mind. See Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-ʿĀmirī, *Kitāb al-amad ʿalá l-abad*, ed. Everett K. Rowson (Beirut: Dār al-Kindī, 1979), 162. For more about the use of this term in Ibn Taymiyyah's thought, see Miriam Ovadia, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and the Divine Attributes: Rationalized Traditionalistic Theology* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2018), 154.

[65] See Abū l-Faḍl ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al-Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1999), 342.

First, using linguistic analysis means that the linguistic roots of each word should be considered while interpreting a text. For instance, Ibn Taymiyyah states that the term "spirit" should only be understood as "wind" in the verse (Genesis 1:2) according to its roots.[66] While refuting the use of the term "image" in Genesis 1:26 for the doctrine of the trinity, Ibn Taymiyyah states that this term should not indicate any further meaning except its known one, which is *likeness*.[67] Regarding the term *son*, he states that the first way of understanding this text is through its linguistic roots; therefore, this verse should be understood literally. That is, he is a real son, as with any other father-son relationship. However, since it goes against reason according to him, it should be understood in accordance with the scriptural usage of such terms.[68]

Servetus expresses his attitude towards this issue clearly by demonstrating a general rule for interpreting text: "Whoever shall handle the Holy Scriptures without a knowledge of the holy tongue will fall into pernicious errors."[69] For instance, he states regarding the Trinitarians' argument through the verse "The Lord said to my lord, sit at my right hand" that they do not know the original language of the Holy Scripture since this verse in Hebrew means "Jehovah spoke to the Adon himself," and thus it distinguishes between the Father and the Son.[70] Supporting the same interpretation, he states regarding the verse, "The Lord rained down from heaven sulphur and fire from the Lord upon Sodom and Gomorrah," that understanding how *lord* is used in this verse on the basis of the idiom of the language is fairly obvious if the Trinitarians knew Hebrew well.[71] In another example,

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66 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 241.

67 *Ibid*., III, 445. He uses the same argument to refute interpreting the image of God as man's intellectual perception, as Maimonides and Islamic scholastics did, since the nature of language rejects limiting the meaning of *image* in internal characteristics to *attributes*. Therefore, it includes the apparent aspect of the being. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān talbīs al-Jahmiyyah*, VI, 466; Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer, 2nd ed. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1904), 13.

68 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 192.

69 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 97.

70 *Ibid*., 94.

71 *Ibid*., 124. There is always a general assumption that the Jews approach the text literally and the Christians approach it figuratively. However, at some point,

after citing several verses regarding the term *man*, he writes, "If you have common sense, reader, and trust in the nature of the demonstrative pronoun, you will recognize manifestly that this is the true and original meaning of that expression."[72] In addition, he states that the question of abstract names, such as calling Christ the wisdom of God, will cause the followers of Scotus difficulty only without a grasp of Hebrew since if some quality of God suits something but surpasses it, that thing is nevertheless named for that quality of God.[73] Lastly, in his argument that the Scripture uses the term *person* as the external aspect of man, Servetus supports his argument by citing its meanings in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.[74]

Second, considering the scriptural usage of a term means that any term in a sacred text should be understood in accordance with the other uses of the term in that sacred text or other scriptures. Ibn Taymiyyah states that one of the central methodological errors regarding some approaches to scripture is to understand a term without referring to its other uses, since this will lead to corruption.[75] For instance, he makes an analogy regarding the term *ḥulūl* (incarnation) by stating that this term is found through the books of prophets and is accepted. However, it should be understood according to that context only and not within the context of false interpretations that emerged later.[76] He interprets the term *son* by its

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Christians had to approach it literally to support their doctrines; J. Lasker writes, "The Jewish polemicists also employed the New Testament to point out the contradictions between this textual source of Christianity and Christian doctrines which sprang up later and became established in the Church. Whereas in the discussion of the Hebrew Bible the Christians accused the Jews of taking the text too literally, here it was the Jews who said that certain passages must be understood figuratively. When Christians read Matt. 26:26-23 ("This is my body ... This is my blood"), they understood it to mean that the Eucharist really became the body and blood of Jesus. The Jewish polemicists, for their part, maintained that these verses were obviously only a parable and were not meant literally." See Daniel Judah Lasker, "Jewish Philosophical Polemics against Christianity in the Middle Ages" (PhD diss., Waltham, MA: University of Brandeis, 1976), 9.

72 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 9.

73 *Ibid*., 123.

74 *Ibid*., 153.

75 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 44.

76 *Ibid*., IV, 371.

use in another verse: "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matthew 24:36). He states that since there are various descriptions of the father and the son in the later verse, then the first passage must be read in the same way, too; thus, the father and the son are not one.[77] Furthermore, he states that there is no biblical verse that states that the eternal being is called *son*.[78] For the term *father*, he states that it cannot be understood literally because Jesus himself said that God is my father and your father, and thus the father here means the one who takes care of his creatures.[79] For the term *holy spirit*, he states that it has been used through the Bible as an angel who carries the revelation, as mentioned regarding the prophet David.[80] According to this methodology, he suggests a new interpretation of the biblical verse "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19); he notes after demonstrating his arguments regarding this topic: "It should be interpreted as the following: In the name of God, the prophet He sent, and of the Angel who carried the revelation."[81]

Servetus was aware of the other uses of the term *son* through scripture, as Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned. He interpreted *son* by claiming that Jesus is the true son and that we are the adoptive ones for two reasons: First, how could Jesus make us sons if he was not a son himself?[82] Second, Jesus was the only one who was born of the true substance of God, unlike us.[83] After a discussion of why the term *holy* was mentioned along with *power* to support his arguments with

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77 *Ibid*., IV, 146; III, 416.

78 *Ibid*., II, 3; 134.

79 *Ibid*., III, 194.

80 *Ibid*., II, 152-153.

81 *Ibid*., III, 197. Ibn Taymiyyah has mentioned this verse so many times through his voluminous work, aiming to refute it through biblical criticism rather than an argument from reason since he is aware that this verse is widely spread throughout the Christian world. This is in accordance with his epistemological position regarding the acceptance of the Prophetic narratives that do not fulfil the conditions of the Qurʾānic transmission.

82 It is clear that Servetus had used *dawr* (circulation argument) while making this point.

83 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 18.

other biblical verses, Servetus notes, "In this case the union does not mean that one may take metaphysically power for the incorporeal son, but rather that the spirit of Christ had all the strength."[84] In addition, he applies the same method while justifying how Jesus was sent by the Father from heaven since this term, that is the father, is used throughout other biblical texts.[85] Furthermore, he repeats statements such as the following: "You could not show a single word or a single iota in the Bible whereby scripture ever would call Word the son."[86] He confirms this notion by saying: "If you show some passage where 'Word' was at some point called 'son,' I will admit that I am beaten."[87] While he was attacking the Trinitarians' conception of *person*, he states that this term is used through scripture and elsewhere as the external aspect of man.[88]

Another aspect of the scriptural usage of a term is its meaning in other scriptures or the ancient books of prophets, since they originate from the same source, that is, God. This is one of Ibn Taymiyyah's central arguments through his polemics against the false interpretation of the baptism verse (Matthew 28:19). For instance, as for the holy spirit, he states that the meaning of *holy spirit* is *revelation*, not *God's life*, since other books of the prophets use this

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84 *Ibid*., 14.

85 *Ibid*., 24-26.

86 *Ibid*., 125.

87 *Ibid*., 152.

88 *Ibid*., 153. This was one of Servetus's strongest arguments because he referred to biblical terminology to support his theology in contrast to Calvin, and it was used by Arius for the same purpose. Timothy George notes that Calvin "was well aware that words such as *ousia*, *hypostases*, *persona*, and even *trinitas* were nonscriptural terms. He once said, 'I could wish they were buried, if only among all men this faith were agreed on: that Father, not the Spirit the Son, but that they are differentiated by a peculiar quality' (Inst. 1.13.15), yet precisely because certain heretics, such as Arius, have used scriptural language to affirm nonbiblical concepts of God, it was necessary for Calvin to refute their errors by using words such as *Trinity* and *Persons*." See Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishing Group, 2013), 207. It seems to me that Calvin's position towards using such nonscriptural terms is similar to Ibn Taymiyyah's position since the latter had used the term *jism* (body) many times through his works to refute the use of the term by other Islamic sects because it was used to examine the anthropomorphic language in the Qur'ān. For more discussion of this issue, see Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān talbīs al-Jahmiyyah*, I, 550.

term in this way.[89] Another example is to use the Qurʾān to argue about the true meaning of *holy spirit*; he states: "Christians mention through their Nicene Creed that Jesus was incarnate by the holy spirit and Mary; this is true according to the Qurʾān, but the holy spirit means angel Gabriel."[90] For the term *son*, he states that the ancient books of prophets use this term as the honored person; it was not mentioned except as a description of a creature.[91]

Servetus also adopted this method clearly; he filled four pages citing verses from the Old Testament and the Qurʾān to prove that this notion of the Trinity is not found anywhere else.[92] He notes in another place, "Neither in the Talmud nor in the Qurʾān are such horrifying blasphemies found."[93] He was against compromising their doctrines with false interpretations, since they made such errors as interpreting "I have born you today" as "I produced you before the ages."[94] He states that there is an indication in the Old Testament, which is "On this day," that supports his interpretation of this scripture as the day of Jesus' resurrection and the day of regeneration.[95] In addition, he uses the various descriptions of God in the Old and New Testaments to support his views on the concept of God. He states that corporeal forms of God are evident in the Old Testament since there was no distinction between the Father and the son. However, in the New Testament, God is a spirit because God exists in the son.[96] Another example to support his view is when he states regarding the frequent usage of the expression "holy spirit" in the New Testament, "the reason for the difference is that there were sanctifications of the flesh in the Law, but not the sanctification of the

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89 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 20.

90 *Ibid*., II, 186; IV, 70.

91 *Ibid*., III, 304; IV, 328.

92 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 48-51.

93 *Ibid*., 66.

94 *Ibid*., 86-87.

95 *Ibid*., 88, 92.

96 *Ibid*., 149. In the last section, while presenting a critique of Servetus's inconsistencies throughout his hermeneutics, I will argue that the context of this verse does allow this interpretation, of which George Stead (d. 2008) writes, "By saying that God is spiritual, we do not mean that he has no body." See George Christopher Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98.

spirit. In fact, at that time there was the spirit, but not as it is now: thus they neither knew the holy spirit nor had they heard whether the holy spirit existed."[97] Another example is when he refers to Rabbi Igzhac: "Notice in what sense the Hebrews spoke: the Messiah was 'From the beginning.' It is not in the manner of the trinitarian sophists but because his person and visible form were subsisting in God. Hence, Rabbi Igzhac Arama said regarding Genesis: 'Before the sun was created, the Messiah's name was subsisting, and it was already sitting on the throne.'"[98]

Third, considering historical contexts of a term means that any term found within the sacred texts should be understood in accordance with the usage of language in its historical context or the original audience's understanding. For instance, both Servetus and Ibn Taymiyyah argue the same way by mentioning a similar story; Servetus notes regarding the argument from the original audience's understanding, "Are we of a lower order than the Samaritan woman? In John 4, she said, 'Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah [Christ], can he?' Christ himself then confirmed the woman's understanding, though she knew nothing about incorporeal entities. When she was seeking for the Messiah to come, who was called the Christ, he answered, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.' He said 'I am' and 'the one you see speaking' He made no reference to something incorporeal; he simply said, 'I who speak, am the true and natural son of God.'"[99] This is the same well-known argument used by Ibn Taymiyyah to demonstrate the understanding of the terms used in accordance with the original audience at that time. He mentions the story of the woman whom the Prophet asked about the location of God; she said that He is in the heaven, and he confirmed her understanding.[100]

Fourth, scriptural harmony, which means that any controversial verse in scripture should be understood in agreement with other verses instead of adopting a contradictory understanding about its meaning. The first premise that Ibn Taymiyyah presents here is that most of the biblical verses state that there is only one God and Jesus

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97 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 274.

98 *Ibid*., 190.

99 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 10.

100 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Risālah al-Tadmuriyyah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1950), 87-88.

was a servant of God. On the other hand, there are a few verses that have controversial meanings regarding the two topics. Therefore, Christians, according to him, should have understood such controversial verses in accordance with the other references to Jesus as servant, but they did not.[101] In addition, he presents a general analogy between Christians and some Muslims regarding this point by noting: "And what Christians have done through their false interpretation of the Bible is the same error as those who altered the meanings of the Qurʾān to be compromised with their desires since both relied on controversial verses instead of the direct ones."[102] Servetus presents the same argument by citing Peter Lombard's words "Individual syllables almost by themselves imply unanimously the existence of a Trinity of three entities," and then he argued that most of the biblical verses are against this interpretation.[103]

Fifth, considering early authorities' understanding of scripture means that any term found within the sacred texts should be understood in accordance with the early authorities' understanding of scripture before the invention of new notions since those earlier understandings are the closest ones to the time of their revelation. Thus, those authorities had understood the scripture apart from engaging with other sources of knowledge. This is one of Ibn Taymiyyah's central arguments to approach scripture; he usually uses it in his discussions in the Islamic context, especially in regards to the topic of God's attributes by arguing that the scholastics' understanding of such texts is not found through the works of the early Islamic scholars, who are the real authorities for understanding scripture."[104] He further complains that "The authority of the scholastics' approach later became the only acceptable way of understanding Islam, and whoever rejects it is considered as someone who is going against mainstream Islam according to them."[105] He supports this criticism by mentioning the reason behind this false authority: "How could those scholastics be considered as

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101 Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 378; II, 315.

102 *Ibid*., I, 104-105.

103 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 39-40.

104 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān talbīs al-Jahmiyyah,* I, 68.

105 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-sunnah al-nabawiyyah fī naqḍ kalām al-Shīʿah al-Qadariyyah*, ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (Riyadh: Jāmiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Suʿūd al-Islāmiyyah, 1986), I, 315.

authorities for understanding religion compared to the ancient scholars although they had various central disputes over their approach?"[106] In addition, he supports his attitude by mentioning the role of the political authority in theological debate; he considers the time of al-Maʾmūn as the first one to support such an approach by the caliphate since it had never been supported by any political institution during the first two hundred years of Islam.[107]

Servetus demonstrates this method, too: "Consider why the manner of speech used by the ancients is not found among our Trinitarians and why instead we find another manner that is totally different and unknown to the ancients."[108] In the introduction to his last work, Servetus writes: "Clement, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and all the other early authorities asserted that this expression, 'Christ,' was a word that referred to human nature."[109] Furthermore, he writes, "All these men neither documented nor contemplated the conceits of our Trinitarians."[110] He further states such ideas had never been heard of, even at the time of Simon Magus.[111] This was one of Servetus's successful projects to examine the mainstream Reformed Christianity that was presented mainly by Calvin. Irena Backus notes that "Servetus's appeal to the ante-Nicene fathers was successful enough to preclude Calvin from making any extensive use of them in his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. However, it did not stop the reformer from reinterpreting the Bible to bring it into line with the Nicene teaching."[112] This argument in particular could answer the question that I have raised in the introduction: how could a person examine an established doctrine that has been accepted across the writings of theologians? Therefore, Servetus knew the credibility of this argument through the eyes of Calvin, and thus his "rhetorical strategy pushed Calvin and his allies into the corner in that, were they

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106 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ fatāwá*, V, 10.

107 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ fatāwá*, V, 553. In addition, he states that the adoption of the corrupted Christianity happened at the time of Constantine. See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 95.

108 Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 47-48.

109 *Ibid*., 7.

110 *Ibid*., 26.

111 *Ibid*., 110.

112 Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378-1615)* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2003), 113.

to concede his point, then an unbridgeable chasm between the New Testament, the postapostolic church, and the relatively late council of Nicaea was established."[113]

IV. How Could Early Christians Be Wrong?

The main implication of the last point regarding the argument from early authorities' understanding of scripture is the question, how could early Christians be wrong? This question is rhetorical. That is, the early authorities' understanding of scripture is essential for contextualizing any reading of scripture, and it must include any understanding of the text that the first generation of a religion had. Therefore, the question "How could early Christians be wrong?" will be examined through this last section by asking it to Servetus, Ibn Taymiyyah, and the Muslim audience, thus providing three main conclusions to build on the analysis of the biblical hermeneutics of Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus.

As seen in the last section, Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus have approached the Bible through the same five methods. However, a critical question could arise here: how could they have different findings regarding the interpretation of such controversial verses of the Bible despite both having rejected the Nicene Creed? I argue that there are two central points for answering this question: First, their commitments to different faiths that informed their theological thinking rather than their intellectual projects. That is, Ibn Taymiyyah is a Muslim, and thus he has a further argument that he uses while presenting his examination of the Christian tradition, which is proving that Muḥammad is a prophet sent by God and that the Qurʾān is the word of God. Thus, the Qurʾān rejects Jesus as divine. He is committed to this point since proving the prophethood of Muhammad is based on intellectual arguments that are known throughout Muslim theological works, namely, those dedicated to *al-nubuwwāt* (matters related to prophethood). Therefore, his references to the Qurʾān to refute the Christian doctrine make the entire basis of his argument different from that of Servetus.

The second point is their different scopes of examining the Christian tradition, while Servetus was aiming at restoring Christianity

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[113] Paul Chang-Ha Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54.

from the Nicene and post-Nicene theologians through heavily relying on the ante-Nicene fathers as the authority for understanding the Scripture, Ibn Taymiyyah aimed at restoring it from the whole Christian tradition, including the ante-Nicene fathers, due to the argument that comes through "Qurʾānic" Christianity, which means to present an alternative story of the whole Christian tradition. However, a question arises here regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's project to restore Christianity from the whole Christian tradition, including that of the ante-Nicene fathers: how could early Christians be wrong? That is, while Muslim scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah, faced an intellectual challenge regarding the issue of *al-tawātur* (recurrent transmission of reports) of some Christian doctrines as the crucifixion of Christ since the Qurʾān apparently denies it,[114] Ibn Taymiyyah used another specific method related to his intellectual project, which is the argument from early authorities' understanding of scripture, since he heavily relies on it through the Islamic tradition known as *fahm al-Salaf* (the predecessors' understanding of Scripture).

This reliance on early authorities informs his approach to understanding Islam; subsequently, it is found through his approach to other religions, since they mostly discuss the same topics. For instance, the Muslim thinker who doubts the authority of *tawātur* through his analysis of Islam, as the Muʿtazilī Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām (d.

[114] See Whittingham, "How Could So Many Christians Be Wrong? The Role of *Tawātur* (Recurrent Transmission of Reports) in Understanding Muslim Views of the Crucifixion," 167-178. The Muslim intrafaith dialogue regarding their own intellectual project has led some of them, such as al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), to examine the mainstream Muslim attitudes towards the crucifixion of Christ. See Abū l-Rabīʿ Najm al-Dīn Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Qawī ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Ṭūfī al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Intiṣārāt al-Islāmiyyah fī kashf shubah al-Naṣrāniyyah*, ed. Sālim ibn Muḥammad al-Qarnī (Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykān, 1999), I, 355-356; al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. Jābir Fayyāḍ al-ʿAlwānī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1992), IV, 256; Abū l-ʿAbbās Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qarāfī, *Nafāʾis al-uṣūl fī sharḥ al-Maḥṣūl*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd and ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwaḍ (Mecca: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafá al-Bāz, 1995), VI, 2843; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-mushtahir bi-l-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), XI, 101.

231/845),[115] will not find any problem rejecting the *tawātur* of the crucifixion of Christ because it is already not a part of the intellectual foundation that he accepts. The same is found through examining the other non-Muslim traditions. For instance, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286), the Ashʿarī theologian, states that Zoroastrians and *al-Thanawiyyah* (dualists) reject God's ability to do the *mumkināt* (contingent possibilities); this is accordance with the adoption of *al-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ al-ʿaqlī* (the human mind's unaided qualification of things as good or bad).[116] He is saying here that the Zoroastrians' claim is not applicable to us, that is, his school of thought, Ashʿarīs, and thus he is transferring the discussion to the other Islamic sects that had accepted this notion as if he were presenting an objection to their intellectual project.

Let us put the question in a different way regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual project and his approach to Christianity; what is the position of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding the divinity of Jesus assuming that he had access to the whole writings of the ante-Nicene fathers, namely, having Edward Burton's (d. 1836) work *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ* in his hands?[117] I argue that Ibn Taymiyyah would trace these testimonies regarding the divinity of Jesus the same way he had regarding the issue of *ḥawādith lā awwal lahā* (infinitely regressing series of temporally

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[115] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Bahādur ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿĀnī (Kuwait & Hurghada: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyyah & Dār al-Ṣafwah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 1988), IV, 238.

[116] Nāṣir al-Dīn Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min Maṭāliʿ al-anẓār* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li-l-Turāth), 179-180. The Jews used this argument to argue for the binding nature of the Mosaic Law in addition to the argument from *tawātur*. See al-Ṭūfī, *Darʾ al-qawl al-qabīḥ bi-l-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ*, ed. Ayman Maḥmūd Shiḥādah (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah, 2005), 122; ʿIzz al-Dawlah Saʿd ibn Manṣūr ibn Saʿd Ibn Kammūnah al-Isrāʾīlī al-Baghdādī, *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth: al-Yahūdiyyah, al-Masīḥiyyah, al-Islām*, ed. Moshe Perlmann (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1967), 107.

[117] For more information regarding Ibn Taymiyyah's theory of accepting reports, see Carl el-Tobgui's article "From Legal Theory to *Erkenntnistheorie*: Ibn Taymiyya on *Tawātur* as the Ultimate Guarantor of Human Cognition," *Oriens* 46, no. 1-2 (2018), 6-61, https://doi.org/10.1163/18778372-04601002.

originated things) when he criticized Ibn Ḥazm's claim that there is a consensus through the whole Islamic tradition on the doctrine of creation ex nihilo (out of nothing).[118] This is to say that both doctrines – the divinity of Jesus[119] and creation ex nihilo – share one central point in my view, which is that they are not clearly presented through the very early history of Christianity and Islam due to the generally ambiguous terms used for represent them, "creation" and "son of man," respectively, in addition to an important point, which is the domination of the practical aspect of religion that is being lived within its rules rather than forming the theoretical philosophical and theological issues. Andrew Hofer notes that "Robert L. Wilken rightly comments that 'the study of early Christian thought has been too preoccupied with ideas. The intellectual effort of the early church was at the service of a much loftier goal than giving conceptual form to Christian belief. Its mission was to win the hearts and minds of men and women and to change their lives,'"[120] which is the same case in early Islam since the disputes regarding the concept of God started later.[121] Accordingly, Ibn Taymiyyah may find his way of facing this intellectual challenge of the testimonies through arguing that the

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[118] See Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī, *Marātib al-ijmāʿ fī l-ʿibādāt wa-l-muʿāmalāt wa-l-iʿtiqādāt* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1938), 167; See Hoover "Perpetual Creativity in the Perfection of God: Ibn Taymiyya's Hadith Commentary on God's Creation of This World," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2004), 287-329, https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.3.287.

[119] For a detailed discussion about the divinity of Jesus, see the conflicting views through these two works; Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: the Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2014); Michael F. Bird, et al., *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature - A Response to Bart D. Ehrman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014).

[120] Andrew Hofer, "Scripture in the Christological Controversies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Paul M. Blowers and Peter W. Martens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 460.

[121] See al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār*, V, 39. This argument is developed by Joseph Priestley to support Unitarianism; "Priestley's story begins not with words, but with silence. The lack of Trinitarian language within scripture, the silence of John the Baptist, Christ, and the Apostles on this important matter, the absence of any Jewish writers inveighing in opposition to the principle: these are all indications that the early church was Unitarian." See Elizabeth Sarah Kingston, "'The Language of the Naked Facts': Joseph Priestley on Language and Revealed Religion" (PhD diss., Falmer, Brighton, UK: University of Sussex, 2010), 185.

Ebionites who had rejected the divinity of Jesus[122] are among the authorities who could answer the question "How could early Christians be wrong?" In other words, if Ibn Taymiyyah was asked how the ante-Nicene fathers could be wrong regarding their testimonies to the divinity of Jesus, then he could reply, "According to your rightful logic, how could the Ebionites be wrong since they serve as the first attempt to understand the personhood of Jesus?"

This is the central question, that is how could the Ebionites be wrong, in which I will be examining Servetus's concept of God through his hermeneutics that he used to criticize the Trinitarians, namely, the original audience and the "very" early authorities, the Ebionites. The question here would be to what extent does the Bible teach Servetus's concept of God, namely, his Neoplatonism?[123] Starting with the argument from the original audience such as the Samaritan woman, whom Servetus refers to many times, I argue that it is difficult to suggest that his understanding was their understanding because the foundation of Servetus's Neoplatonism is found through his theology based on a fascination with light symbolism.[124] Thus, it is

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[122] Edward Burton, *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1829), 481. The Ebionites are historically categorized as "Jewish Christians" who believed in Jesus but continued following the Jewish law. See Oskar Skarsaune, "Introduction, 1: Jewish Believers in Jesus in Antiquity – Problems of Definition, Method, and Sources," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 9; Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99; Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, ed. and trans. John A. Baker (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Co., 1964), 114.

[123] Some ante-Nicene fathers have criticized Neoplatonism, as did Irenaeus (d. 202). Plotinus (d. 270), who is considered as the founder of Neoplatonism, had "presuppositions that prevented him from speaking about a divine history within the world. Therefore, Irenaeus would no doubt have regarded him as an unbeliever." See E. P. Meijering, "God Cosmos History: Christian and Neo-Platonic Views on Divine Revelation," *Vigiliae Christianae* 28, no. 4 (1974), 268, https://doi.org/10.2307/1583232.

[124] Elisabeth Feist Hirsch, "Michael Servetus and the Neoplatonic Tradition: God, Christ and Man," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 42, no. 3 (1980), 572. This is also found in his approach to the Imago Dei. See Jason van Vliet, *Children*

difficult to suppose that the Samaritan woman could have understood Servetus's concept of God because "when the Christians encountered the term 'allegory' in Paul - which served as an impulse to and confirmation of their own dealings with Holy Scripture - they could not in the first place understand it other than as the rhetor (or perhaps already the grammarian) had taught them in the school."[125] Therefore, approaching the term "Light" with this philosophical interpretation is problematic, and his polemics against those who accepted "incorporeal entities," namely, the Trinitarians, may be questioned since he had done the same through his Neoplatonism. I am not saying that this is the only meaning of the text since the original audience could simply serve as the gateway to further meanings, such as the Avicennan hermeneutics, which allow that scriptures are meant to call the masses to adhere to the truth.[126] Thus, he accepts that there is an understanding of the original audience, but it is a departure point for him. However, Servetus's hermeneutics cannot be read as Avicennan ones since he does use this argument for another purpose: to accept the literal understanding of the text to prove a doctrine, as with the Samaritan woman, when he writes, "He – Jesus – made no reference to something incorporeal; he simply said, 'I who speak, am the true and natural son of God.'"[127]

This is one of the common issues found across the hermeneutics of the three Abrahamic faiths in which a certain term had a certain meaning according to the original audience based upon their use of language and then was changed due to later interactions with world traditions. The impact of this issue is primarily seen while approaching the concept of the incorporeality of God, which started at the time of Philo of Alexandria, as he was the first one to interpret the notion of "God is not like a man" in order to accept the philosophical concept of God as not composed of parts, which Mireille Hadas-Lebel notes that Philo "likes to quote it independent of

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of God: The Imago Dei in John Calvin and His Context (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 239.

[125] Charles Kannengiesser, ed., *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2004), I, 162.

[126] Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī Ibn Sīnā, *al-Aḍḥawiyyah fī l-maʿād*, ed. Ḥasan ʿĀṣī (Tehran: Muʾassasah-ʾi Shams-i Tabrīzī, 1382 HS), 99.

[127] Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 10.

its context."[128] This is found in Servetus's attempt to use the verse "God is spirit" (John 4:24) as a basis for his theology. However, and according to his hermeneutics, the context for using such term does not support his theology. George Stead asserts: "By saying that God is spiritual, we do not mean that he has no body but rather that he is the source of a mysterious life-giving power and energy that animates the human body, and himself possesses this energy in the fullest measure. The spirit is an unseen power, like the wind or the breath; and God, who is himself unseen, can communicate with men, not only by visible apparitions but by unseen agencies, spirits."[129] Accordingly, the original audience and let's say the early authorities, namely, the Ebionites, could not have accepted Servetus's theology, and thus I am arguing here that the logical conclusion of Servetus's hermeneutics would lead to Joseph Priestley's theology, in which he argued that "no person can reflect upon this subject without thinking it a little extraordinary, that the Jewish Christians, in so early an age as they are spoken of by the denomination of Ebionites, should be acknowledged to believe nothing either of the divinity, or even of the pre-existence of Christ, if either of those doctrines had been taught them by the apostles."[130] That is why early Christians believed in a corporeal concept of God.[131] What makes this argument more interesting is bringing Ibn Taymiyyah's insights to bear, since the basis of his philosophical-theological concept of God is similar to Priestley's one: both share a similar understanding of one of the most complicated issues in philosophy and theology, which is anthropomorphism, since it was probably the main criticism of the scriptural concept of God since the time of the Classical Greek religions.[132] Thus, they use the same argument, which is "the fact that

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[128] Mireille Hadas-Lebel, *Philo of Alexandria: A Thinker in the Jewish Diaspora*, trans. Robyn Fréchet (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 152.

[129] Stead, *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, 98.

[130] Burton, *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 481.

[131] David L. Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses," *Harvard Theological Review* 83, no. 2 (1990), 105.

[132] Mor Segev states that "the most explicit criticism of the content of traditional religion in ancient Greek philosophy is found in the fragments of Xenophanes, who rejects the anthropomorphic depictions of divinity at the basis of traditional religion in general." See Mor Segev, *Aristotle on Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 16.

the deity and the human mind possess intelligence does not necessarily mean that they are similar in other respects,"[133] and thus they were accused of implying that God is material[134] since Priestley accepted materialism and Ibn Taymiyyah rejected many times through his works the notion of having something that is not capable of being known by the senses, calling it *maʿdūm* (nonexistent)[135] which could be interpreted as materialism although it requires more investigation.[136]

Having presented the question "How could early Christians be wrong?" to Ibn Taymiyyah and Servetus, I will present it now to a modern discussion of the Christian-Muslim dialogue regarding the divinity of Jesus. That is, I have mentioned through the introduction that both the new data found through the Christian tradition as available in the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers and the classical Muslim intellectual arguments will be engaged in order to present a new challenge for the intellectuals of both traditions to contend. This methodology is inspired by the intelligent freethinker Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who states through the introduction of his voluminous work *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl* that he shall do his best to strengthen every idea

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[133] Simon Mills, "Joseph Priestley and the Intellectual Culture of Rational Dissent, 1752-1796" (PhD diss., London: Queen Mary, University of London, 2009), 194; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ*, V, 83.

[134] Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 224. "Arguing that we have no conception of God apart from his actions in nature and thus no warrant for forming a notion of an immaterial first cause, Priestley states that his materialism is that philosophy which alone suits the doctrine of the Scriptures, though the writers of them were not philosophers, but had an instruction infinitely superior to that of any philosophical school. Every other system of philosophy is discordant with the Scriptures, and, as far as it lays any hold upon the mind, tends to counteract their influence." See J. G. McEvoy and J. E. McGuire, "God and Nature: Priestley's Way of Rational Dissent," in *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences, Sixth Annual Volume*, ed. Russell McCormmach (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 334.

[135] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān talbīs al-Jahmiyyah*, I, 229.

[136] Since this study is limited to Servetus and Ibn Taymiyyah, I will not go further in analysing the two projects of Ibn Taymiyyah and Priestly. However, the seeming similarities between the two thinkers regarding central issues in philosophy and theology could form an interesting study.

even if it does not have any strong argument before examining it.[137] Accordingly, the question "how could early Christians be wrong?" is presented to the Muslim audience in the following manner: Do the testimonies of the ante-Nicene fathers to the divinity of Jesus reach the level of being considered *tawātur maʿnawī* (thematic recurrent mass transmission), namely, the ones mentioned by Edward Burton? This is the same argument used by the influential theologian al-Kawtharī (d. 1952) regarding the second coming of Jesus, in which he claims that the Prophetic narratives on this topic had reached the level of being considered as *tawātur maʿnawī*.[138] This is not a challenge for Islam itself since Islam is based on the argument from the prophethood of Muḥammad, which has already been built through other intellectual arguments regarding the miraculous Qurʾān. This is a challenge for the intellectual project of each Muslim figure and even Christian ones, because once the Christian thinker accepts this argument, he or she would face its logical conclusions while examining and understanding his or her own tradition and the other traditions since, for instance, the Muslim could use the same argument to prove the prophethood of Muḥammad. Accordingly, each Muslim figure will have a different answer for this central question, which I argue is probably the strongest one that could be presented by Christians using Muslim intellectual arguments.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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[137] Al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, I, 99. That is why he elsewhere presents a critical question by stating that since we necessarily know that Jesus did not teach that he is the son of God, then how could all Christians accept this notion? He answers the question by suggesting that Christians interpreted the term "Son" to be a real son as a response to the Jewish term for Jesus. Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī*, XVI, 35-36. This reminds me of the method of German scholar Johann Joachim Müller (d. 1733), which Noel Malcolm describes as "the requirement of equal treatment took priority over the need to prove gross fraudulence" while he was demonstrating that all religions accept polygamy and physical paradise. See Malcolm, *Useful Enemies*, 312-313.

[138] Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī, *Naẓrah ʿābirah fī mazāʿim man yunkir nuzūl ʿĪsā ʿalayhi l-salām qabla l-ākhirah*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Khalīl li-l-Ṭibāʿah, 1987), 115.

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UNDERSTANDING THE DISCOURSE OF ʿALĪ JUMʿAH ON THE MILITARY COUP DURING THE ARAB SPRING IN EGYPT

Muhamad Rofiq Muzakkir
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta-Indonesia
mmuzakki@asu.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3145-020X

Abstract

This article aims to propose an alternative explanation to the existing scholarship about the factors behind the failure of Egypt to transform into a democratic country after having experienced the major moment of the Arab Spring. I argue that the theological discourse of the *ʿulamāʾ* and their commitment to one of the currents of Islamic political thought in the premodern period contributed to the miscarriage of the Arab Spring. In doing so, I focus on unpacking the discourse of the previous grand *muftī* of Egypt, ʿAlī Jumʿah (Ali Gom'ah), on the military coup against the democratically elected president from the Muslim Brotherhood, Muḥammad Mursī (Mohammed Morsi). On several occasions, Jumʿah conveyed discourses that supported and justified the actions of the military leaders who took power. I trace ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the coup through three medieval scholars' views on the usurpation of power (*al-istīlāʾ ʿalá l-imārah*). I compare ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse to that of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah, three prominent political theorists and jurists in the medieval period. I argue that the tendency to conform with tradition led ʿAlī Jumʿah to formulate his

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undemocratic discourse. In this article, I examine several notions from the Islamic legal field that ʿAlī Jumʿah employed to justify the coup. I also argue that in addition to following the standard norms from the medieval period, ʿAlī Jumʿah also departed from such norms in several aspects. I contend that his discourse during the Arab Spring has had severe implications for both the Islamic legal field and the political trajectory of Egypt.

Key Words: Usurpation of power, Egypt, ʿAlī Jumʿah, the Arab Spring, authoritarianism.

I. Introduction

The Arab Spring, which occurred eight years ago in several Arab countries in the Middle East, failed to accomplish its objective to achieve democratic reform in the region. In Egypt, since the ousting of Ḥusnī Mubārak in 2011 and the success of the first democratic election in 2012, there have been setbacks, moving the country toward an authoritarian system. The military took power through a coup against President Muḥammad Mursī in 2013, and since then, Egypt has endured the worst authoritarian system in its modern history. This setback has compelled researchers to ask the following question: how can we explain the failure to transition into a democratic system in Arab countries, more specifically in Egypt?

A number of works have been written about this failure. Some studies look at the hegemony of the military in Egyptian politics as the main force behind the durability of authoritarianism in the country.[1] Others look at the factor of Egypt's neo-liberal economic structure, which relies on *crony capitalism*.[2] Many look at the role of

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1 Khaled Abou El Fadl, "The Praetorian State in the Arab Spring," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law* 34 (2013), 305-314; M. Cherif Bassiouni, "Egypt's Unfinished Revolution," in *Civil Resistance in the Arab Spring: Triumphs and Disasters*, ed. Adam Roberts, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 53-87.

2 Michal Lipa, "Internal Determinants of Authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East. Egypt before the Arab Spring," *Hemispheres: Studies on Cultures and Societies* 31, no. 3 (2016), 57-67.

the pragmatism of the *Salafī* political groups.[3] Some maintain that "the lack of [an] intellectual anchor" and the absence of radical ideology explain the failure of the Egyptian revolution.[4] Still more investigate the role of foreign countries in weakening the revolution movement.[5] Finally, some authors examine the role of the secular intelligentsia who betrayed the revolution because of their aversion to the Muslim Brotherhood.[6] While these approaches are important, this study will examine the factor of theological rationalization by religious actors as a contributor to the longevity of the authoritarian system in Egypt. This writing follows what, in political science, is called a constructivist and interpretivist account, namely, an approach that looks at the religious tenets of religious actors and examines how the religious actors use their capacity to interpret religious text to

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3 Jacob Høigilt and Frida Nome, "Egyptian Salafism in Revolution," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 1 (2014), 33-54, https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/ett056; Annette Ranko and Justyna Nedza, "Crossing the Ideological Divide? Egypt's *Salafists* and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39, no. 6 (2016), 519-541, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116274.

4 Asef Bayat, *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017).

5 Khaled Abou El Fadl points out the role of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) not only in terms of funding but also in setting up the military coup against the Muslim Brotherhood. See Abou El Fadl, "Failure of a Revolution. The Military, Secular Intelligentsia and Religion in Egypt's Pseudo-Secular State," in *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*, ed. Larbi Sadiki (London & New York: Routledge, 2015), 253-270.

6 Ahmed Abdel Meguid and Daanish Faruqi, "The Truncated Debate: Egyptian Liberals, Islamists, and Ideological Statism," in *Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy*, ed. Dalia F. Fahmy and Daanish Faruqi (London: Oneworld, 2017), 253-290; Amr Hamzawy, "Egyptian Liberals and Their Anti-Democratic Deceptions: A Contemporary Sad Narrative," in *Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy*, ed. Dalia F. Fahmy and Daanish Faruqi (London: Oneworld, 2017), 337-360; Abou El Fadl, "Egypt's Secularized Intelligentsia and the Guardians of Truth," in *Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy*, ed. Dalia F. Fahmy and Daanish Faruqi (London: Oneworld, 2017), 235-252.

respond to certain phenomena.[7]

This study examines the role of ʿAlī Jumʿah (pronounced ʿAlī Gomʿah in the colloquial Egyptian Arabic), a former grand *muftī* of Egypt and an Azharī scholar, and the discourse he produced in justifying the overthrow of the first democratically elected president of Egypt, Muḥammad Mursī. Given his position as the grand *muftī*, Jumʿah was the most important cleric who formulated political discourses to respond to the political turmoil in Egypt in 2013.[8] Before and after the coup on July 3, 2013, he attended the assembly of the Egyptian Security Forces and gave a speech in front of the military officers. Jumʿah also appeared in an interview on the Egyptian pro-military TV channel. On these occasions, he stated his support for the military coup announced by General ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Sīsī. Moreover, he legitimized the carnage against approximately 1150 people who supported the deposed president.

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7 Ron Eduard Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 6-8; Carolyn M. Warner and Stephen G. Walker, "Thinking about the Role of Religion in Foreign Policy: A Framework for Analysis," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, no. 1 (2010), 113-135, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2010.00125.x.

8 The support of the military coup was not exclusive to ʿAlī Jumʿah. Many other important figures and political factions in Egypt assented to the coup as well. However, since they used different reasoning that was not theological, their position is outside my current concerns. In this research, I focus on Jumʿah because he is a scholar of Islam who employed the Islamic discursive tradition to support the military leaders who took over the power. It is true that grand sheikh of al-Azhar, Aḥmad Ṭayyib, also sanctioned the coup by quoting the famous legal maxim "*irtikāb akhaff al-ḍararayn* (taking the lesser of two evils)," meaning that the removal of Mursī was less evil than keeping him in the office. However, Aḥmad Ṭayyib's subsequent discourse is not significant for this analysis. As Banoo notes that after the coup, Aḥmad Ṭayyib was silent regarding the carnage committed by the military officers against Mursī's followers. He then withdrew from the public scene for quite a while and reappeared again to comment on another Islamic legal issue. For further elaboration regarding the stance of the grand sheikh of al-Azhar on the al-Sīsī regime, read Masooda Bano, "At the Tipping Point? Al-Azhar's Growing Crisis of Moral Authority," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 4 (2018), 722, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743818000867.

In looking at the discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah, this study will investigate the following question: How did ʿAlī Jumʿah formulate his discourse on the military coup? Two minor questions underpin this central question: How does the Islamic tradition influence ʿAlī Jumʿah, and how does he differ from that tradition?

There are four relevant works for examining the discourse of Muslim scholars in general and ʿAlī Jumʿah in particular during the Arab Spring. Mohammed Fadel, in his study of the position of the *ʿulamāʾ* (Muslim scholars) during the Arab Spring, conducted a comparison between the discourses of what he calls "republican Islam" and "authoritarian Islam." He maintains that it is still speculative to claim that the discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah was a result of an adherence to classical Islamic discourses. What can be confirmed, he argues, is that authoritarian Islam is more concerned with preserving Islamic orthodoxy than democratization.[9] David H. Warren, in his article responding to Fadel, contends that ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse was highly influenced by the modern ideas of nationhood and nation-states formulated by Rifāʿah al-Ṭahṭāwī (d. 1873), an Egyptian Muslim scholar whose work heralded the beginning of Islamic reformation in Egypt.[10] Those two scholars have not paid significant attention to ʿAlī Jumʿah's indebtedness to the Islamic tradition.

Unlike Warren and Fadel, who doubt the adherence of ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse to the traditional discourse on power, Ibrahim Moosa argues that the traditionalist *ʿulamāʾ* of al-Azhar (including ʿAlī Jumʿah) still espoused the traditional language on politics such as the notion of *shawkah* (the army) in their response to the political turmoil in Egypt. Moreover, he also stated that the language of modern democracy, namely, the sovereignty of the constitution, has been absent in their discourse.[11] In line with Moosa, Amr Osman also

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[9] Mohammad Fadel, "Islamic Law and Constitution-Making: The Authoritarian Temptation and the Arab Spring," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 53, no. 2 (2016), 472-507, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2711859.

[10] David H. Warren, "Cleansing the Nation of the 'Dogs of Hell': ʿAli Jumʿa's Nationalist Legal Reasoning in Support of the 2013 Egyptian Coup and Its Bloody Aftermath," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no. 3 (2017), 457-477, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000332.

[11] Ebrahim Moosa, "Political Theology in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring: Returning to the Ethical," in *The African Renaissance and the Afro-Arab Spring:*

contends that events in early Islam shaped the political stance of Muslim scholars during the Arab Spring. ʿAlī Jumʿah, in particular, Osman continues, had a tendency to avoid the topic of *fitnah* (civil unrest) in medieval Islam when justifying the military coup.[12] While these two studies are very specific in pointing out the influence of the classical Islamic tradition, they do not attempt to juxtapose ʿAlī Jumʿah with specific scholars from the classical-medieval age. In addition, they fail to elucidate the extent to which ʿAlī Jumʿah deviates from the Islamic tradition.

To explain ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the military coup (*al-inqilāb al-ʿaskarī*), this paper will look at the medieval Islamic discourse on the usurpation of power (*al-istīlāʾ ʿalá l-imārah* or *al-taghallub*). In this research, I compare the reasoning of both medieval scholars on the usurpation of power and ʿAlī Jumʿah on the military coup. I select three scholars from the medieval period to be compared with ʿAlī Jumʿah, namely, al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), and Ibn Jamāʿah (d. 733/1333). The selection of these scholars is justified by their salient positions in Islamic political thought. These three scholars are among the most prominent theorists of Islamic politics and most quoted Muslim scholars on the issue of state and government by contemporary researchers. I argue that we will not be able to understand the reasoning of ʿAlī Jumʿah unless we trace the genealogy of his discourse and its constitutive elements in the classical discourses.[13] As I will explain later, ʿAlī Jumʿah employed a

A Season of Rebirth?, ed. Charles Villa-Vicencio, Erik Doxtader, and Ebrahim Moosa (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015), 101-120.

12 Amr Osman, "Past Contradictions, Contemporary Dilemmas: Egypt's 2013 Coup and Early Islamic History," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 2 (2015), 303-326, https://doi.org/10.1111/dome.12071.

13 The tracing of the genealogy of ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse in this article is an application of Talal Asad's concept of "Islam as a discursive tradition." Unlike the tendency of some sociologists to read the political discourses of modern Muslim activists as mere responses to modernity or material conditions and, therefore, to disregard the examination of the classical Islamic discourse that is constitutive to modern discourse, Asad suggests that a scholar working on Islam has to look at a person's specific discourse, which relies upon continuity with classical discourse. For further clarification of this concept, read Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle* 17, no. 2 (2009), 1-30, https://doi.org/10.5250/quiparle.17.2.1.

number of notions from classical Islamic political discourses to justify the military coup.

Following Ovamir Anjum's method for examining Islamic political thought, in comparing the ideas of the three medieval Muslim scholars and those of ʿAlī Jumʿah, I pay attention to three components in my analysis, namely, the conceptual elements of their political thought, the sociopolitical context in which they formulated their political insights, and the position of their ideas within the Islamic discursive tradition.[14]

In this study, I see ʿAlī Jumʿah as a scholar whose tendency is conformity with tradition. As such, I view the discourses he formulated during the political upheaval in Egypt as a result of his commitment to the medieval view, which allow the holder of arms to usurp power from legitimate rulers. Following this logic, I argue that the reason ʿAlī Jumʿah justified the military coup against the democratically elected president in 2013 is that he followed the dominant political thought within the legal culture in Islam. Therefore, I argue that the medieval discourses profoundly influenced ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the military coup during the political turmoil in Egypt in 2013. That being said, I also suggest that in addition to being influenced by the medieval discourses, Jumʿah also departed from them. He produced a legal discourse that fit with the interest of the Egyptian military. This divergence from traditional concepts has implications both for the Islamic legal field and the political trajectory of Egypt.

This article is divided into five sections. In the first section, I explicate the theoretical framework that I use in this study. In the second section, I elaborate the thoughts of the three medieval Muslim political theorists on the issue of usurpation of power, namely, al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah. In the third section, I proceed to describe ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse before, during, and after the ousting of Muḥammad Mursī in the military coup. In the fourth section, I juxtapose the discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah and the three medieval Muslim scholars, revealing the similarities and differences between them. Finally, in the fifth section, I conclude by pointing out the findings and limitations of this research.

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[14] Ovamir Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19.

Before I proceed, there is one thing I need to mention with regard to the limitations of my study. The discourse regarding the issue of the usurpation of power within the Islamic tradition is not monolithic. There are various positions regarding the usurpation of power and the military coup. Some classical scholars such as Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥalīmī (d. 403/1012), a scholar of ḥadīth and kalām, and modern scholars such as Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, the former President of The International Association of Muslim Scholars, have rejected the usurpation of power. In this regard, it is relevant to highlight Bruce Lincoln's contention that religion, as a macroentity, "has countless internal varieties and subdivisions"[15] and, therefore, cannot be essentialized. As such, what I want to emphasize is that the inclination that I discuss here is not the only stance that exists in the Islamic tradition. The elaboration of the ideas of scholars who have rejected the usurpation of power is beyond the scope of this article.

II. Theoretical Framework

There is one theoretical question that helps me frame my work, namely, how can we understand Islamic political discourse? In this article, I see the political discourse of the three medieval scholars and that of ʿAlī Jumʿah as a part of the legal culture in Islam. To put it differently, I treat their political discourse as a legal discourse and treat them as political theorists and jurists at the same time. As political thinkers, they talk about power and respond to the political issues they faced in their respective times. As jurists, they use the language of law in formulating such a discourse. The reason why I frame those scholars as jurists and their political discourse as legal discourse is that in the Islamic scholarly tradition, politics is one field of many within the legal system. In the Islamic tradition, a legal field is an all-encompassing field. It deals with the whole aspect of practical issues in Muslim life, from ritual (*ʿibādāt*) such as prayer, giving alms, and pilgrimage, to human relations (*muʿāmalāt*), which include the matters of transactions and politics. Therefore, by positioning ʿAlī Jumʿah and the previous scholars as jurists, it is easier to demonstrate their social influence and understand why their discourses have been very powerful in shaping people's opinions. In the Islamic tradition, legal scholars (jurists) have a very important and

[15] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 8.

prominent position since they deal with two aspects of Islamic rulings: transcendent (divine scripture) and practical issues.[16] Muslims perceive jurists as authoritative interpreters of God's speech and mediators through which people implement religious rulings. Muslims also consider jurists to be civic leaders because of their involvement in day-to-day Muslim matters through the *fatwá*s they issue.[17]

One particular notion within the Islamic legal-thought system that profoundly informs the perspective of this article is the idea of *taqlīd,* wherein a jurist or Muslim legal scholar follows or adapts established ideas in taking a stance and formulating discourse. When he faces a contemporary issue that needs to be explained to his coreligionists, instead of using his own reasoning independently, he will refer to the existing views. He will select an opinion that has become either a convention among legal scholars or the strongest opinion in the field. A jurist, as a consequence of the field of law, therefore, tends to be a "conservative and resistant to change."[18] In regard to taking a stance pertains to a political issue, a jurist will also look at the previous precedent within the field, namely, how the authoritative scholars in the past have responded to the same predicaments. If he finds that previous scholars already address it, he will conform to the existing views and abide by them. If not, he will derive his opinion on a new case from the spirit of the traditional opinion.

In the next few sections, I will explain how al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah, who lived in different time periods, responded to the issue of usurpation of power.

A. Al-Māwardī and the Rise of the Discourse

The issue of the usurpation of power (*al-istīlāʾ ʿalá l-imārah* or *al-taghallub*) in Islamic scholarly tradition is a central topic that has been addressed by most Muslim jurists writing on political issues

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16 Ebrahim Moosa, "Allegory of the Rule (*Ḥukm*): Law as Simulacrum in Islam?" *History of Religions* 38, no. 1 (1998), 23, https://doi.org/10.1086/463517.

17 Wael B. Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 52.

18 Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 111; Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought*, 24.

from the medieval period until today. In the modern era, for instance, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), a reformist jurist who experienced the abolishment of the Ottoman Empire still alluded to this topic in his political treatise, *al-Khilāfah*.[19] This section discusses the ideas of al-Māwardī to show the origin of the concept.

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī was a jurist from the Shāfiʿī school of legal thought. In the era of al-Qādir Billāh and al-Qāʾim Billāh, two caliphs of the ʿAbbāsid dynasty, al-Māwardī served as a chief judge (*aqḍā l-quḍāh*) in several cities, namely, Ustuwāʾ and Baghdād.[20] According to Gibb, as quoted by Khaled, al-Māwardī was the first jurist to legalize the usurpation of power as a means to come to power.[21] Likewise, Riḍwān Sayyid contends that al-Māwardī is the first jurist to be fully aware of new realities and believe that there is no point in returning to the condition in which a caliph has full authority without being controlled by usurpers. For al-Māwardī, Riḍwān argues, there is no harm in setting the caliph up as a mere symbol of order, continuity, and the political unity of Muslims.[22]

Three sociopolitical contexts were very influential in shaping al-Māwardī's discourse on the usurpation of power. First, the ʿAbbāsid was already conquered and ruled by the Būyid warlords from a region in Iran called Daylam who embraced Shīʿah Ithná ʿAshariyyah (Twelver Shiism). The control of ʿAbbāsid caliphs by the usurpers (*umarāʾ al-istīlāʾ*), according to Riḍwān al-Sayyid, had taken place a

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19 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *al-Khilāfah* (Cairo: Muʾassasat Hindāwī li-l-Taʿlīm wa-l-Thaqāfah, 2012), 38-40.

20 Abū l-ʿAbbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān al-Barmakī al-Irbilī, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1900), III, 282; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006), XIII, 311.

21 Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 9.

22 Riḍwān al-Sayyid, *al-Jamāʿah wa-l-mujtamaʿ wa-l-dawlah: sulṭah al-aydiyūlūjiyā fī l-majāl al-siyāsī al-ʿArabī al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Jadāwil li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2015), 54-55. Lambton holds a different view. She maintains that al-Jāhiẓ (d. 255/869), who lived two centuries earlier than al-Māwardī, was the first scholar who accepted the usurpation of power. He did so to justify the seizure of power from the Umayyad Caliphate by the ʿAbbāsid. Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam. An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 58-59.

few centuries before al-Māwardī's era, namely, right after the Caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833) started replacing the Khurāsānī warriors by employing Turks and Daylamīs as soldiers.[23] Second, the caliph of the ʿAbbāsid was only a puppet of the Būyid *amīrs*, who ruled without real political power. The caliph was still the symbol of the caliphate, but the actual power was in the hands of the Būyid rulers. Third, the ʿAbbāsid caliphate faced an external threat from the Zaydī Caliphate in Yemen and Ṭabaristān and the Ismaʿīlī Caliphate in Cairo.[24]

Al-Māwardī discusses the topic of the usurpation of power on two occasions in his book *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyyah* (*Sultanate Ordinances*). The first occasion is in the chapter on the contract of rulership (*ʿaqd al-imāmah*). In this section, al-Māwardī speaks about two kinds of deficiency in the capacity of a caliph to act (*naqṣ ḥurriyyat al-taṣarruf*). The first deficiency is a control (*al-ḥajr*), namely, a condition where "someone with his retinue gains authority over the caliph."[25] Al-Māwardī states that as long as a usurper does not commit a serious sin (*maʿṣiyah*) and does not oppose the actual caliph, this control does not exclude the rulership of the caliph and does not impair the validity of his governance. However, if the usurper commits a severe transgression over Islamic law or he does not behave justly, he cannot be retained in power. This person who is in control of the caliph should be removed instead. The second deficiency is coercion (*al-qahr*), namely, "the caliph becomes imprisoned by an enemy force."[26] This situation prevents the caliph from continuing as a caliph. Al-Māwardī decrees that a Muslim community (*ummah*) should choose another capable person as the caliph. If there is a possibility that the captive caliph can be freed, however, the *ummah* should strive to save him either through war or ransom. Al-Māwardī mentions one specific case: If the caliph is a captive of rebel Muslims and the rebels have not appointed another caliph, then he should be maintained as a caliph. If the rebels appoint another ruler; however, the captive ruler has no longer any power, he

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23 Al-Sayyid, *al-Jamāʿah wa-l-mujtamaʿ*, 52.

24 *Ibid*., 53; Lambton, *State and Government,* 87-88.

25 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyyah wa-l-wilāyat al-dīniyyah*, ed. Aḥmad Mubārak al-Baghdādī (al-Manṣūrah & Kuwait: Dār al-Wafāʾ & Maktabat Dār Ibn Qutaybah, 1989), 27.

26 *Ibid*., 28.

should be excluded from the office. The electors (*ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd*) should choose another person to be caliph.

Reading this ordinance, one can see the effort that should be put forth to sustain the legitimacy of a caliph in situations of control and coercion by others. Although al-Māwardī recognizes the *de facto* power of usurper, he does not legitimize a usurper's claim of *imāmah* (being a caliph). Even if a caliph is deposed, the usurper can never be caliph. In this situation, there should be another person who fully meets the standard conditions in medieval Islam for being a caliph, among which is "having a lineage from the Quraysh tribe or the Prophet's family."[27] The maximum extent of authority that al-Māwardī allows is the usurper having the status of *amīr* or executor of power on behalf of the caliph.[28]

It is relevant to mention here that the idea that a caliph being in captivity necessitates choosing a substitute for him was later used by ʿAlī Jumʿah to justify Mursī's ouster during the Egyptian uprising in 2013. Despite the difference in the political context, namely, the Islamic caliphate in the past and the modern democratic system in the current situation, Jumʿah used this notion to justify Muḥammad Mursī's ouster. Quoting the classical discourse of *al-imām al-maḥjūr* (coerced ruler), Jumʿah contended that Mursī was no longer legitimate because the military power had him imprisoned.

The second discussion of usurpation in al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām* lies in the chapter on "establishing governorship in the provinces (*taqlīd al-imārah ʿalá l-bilād*)."[29] Al-Māwardī mentions a case in which a military leader took over a certain area within the ʿAbbāsid caliphate territory using military force. Al-Māwardī maintains that this situation forces a caliph to listen to the local usurper and give him administrative authority. Al-Māwardī mentions a reason for the recognition of the usurper in this kind of usurpation: "to preserve shariah canon and to safeguard religious laws that cannot be left to dissolve and be messy."[30] This view assumes that if a caliph rejects the authority of usurper, something harmful such as bloodshed, might

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[27] *Ibid*., 5.

[28] *Ibid*., 45

[29] *Ibid*., 40-46.

[30] *Ibid*., 45.

happen. For al-Māwardī, instead of letting the harm happen, it is wiser to acknowledge the rulership of a local usurper.

However, the recognition of a usurper is not done without meeting certain conditions. Al-Māwardī puts forward seven circumstances for the acknowledgment of this second kind of usurpation of power. These conditions are as follows: first, the usurper does not abolish the prophetic office of the caliphate, therefore, sharīʿah is maintained. Second, he should give an oath of allegiance to the caliph. Third, he should establish unanimity in friendship and mutual help in order to maintain an active Muslim community. Fourth, he should conclude religious contracts and execute other rulings and court judgments. Fifth, the receipt of the money that accords with sharīʿah should be paid. Sixth, he should apply *ḥudūd* (criminal punishments) correctly. Seventhly, he should possess moral capacity, meaning that he always avoids what Allah prohibits.[31]

Scrutinizing al-Māwardī's discourse on the usurpation of power, one can see how the idea of establishing good governance, namely, a healthy system of power rotation, was absent from his concern. What seemed at stake for him was stability and order for the sake of the application of Islamic law at the expense of having an ideal system of rulership. The temporal reality that he justified later on become a norm in Islamic legal discourse. The idea of accepting usurpation has profoundly shaped Islamic political thought and was repeated in Islamic legal discourse in subsequent periods. The idea has been invoked several times to justify the usurpation of power throughout the history of politics in Muslim societies, including by ʿAlī Jumʿah in his discourse legitimizing the military coup against Muḥammad Mursī. For jurists who accept this notion, once a usurper becomes the holder of power and can govern effectively, "people have to obey him (*wajaba taqlīd al-mustawlī*)."[32] Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Jamāʿah are the next Muslim scholars who repeated the same tendency and gave additional reasoning for accepting such a notion.

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31 *Ibid*.

32 *Ibid*.

B. The Development of the Discourse: al-Ghazālī's and Ibn Jamāʿah's Interventions

Like al-Māwardī, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī was also a scholar from the Shāfiʿī school of legal thought. He served as a professor at Niẓāmiyyah University in Baghdād. During his time, the Shīʿī rulers no longer controlled the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. The Seljuq dynasty had already defeated the Būyid dynasty in 1055.[33] Like al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī was preoccupied with the threat of the so-called Bāṭinī dynasty or the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Cairo. This threat can be seen in his treatises, such as *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, *Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭiniyyah*, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm*, and *al-Qisṭās al-mustaqīm,* in which he criticizes the theology of the Bāṭinī on the notion of *al-taʿlīm* (deriving esoteric knowledge from an absent imām). This empirical context informs us that al-Ghazālī's political thought revolved around an effort to solidify the Sunnī Muslim community.

Al-Ghazālī addressed the issue of usurpation of power in two books, namely, *al-Iqtiṣād fī l-iʿtiqād* (Moderation in Theology) and *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Revival of Religious Knowledge) (2003; 2005). In *al-Iḥyāʾ*, al-Ghazālī unequivocally states that whoever usurps power with military force (*wa-man istabadda bi-l-shawkah*), as long as he is still loyal to the caliph, he is considered an executor of administrative and court duties in the caliphate territory (*fī aqṭār al-arḍ*). Al-Ghazālī legitimizes the usurpation of power and grants usurpers the title *sulṭān*.[34] He further maintains that even if a *sulṭān* is oppressive, as long as "the military power supports him (*sāʿadathu l-shawkah*)" and overthrowing him would be painful and could cause civil chaos, he should be left in power and obeyed.[35] This statement has two

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[33] Carole Hillenbrand, "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik? Al-Ghazālī's Views on Government," *Iran* 26, no. 1 (1988), 81.

[34] In *Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭiniyyah*, al-Ghazālī maintains that under no circumstances can a usurper be a caliph if he is not from Quraysh lineage. Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭiniyyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Kuwait: Muʾassasat Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1970), 180.

[35] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (along with Abū l-Faḍl Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥusayn al-ʿIrāqī's *al-Mughnī ʿan ḥaml al-asfār fī l-asfār fī takhrīj mā fī l-Iḥyāʾ min al-akhbār*), (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 591. In *Faḍāʾiḥ*, al-Ghazālī even states that the legitimacy of an imām depends not on the number of people who give an oath of allegiance to him but on the military reach (*shawkah*) he

meanings. On the one hand, al-Ghazālī permits the rulership of a tyrannical usurper.[36] On the other hand, he also permits the possibility of deposing him as long as it does not create civil disorder. In other words, even though al-Ghazālī accepts the reality of the usurpation by and rulership of an oppressive *sulṭān*, he still favors an ideal condition, which is succession without the usurpation of power. For al-Ghazālī, usurpation is not a standard means for gaining a ruler. In *al-Iqtiṣād*, which is a theological book, al-Ghazālī affirms this notion. He maintains that if a usurping ruler has military power and opposing him will cause chaos, the best choice is to give him an oath of allegiance. Al-Ghazālī further argues that living under the oppressive and unjust rulership of the usurper is preferable than living without any ruler because the absence of a ruler will invalidate all matters in the courts and provincial rulership within the caliphate. Additionally, any contracts and marriages will be considered invalid.[37]

At first glance, al-Ghazālī seems to hold the same view as al-Māwardī. However, it is worth noting that there is a significant difference between the two scholars. While both accept usurpation, al-Māwardī is still quite selective in legitimizing the usurper. He still places some conditions upon which the legitimacy of the usurper rests. Al-Ghazālī, by contrast, accepts the legitimacy of a usurper without almost any condition, even the usurper has moral issues. With the logic of necessity (*al-ḍarūrah*), Al-Ghazālī even accepts the rulership of an unjust usurper. Starting with al-Ghazālī, the Islamic discourse of usurpation of power became more pragmatic.

Like al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī, Ibn Jamāʿah was also the jurist from the Shāfiʿī school of legal thought. He was born in Syria and later lived in Egypt under the Mamlūk Dynasty. Ibn Jamāʿah was also a chief justice like al-Māwardī. During Ibn Jamāʿah's time, the threat from the Shīʿī community was no longer significant. The Fāṭimīs were already defeated by the Ayyūbid Dynasty a few centuries earlier. However, there were two other issues that the Mamlūk Dynasty

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has. Hence, if a usurper is supported by military force, he has legitimacy as a ruler (*wa-dhālika yaḥṣulu bi-kull mustawlin muṭāʿ*); al-Ghazālī, *Faḍāʾiḥ*, 177.

36 Al-Ghazālī grounds his acceptance of the rulership of an oppressive and ignorant *sulṭān* in six ḥadīths that emphasize obedience to a ruler and the prohibition of *khurūj* against him; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 591.

37 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī l-iʿtiqād*, ed. Inṣāf Ramaḍān (Damascus & Beirut: Dār Qutaybah, 2003), 171.

faced: the Mongols and the crusade troops. A century before his time, the Mongols had already devastated Baghdād city, the ʿAbbāsid capital. The crusade was trying to conquer Jerusalem, which was part of Mamlūk territory. Based on this historical context, therefore, Ibn Jamāʿah's ideas should be read as an attempt to consolidate Muslim power against outside enemies.

Following al-Māwardī, in *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām*, Ibn Jamāʿah discusses the issue of usurpation (*al-istīlāʾ*) on two occasions. The first one regards a mechanism of rulership (*inʿiqād al-imāmah*). The second regards how a caliph should appoint a governor in a province (*tafwīḍ al-wilāyah*). Ibn Jamāʿah considers usurpation (*al-imāmah al-qahriyyah*) to be a third way to select an imām (ruler) after the two established methods in Islamic legal system, namely, selection (*al-ikhtiyār*) by the electors (*ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd*) and appointment by the previous caliph (*istikhlāf al-imām*). As such, Ibn Jamāʿah was the first scholar to place the usurpation of power within the discussion of the mechanisms for establishing an imām in his office. Moreover, he was the first jurist to recognize usurpers not as *sulṭāns* but as *imām* themselves. In this sense, his acceptance of usurpation goes beyond that of the two previous jurists. It was not an exaggeration, therefore, when Abou El Fadl contended that Ibn Jamāʿah signifies an absolute political realism in Islamic political thought.[38] After Ibn Jamāʿah, Muslim scholars no longer cared about idealism. Instead, they were preoccupied with justifying existing political realities.

Ibn Jamāʿah maintains that conquest and overcoming a leader (*al-qahr wa-l-taghallub*) through military power (*shawkah*) is a legitimate means to come to power. For him, obeying the usurper is not only necessary but also obligatory for achieving unity among Muslims. He states:

> If there is no capable person to be an imām (ruler), then someone with arms and troops overcomes the power without a pledge of allegiance of the electors and an appointment from the previous ruler, his rulership is upheld. Obeying him is mandatory for achieving unity among Muslims. Even if he is ignorant and immoral, his rulership is

[38] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 12.

still acceptable according to the strongest opinion (in our school).[39]

He further contends that even if the usurper is defeated or coerced by another person through force, obedience should be given to whoever wins. One can note in this statement the influence of both al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī. Ibn Jamāʿah inherited acceptance of usurpation from al-Māwardī and acceptance of the rulership of an unjust ruler from al-Ghazālī. His originality comes in the form of a detail in his argument, namely, a statement from Ibn ʿUmar, one of the Prophet's Companions, that justifies the acquisition of power through usurpation: "We are with whoever wins (*naḥnu maʿa man ghalaba*)."[40]

In a chapter on appointing a governor in a province, Ibn Jamāʿah contends that if a person comes to power through military force in certain areas within the caliphate, the caliph should give him authority to rule to avoid disunity in the ummah. The usurper takes the executive office of power. Furthermore, if the usurper is not the right person for *wilāyah* because he lacks the desired qualities, the caliph still has to obey him. As a solution, the caliph should appoint someone capable as a deputy to the usurper in order to manage the affairs of both the world and the hereafter.[41]

From the above discussion, it is clear that the idea of acceptance of the usurpation of power originated with al-Māwardī. He formulated such a discourse to avoid disunity among Sunnī Muslims when facing external threats. Al-Ghazālī, who came after him, followed his ideas. Al-Ghazālī departed from al-Māwardī when he accepted unjust and immoral usurpers as rulers. Ibn Jamāʿah strengthened al-Ghazālī's position. His divergence from the two previous jurists lay in his discussion of the topic within a chapter on the mechanism of selecting a ruler. It is also evident that although al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah share a basic view on the issue of usurpation of power, namely, accepting it, each jurist had a distinct idea in terms of the details and made a significant departures from their predecessors' ideas on the topic.

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[39] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Jamāʿah, *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām*, ed. Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Munʿim Aḥmad (Doha: Riʾāsat al-Maḥākim al-Sharʿiyyah wa-l-Shuʾūn al-Dīniyyah, 1985), 55.

[40] *Ibid*., 56.

[41] *Ibid*., 61.

The next section will discuss how ʿAlī Jumʿah legalized the military coup against Muḥammad Mursī in 2013 using ideas from these medieval scholars.

III. ʿAlī Jumʿah's Discourse

Before turning to ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the usurpation of power, I will briefly explain his position in the sociocultural life of Egypt when the Arab Spring erupted. ʿAlī Jumʿah was a grand *muftī* of Egypt who served in the position until February 2013 and was a prominent scholar of al-Azhar, a semigovernmental seminary that is influential in the Sunnī Muslim world. These two positions had two consequences for Jumʿah. On the one hand, they gave him credentials for influencing public perception. On the other hand, his positions put him under the control of the state. With these two positions, it was impossible for him to produce a discourse that contradicted the interest of the state.[42] In fact, during his term as a *muftī*, he never issued any legal opinion denouncing any oppression committed by Ḥusnī Mubārak. For instance, he never made any statement criticizing the detention law that allows Egyptian authorities to arrest suspicious persons. He also never denounced the torture of political detainees in prisons by Egyptian police officers. ʿAlī Jumʿah had only distanced himself from the state when the state was not under the influence of military control. ʿAlī Jumʿah made several statements that, more than just weakening, actually opposed the authority of Muḥammad Mursī.

ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the usurpation of power can be traced starting from his *fatwá* regarding two mass protests against two different ruling governments. The first protest was what the Egyptians called the January Revolution (*thawrah yanāyir*), which happened in 2011. People from various backgrounds gathered at Taḥrīr Square, demanding that the dictator, President Ḥusnī Mubārak, withdraw from office. On this occasion, ʿAlī Jumʿah showed a tendency to

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[42] The tendency of al-Azhar's figures to be state legitimizers has been a fact since the period of Gamal Abdul Nasser, who undertook a top-down modernization and subordinated al-Azhar by giving the grand shaykh a status equal to the prime minister. For further reading, see Malika Zeghal, "Religion and Politics in Egypt: The Ulema of al-Azhar, Radical Islam, and the State (1952–94)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999), 371-399, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800055483.

discourage people from protesting. He stated that protesting is forbidden (*ḥarām*).[43] He issued a *fatwá* that it was permissible for Muslims to not attend obligatory Friday prayer at mosques during protest days. He argued that there was greater risk of harm if one attended prayers at a mosque.[44] In general, ʿAlī Jumʿah's argument discouraging Egyptians from protesting against Mubārak was based on the idea of avoiding civil strife (*fitnah*). He believed that protesting the president would lead to chaos that, in turn, would shake the stability of the state. The second mass protest ensued two years later, in 2013, against the democratically elected president, Muḥammad Mursī, from the Muslim Brotherhood. A group that called themselves the *Tamarrud* (Rebellion) movement asked Muḥammad Mursī to hand over power. His one-year presidency was deemed a failure in terms of bringing about stability and improving the economic situation of Egypt. Mursī was also seen as having monopolized power and making collusive policies. He only placed Islamists from his party and the *Salafī* parties in the Constituent Assembly, disregarding other political factions, especially liberals. Moreover, he was seen by his critics as the president of the Muslim Brotherhood rather than the president of Egypt.[45] Soon after the protest against Mursī erupted, ʿAlī Jumʿah changed his legal opinion regarding acts of protest. In this case, he supported the *Tamarrud*

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[43] ʿAlī Jumʿah, *Maqṭaʿ ṣawtī lī-muftī ʿAlī Jumʿah athnāʾ al-thawrah wa-yuʿalliq ʿalayhi l-Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿd al-Azharī*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzf_79q9fKo, accessed May 20, 2019.

[44] Jumʿah, "Min mawāqif al-ustādh al-duktūr ʿAlī Jumʿah," accessed May 20, 2019, http://www.draligomaa.com/index.php/%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A3%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A9/item/911-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A3-%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9.

[45] Ann M. Lesch, "The Authoritarian States Power over Civil Society," in *Egypt and the Contradictions of Liberalism: Illiberal Intelligentsia and the Future of Egyptian Democracy*, ed. Dalia F. Fahmy and Daanish Faruqi (London: Oneworld, 2017), 142; John L. Esposito, Tamara Sonn, and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy after the Arab Spring* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 220-224; Khalil al-Anani, "The 'Anguish' of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt," in *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*, ed. Larbi Sadiki (London & New York: Routledge, 2015), 232.

movement. For him, the enormous mass protest of Mursī was a sign that Mursī no longer had legitimacy. His short-term presidency only caused the country to be more unstable.[46] ʿAlī Jumʿah then went beyond a mere legitimization of the people's protest. He also justified the coup and the massacre of approximately 1.150 Muslim Brotherhood members by the Egyptian army.[47] In his speech before a group of military officers, he even stated, that "they are rebels (*khawārij*), and the *khawārij* are the dogs of the hellfire (*kilāb al-nār*). They are *khawārij*; blessed are those who kill them (*ṭūbá liman qatalahum*)."[48] On several occasions, Jumʿah appeared in front of the public to condemn the rallies of the Muslim Brotherhood in Rabʿah Square and to give support to the actions that the army had taken.

ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse justifying the military coup against President Mursī was based on typical reasoning from the Islamic legal tradition (*fiqh*). Scrutinizing his speeches before and after the coup, I observed that he employed four traditional Islamic legal notions to support the army. First, he used the concept of *taghallub ahl al-shawkah* (the conquest by the possessor of force), which was already elaborated above in the discussion of the three medieval scholars. This notion was apparent when he pronounced in his interview with CBC channel that "*aṣbaḥnā l-mutaghallibīn* (we became the defeaters)."[49] Jumʿah stated that, although Egyptians had pledged allegiance (*bayʿah*) to the new regime, President Mursī had caused disarray during his short presidency. Within one year of Mursī's

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[46] Youssef Belal, "Islamic Law, Truth, Ethics: Fatwa and Jurisprudence of the Revolution," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38, no. 1 (2018), 116, https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201x-4390015.

[47] This number for the death toll was taken from the Human Rights Watch website. See Human Rights Watch, "The Rabʿa Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt," https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/12/all-according-plan/raba-massacre-and-mass-killings-protesters-egypt, accessed May 20, 2019.

[48] Jumʿah, *ʿAlī Jumʿah wa-huwa yakhṭub amāma ʿaskar al-inqilāb al-liqāʾ al-musarrab kāmil*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5_r-zV5Tj4, accessed May 18, 2019.

[49] The interview was done on 23.8.2013 by the journalist Khairī Ramaḍān. See ʿAlī Jumʿah, *Faḍīlat al-imām al-duktūr ʿAlī Jumʿah wa-ruʾyah taḥlīliyyah li-mā yaḥduth fī l-bilād,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52DMpHZBxE4, accessed May 20, 2019.

administration, Egyptians were experiencing a serious energy crisis, specifically, electricity, gas, and petrol shortages. During this period, the prices of everyday supplies were inflated tremendously. The interest of the country was affected at both the national and international levels.[50] For ʿAlī Jumʿah, Mursī's incapacity to be an effective ruler to overcome the crisis was a legal excuse to depose him. In his speech before the Egyptian Security Forces, ʿAlī Jumʿah stated:

> In Islamic law (*fiqh*), it is permitted to depose a president. It is permitted to depose a president if he goes insane. It is even permitted to depose a president if he is imprisoned by the enemy. It is permitted to depose a president if he loses his senses. It is permitted to depose a president if there is anarchy in the land and among the people, and rights are no longer protected.[51]

In supporting his invocation of the traditional notion of "*al-tamakkun bi-l-quwwah* (the conquer by the holder of the army)," ʿAlī Jumʿah praised Egypt's Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF), which the medieval scholars did not do, even when they accepted the usurpation of power. He addressed the Egyptian soldiers as "O knights of the knights (*ayyuhā l-abṭāl al-fursān*)."[52] ʿAlī Jumʿah maintained that the Egyptian military had not done anything wrong, nor would they ever. He stated in his message to the Egyptian Security Forces after the coup that "the Egyptian army never went to the marketplace to beat people or steal their wealth. On the contrary, it builds rather than destroys."[53] He further argued that the Egyptian army "always sides with the truth, eliminates oppression, and

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[50] ʿAlī Jumʿah, "Translation of the Transcript of Ali Gomaa's Message to the Egyptian Security Forces in the Weeks Prior the Rabaa Massacre, draft translation (12/2015) by Usaama Al-Azami," https://www.academia.edu/19791977/Translation_of_Ali_Gomaas_Lecture_to_the_Egyptian_Armed_Forces_Summer_2013_in_the_weeks_prior_the_Rabaa_Massacre_draft_.

[51] Jumʿah, "Tolerance in Islam [A translation of Ali Gomaa's Lecture to the Egyptian Armed Forces on 18 August 2013 – 4 days after the Rabaa Massacre]," trans. Usaama al-Azami, https://www.academia.edu/31264955/Ali_Gomaa_s_Lecture_to_the_Egyptian_Armed_Forces_on_18_August_2013_four_days_after_the_Rabaa_Massacre_draft_, accessed May 18, 2019.

[52] Jumʿah, *ʿAlī Jumʿah wa-huwa yakhṭub*.

[53] Jumʿah, "Translation of the Transcript of Ali Gomaa's Message to the Egyptian Security Forces in the Weeks Prior the Rabaa Massacre."

punishes rebels." and "God always guides them in whatever action they do."[54] To elevate the military's position after the coup and convince people to accept what the army had done, ʿAlī Jumʿah then mentioned several ḥadīths that he identified as the Prophet's guarantee of the truthfulness of the Egyptian army.[55] He also recalled several heroic actions that the Egyptian army had taken throughout the history of the nation: namely, the war against Israel in 1948 and the war in Mexico in 1863.

Second, ʿAlī Jumʿah used the concept of *al-imām al-maḥjūr* (detained ruler) to justify the coup. According to Jumʿah, in traditional Islamic legal thought, there is a notion that allows the holder of the army to detain a ruler for his incapacity to govern. If a ruler lacks experience, the people will fall into disorder. In facing this situation, jurists may call on people with power (*ahl al-shawkah*) to arrest the ruler and isolate him in a legally restricted place. Afterward, he will lose legitimacy in governing.[56] Jumʿah stated:

> The jurists of Islam have talked about a detained ruler. The imām to whom we have pledged allegiance causes instability in the country. His colleagues detain him and quarantine him (*fa-aṣḥābu*[hū] *iʿtaqalūhu, wa-ḥajarū ʿalayhi*). They say: "Sit down here" and they lock him. He loses his legitimacy (*dhahaba sharʿiyyatuhū*).[57]

Based on my reading of al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah, I have found no specific concepts that perfectly match with this idea. I

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[54] Ibid.

[55] He mentioned the ḥadīth about the virtue of the so-called "*al-jund al-gharbī* (the western army)," namely the Egyptian Army from al-Ḥākim's book of ḥadīths, *al-Mustadrak*. According to this ḥadīth, the Prophet predicted that "there will be the days of chaos among people. The safe people are the Western Army, namely the Egyptian army." See Jumʿah, *Ḥadīth Rasūl Allāh ʿan jaysh Miṣr* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8odslLsmrI&t=573s, accessed May 18, 2019. In fact, this ḥadīth is strongly inauthentic (*shadīd al-ḍaʿf*). See Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad al-Idlibī, "Ḥadīth al-jund al-gharbī: Ḥadīth 'satakūn fitnah, khayr al-nās fī-hā al-jund al-gharbī'," http://idlbi.net/jundgarbi/, accessed May 20, 2019; Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-aḥādīth al-ḍaʿīfah wa-l-mawḍūʿah wa-atharuhā l-sayyiʾ fī l-ummah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʿārif li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2004), XII, 1066.

[56] Jumʿah, "Min mawāqif."

[57] Jumʿah, *ʿAlī Jumʿah wa-huwa yakhṭub.*

suppose that ʿAlī Jumʿah was referring to the idea of a coerced caliph in al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām,* namely, when al-Māwardī discusses the deficiencies of a ruler. Recalling what I mentioned previously, according to al-Māwardī, if an enemy imprisons a caliph and there is no chance to free the caliph, the electors can replace him with another person. Even if this was what Jumʿah meant, the case of Mursī was meaningfully different. He was deposed and detained by military officers, not by the nation's enemies. Mursī lost the capacity to govern because the army took over his power not because the enemy infiltrated the country and defeated him. By using this notion, ʿAlī Jumʿah actually unwittingly equated ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Sīsī, the head of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces of Egypt that overthrew Mursī, with the enemy. Moreover, Jumʿah also overlooked the fact that al-Māwardī was unwilling to give the status of caliph to one detaining a caliph –the caliph should be appointed by legal means instead. The analogy of President Mursī as a caliph was also flawed because he was chosen as a president through a presidential election in a democratic system. In contrast, caliphs are chosen based on either a testamentary designation (*al-istikhlāf*) by a previous caliph or a selection by a committee of electors (*ikhtiyār ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd*). As such, Jumʿah's analogy of a military coup as *al-imām al-maḥjūr* was defective and dishonest. The reasoning behind Jumʿah's discourse does not look consistent with that of the classical authority that he was trying to refer to, leading to the impression that he produced a legal trick to support Mursī's ouster.

Third, ʿAlī Jumʿah employed the notion of the will of the people (*binā*ˀ*an ʿalá l-shaʿb*). For him, the people are the actual holder of sovereignty—not the constitution, not the electors, and not the president.[58] As such, contrary to the popular conception in politics that sees sovereignty in the constitution, Jumʿah maintained that the supreme authority lays in the hands of the people. When the people called for Mursī to withdraw from his position, it meant that Mursī was untenable. Jumʿah claimed that before the military coup, thirty million people protested against Mursī in Taḥrīr Square, demanding his withdrawal.[59] By implication, Jumʿah argued, that meant that they

[58] Jumʿah, *Faḍīlat al-imām*.

[59] Jumʿah, *30 yūniyū yawm min ayyām Allāh intaṣara fīhi l-muʾminūn ʿalá l-kāfirīn*, https://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/1303970, accessed October 11, 2018.

supported the military's actions in overthrowing him. Jumʿah also claimed that this number was even larger than the number of those who protested against Mubārak. In this regard, Jumʿah based the notion of the people's will on the concept of *al-sawād al-aʿẓam* (the overwhelming majority).[60]

This notion initially came from a ḥadīth that teaches Muslims to always side with the mainstream group if there is cleavage among people.[61] Jumʿah used this notion as a political instrument to undermine Mursī's presidency. Commenting about the Muslim Brotherhood's victory in the 2012 presidential election, Jumʿah said that Mursī's victory came only with 51% of the vote, which is far below the concept *al-sawād al-aʿẓam* and does not represent the will of the people at all. Jumʿah argued that Mursī was chosen by only 13 million out of 25 million Egyptian voters, which is only a quarter of the total Egyptian population of 90 million. Jumʿah continued, suggesting that considering 51% as a majority vote is an un-Islamic concept. Such a figure is considered the majority only in the US political system, not in the Islamic legal system. He claimed that according to the Islamic legal system, especially the Shāfiʿī school of legal thought, 51% cannot be taken seriously. According to his calculations, *al-sawād al-aʿẓam* means 86%, and this was the number of people who protested against Mursī.[62]

Fourth, to justify the coup, ʿAlī Jumʿah employed the concept of the moral deviance of a ruler and his followers. In an interview with CBC, ʿAlī Jumʿah stated that he considered Mursī and his followers to be "evil crooks criminals (*al-fāsiqīn al-fāsidīn al-mujrimīn*)."[63] The reason he called them that is that "they are in conflict against the believers and the nation (*wa-kānū fī ṣirāʿ maʿa l-muʾminīn maʿa al-*

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60 *Ibid*.

61 The ḥadīth says, *"idhā raʾaytum ikhtilāfᵃⁿ, fa-ʿalaykum bi-l-sawād al-aʿẓam* (if you see the disputation among people, you have to side with the majority)". This ḥadīth was compiled by Ibn Mājah, and according to some ḥadīth critics, it is *ḍaʿīf* (weak).
See islamweb.net, "Maʿná l-sawād al-aʿẓam wa-l-amr bi-luzūm al-jamāʿah al-ūlá," https://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=210028, accessed May 21, 2019.

62 Jumʿah, *30 yūniyu*.

63 *Ibid*.

awṭān)" and in political positions that "they do not deserve."[64] Further, he called Mursī and the members of the Muslim Brotherhood *khawārij* (rebels) because they insisted on asking for the restoration of Mursī's presidency through protests in the Rabah Square, inciting violent protests and creating civil strife.[65] By doing so, he argued, the Muslim Brotherhood divided Egyptian society. To condemn Mursī and his followers, Jumʿah once again invoked Prophetic tradition, using a ḥadīth calling *khawārij* the dogs of hellfire.[66]

From the description above, it is clear that ʿAlī Jumʿah was influenced by several notions in the traditional Islamic legal system. The next part will juxtapose ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse with that of three medieval political theorists. It will reveal the extent to which Jumʿah's discourse was influenced by and differed from these medieval discourses.

IV. Analysis: Influences and Divergences

As has been described before, in his political discourse, ʿAlī Jumʿah used the notion of conquering through force (*al-taghallub bi-l-shawkah*) and the idea of the detained ruler (*al-imām al-maḥjūr*). Moreover, he invoked ḥadīths about the overwhelming majority (*al-sawād al-aʿẓam*) and the evilness of rebels (*khawārij*). This section will discuss the commonalities and significant differences between ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse and that of the medieval jurists.

Aside from an explicit invocation of the traditional discourses on the usurpation of power, there are other similarities between ʿAlī Jumʿah's political discourses and that of the three medieval scholars.

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64 *Ibid*.

65 Warren, "Cleansing the Nation," 465-467.

66 Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, his fellow Azharī scholar and a strong supporter of Mursī's legitimacy, refuted the invocation of *khawārij* to label the Muslim Brotherhood members. Instead, he used this term to designate those asking for the withdrawal of Mursī. For further reading, see Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī "al-Khawārij bayna l-dīn wa-l-tārīkh wa-l-siyāsah [Kharijīs between Religion, History, and Politics]," Al-Jazeera's Interview with Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2013/8/25/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AE-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9, accessed July 10, 2018.

First, ʿAlī Jumʿah, following previous Muslim jurists, not only legalized the usurpation of power but also argued obedience to usurpers to be a religious obligation. In this discourse, dictatorship and the usurpation of power are not seen as deviations from a norm but rather as normal behaviors. As a result, there is no way Egypt can become a truly democratic country, as the autocracy is sanctioned by political theology. Second, ʿAlī Jumʿah was also in agreement with the medieval scholars in terms of their understandings of politics. Al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah, along with other scholars, were realism-based scholars who accepted their realities for the sake of avoiding *fitnah* (civil disorder) and at the expense of having a normal system of circulating power. ʿAlī Jumʿah continued this trend. For ʿAlī Jumʿah, a mere election cannot validate and sustain the leadership of a ruler if people no longer want him in the office. Jumʿah was also not particularly interested in formulating a good political system for selecting an ideal ruler.

Third, there is a complete absence of any notion of accountability from those in power and of checks and balances against rulers in the discourses of ʿAlī Jumʿah and that of the medieval scholars. For Jumʿah, a usurper or an army officer, once he defeats the previous ruler and can reign effectively, becomes unquestionable. There is no need for people to criticize him, since it will open the door to civil chaos. After several years of General al-Sīsī sitting in office after several cases of the abuse of power, ʿAlī Jumʿah did not make any critiques of this autocracy. I contend that the absence of critiques of the autocratic ruler in Jumʿah's discourse is the influence of medieval views that overlook such a notion. This confirms what Ovamir Anjum, an intellectual historian, has noted that in the medieval political discourse: most Muslim political theorists have raised the position of the ruler to a certain level of sanctity by embracing what Anjum calls "a ruler-centered vision."[67]

All of these similarities with traditional discourses indicate that the political discourse of Muslim scholars is determined by what I mentioned previously as a tendency to conform. Muslim jurists care more about concordance with tradition than with the need to transform countries into democratic states. In this sense, formulating a discourse is just a matter of repeating already established opinions.

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[67] Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community*, 132.

As Moosa states, "law ruling was activated in a mechanical manner."[68] This adherence to past authorities on the issue of the usurpation of power confirms what Abou El Fadl identified in his study on Muslim scholars' discourses on the rebellion: the traditional discourses on Islamic political thought "are repeated without material revision or development."[69]

It is also important to note that aside from being influenced by medieval discourses, in some senses, ʿAlī Jumʿah also deviated from those ideas. In other words, his discourse did not entirely abide by classical *fiqh* (Islamic legal thought); he also departed from such *fiqh*. This deviation can be seen in several ways. First, it is clear that the logic behind the classical jurists' discourse is avoiding bloodshed (*fitnah*) at the expense of having an accountable political system. Al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah had to justify the usurpation of power in order to avoid disunity and civil strife. In contrast, ʿAlī Jumʿah neither avoided *fitnah* nor built a system. He even formulated a discourse that sanctioned massacre and human rights violations by the Egyptian government. For Jumʿah, the point was not stopping the *fitnah*, because even after al-Sīsī became the ruler, the *fitnah* still ensued and even escalated.[70] What was at stake for Jumʿah was instead encouraging society to be submissive to the ruler and

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[68] Moosa, "Recovering the Ethical: Practices, Politics, Tradition," in *The Shariʿa: History, Ethics, and Law*, ed. Amyn B. Sajoo (London & New York: I. B. Tauris & The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2018), 52.

[69] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 244.

[70] In Egypt, with the rise of the junta military into power, authoritarianism has intensified tremendously. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Sīsī, the current president, plays a zero-sum game, which has never been done by previous leaders. Not only has he cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, but he also allows no opposition movement to exist. He labels any critical opponent an enemy, terrorist, or violent actor. In the last election, in March 2018, he detained almost all of the candidates whom he thought could challenge his popularity. Among all candidates, al-Sīsī retained only the weakest one as his competitor. Not only that, he also has blocked any possibility for the presence of a stable civil society. In 2013, the first year of his administration, he banned hundreds of thousands of imāms and closed 5.000 small mosques (*zawāyā*) in Egypt, which he considered places for disseminating hatred and opposition toward his administration. For further reading regarding banning imāms and closing mosques, see Abou El Fadl, "Dominating Religion in Egypt's Pseudo-Secular State," http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2013/09/15/3848943.htm, accessed March 5, 2018.

negating the Muslim Brotherhood, which formed a possible threat to the position of al-Azhar as the only religious authority in Egypt.[71] Second, even though the medieval Muslim jurists accepted the legitimacy of a usurper of power, they still bound him with several moral obligations that must be fulfilled. In contrast, ʿAlī Jumʿah was not interested in formulating such a notion. He was not interested in guiding the usurper in exercising power as a ruler. He never talked about the moral obligation of a ruler toward the people. In Jumʿah's discourse, a usurper (*mustawlī*) then becomes an absolute ruler.

Third, through the invocation of the term *khawārij*, ʿAlī Jumʿah treated the followers of the deposed president as rebels. However, Jumʿah's discourse on rebels does not correspond with the discourses of the medieval scholars on the same subject. They prohibit rebellion against the government, but they do not condemn rebels if they have a political reason (*taʾwīl*).[72] For them, rebellion is not a sin or a criminal act. Therefore, rebels should not be tortured, let alone killed.[73] Rebels have to be treated humanely.[74] Rebellion, according to traditional norms in Islamic legal thought, is only a civil infraction. The ruler is allowed to fight rebels but not to nullify them; the ruler should rather prevent any harm they might cause.[75] For ʿAlī Jumʿah, by contrast, it was right that the Muslim Brotherhood members who refused to obey the ouster of the weak president and who were adamant about restoring Mursī's position and creating civil strife were killed. In this sense, Jumʿah completely departed from the medieval tradition.

Fourth, the political discourses of medieval scholars emphasized a ruler-centered vision, meaning that politics always revolve around the interests of a ruler. Meanwhile, ʿAlī Jumʿah produced what I call "a pseudocommunity vision." By invoking the notion of *al-sawād al-aʿẓam* (the overwhelming majority) as the excuse to justify the military coup, it might have seemed that he took the consideration of the people (*ummah*) seriously and put them at the center of his political vision, but he, in fact, did not do so. In the aftermath of the Egyptian uprising and the ascension of General al-Sīsī to the

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71 Fadel, "Islamic Law and Constitution-Making," 504.

72 Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 326.

73 *Ibid*., 244.

74 *Ibid*., 233.

75 *Ibid*., 243.

presidency, Jumʿah set the community aside again. He did not, for instance, formulate any ideas for how people can channel their critiques of the current military regime. He cared about neither the imprisonment nor the cultural silencing of political activists who were critical of the dictator president. He only used this concept to support the overthrowing of Mursī.

These significant departures from the medieval discourses on politics suggest two important things. First, they reveal how ʿAlī Jumʿah betrayed the humanistic face of the Islamic legal tradition, particularly when he justified killing people and called them rebels against the political gains of the army. Second, they suggest that although the legal tradition was influential in shaping Jumʿah's stance, it also became an instrument to enable the military regime to gain power. In other words, he was not sincere and honest when dealing with the legal tradition. Ultimately, this implies that ʿAlī Jumʿah has set a highly negative precedent. Through his arguments, the Islamic legal tradition becomes not only a reference that determines political stances but also the most effective legal trick in the political game.

V. Conclusion

In this article, I have examined the political discourse of ʿAlī Jumʿah as an alternative explanation of the reasons behind the failure of Egypt to transition into a democratic country after the Arab Spring. I have argued that ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse on the military coup against the democratically elected president was shaped by his strict adherence to the discursive legal tradition in Islam. He followed the most dominant view within the Islamic legal system, which accepts the usurpation of power by the holder of the army. He employed the notions of defeat (*al-taghallub*), a detained ruler (*al-imām al-maḥjūr*), the moral deviance of a ruler (being *khawārij*), and an overwhelming majority (*al-sawād al-aʿẓam*). Despite his substantial conformity with tradition, however, Jumʿah also digressed from it. The way he deployed traditional Islamic legal concepts seems very selective, leading to the impression that he used Islamic law as a trick to legalize the usurpation of power.

ʿAlī Jumʿah accomplished such trickery in several ways. He distorted the medieval concept of a detained ruler, treated the group that rejected the coup as rebels, and legalized killing people for

political reasons. The way he invoked these three concepts is significantly different from the way al-Māwardī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Jamāʿah discussed them. Therefore, although Jumʿah's arguments defending the usurpation of power relied heavily on the medieval discourse, it might be not an exaggeration to say that he also abused the Islamic legal tradition to fit military interests.

ʿAlī Jumʿah's discourse has consequences for both the ethical dimension of the Islamic legal system and the political trajectory of Egypt. Due to his authoritarian discourse, the Islamic legal field has become displaced from its ethical mooring. To borrow Moosa's expression, by being "faithful to tradition but violating contemporary moral norms"[76] Jumʿah cost the Islamic legal field its humanist face and moral values. In addition, Jumʿah's justification for the military coup has also caused Egypt's possibility of being a democratic country to fade away. His pro-dictatorship discourse has estranged Egypt's political path from democracy. Under the patronage of a religious establishment that is very hegemonic in Egypt's social life, there is no way that autocracy and dictatorship can disappear from the country's politics in the near future.

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[76] Moosa, "Recovering the Ethical," 53.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century, by Marinos Sariyannis

Özgür Kavak

A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century, by Marinos Sariyannis (Handbook of Oriental Studies / The Near and Middle East, 125) (Leiden & Boston: Leiden, 2018), xii + 596 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-37559-8, €149.00 / $179.00

The absence of a comprehensive list of Ottoman manuscripts on political thought poses a serious obstacle to using and analyzing sources in the field in a consistent fashion. Modern catalogues exist for various geographies and periods of the Islamic world, yet they lapse into silence when it comes to Ottoman political thought. Chief among the reasons for this silence are the relative paucity of Turkish-speaking scholars compared to Persian and Arabic and the scattered manner in which political texts have been categorized under different disciplines in Turkish libraries, especially in the Süleymaniye Library.

A book to fill this gap has finally been published. *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, the first comprehensive study on the history of Ottoman political thought as a whole, was written by Marinos Sariyannis, who has long been working in this field. Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas also contributed to the book by writing Chapter 6. This nine-chapter book is a highly-expanded version of an earlier study of Sariyannis, namely, *Ottoman Political Thought up to the Tanzimat: A Concise History*, which was published as an e-book by the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation of Research and Technology – Hellas. The final part of the book offers researchers a detailed thematic study of some central notions in the Ottoman political vocabulary. The book also contains two appendices: the first a "comparative timeline of historical events and political works, with reference to the chapters-cum-ideological categories," and the second "samples of translated texts from representative works."

In the introductory part of the study, in which Sariyannis presents his methodology, he sets out the scope of political thought as follows: "All Ottoman texts and ideas pertaining to governance (which is a

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more accurate and less anachronistic term) to be political, whether they are specific or philosophical." Sariyannis describes his approach which is based on emic-epic distinction in the anthropological jargon. According to him, an "emic" approach is a viewpoint from the perspective of the subject rather than of the observer. An "etic" approach to Islamicate political thought is one based on what the researcher considers to be political thought. The second, would enlarge the scope of the study in disproportional dimensions, since almost all Islamic law would have to enter the equation. On the other hand, it must be noted that an "emic" paradigm often "reproduces on [sic] order of domination and does so by excluding the oral, the subaltern, and (very largely) the vernacular" (p. 6). This methodological approach is derived from the Cambridge School of Historiography led by Quentin Skinner. The author himself points out this influence saying that his purpose in writing the book is "to approach Ottoman political thought (or discourse) from the perspective of a historian rather than a political scientist, with no claims or attempts whatsoever to interpret modern-day eastern Mediterranean politics" (pp. 9-10).

Sariyannis categorizes the texts surrounding Ottoman political space under the main headings of "*ahlak*, *fıkh*, *tasawwuf* or Sufi perspective, and *ıslahat* or reform literature" and also proposes that there are texts (intertwined with different genres (p. 7). While the author acknowledges that many non-textual sources (i.e. historical context) outside these genres must be encompassed in order to fully examine political thought, he thinks that this issue should be compensated by other studies (pp. 7-8).

Sariyannis aims the book to be "a reference book" that presents a thematic analysis of Ottoman political thought. Each chapter is devoted to a particular period and to a particular ideological approach that defined it, with different sections throughout the chapter laying out particular manifestations of that approach.

The first chapter, "The Empire in the Making: Construction and Early Critiques," in its first part deals with the texts which has anti-imperial complaints, attitudes, and criticisms of the allegedly marginalized *ghāzī* environment during the process of the Ottoman transition from principality to state. This is partly done by utilizing the fictions of "anti-imperial" historians of a later period such as Yahşi Fakih, Aşıkpaşazade, and Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican. The second part

of this chapter mainly analyzes the texts *Kenzü'l-kübera* [*Kanz al-kubarā'*] of Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, who is said to have played a role in the transmission of the Persian political tradition to the Ottoman Empire, and *Maʿārifnāmah* of Sinan Pasha. While Sariyannis devotes a central place to the analysis of these two texts, he also analyzes some other texts of 14th and 15th-century authors which emphasize the justice of the sultan.

Entitled "'Political Philosophy' and the Moralist Tradition," the second chapter examines the significance of moral philosophy texts for politics. It focuses on various thinkers, from Amasi to Kınalızade, and works on ethical-political philosophy to trace the evolution of practical philosophy in Ottoman political thought, as well as the afterlife of the genre in later periods.

The author argues that with the conquest of Istanbul the developments that followed it, the Ottoman understanding of politics, which was largely nourished from the *adab* literature, "needed something more: a comprehensive theory that would encompass all of human society, raising the moral virtues demanded of a ruler to a universal system explaining both the individual and society at large" (p. 66). According to Sariyannis, this need was met by a tradition of political philosophy under the influence of al-Ṭūsī and al-Dawwānī's philosophical centered lines.

The third chapter, "The Imperial Heyday: the Formation of the Ottoman System and Reactions to It," begins with an analysis of the legal aspects of the rapidly increasing number of political texts in the period of Süleyman the Magnificent. It continues with Celalzade Mustafa, who represents the literature of *adab*, and then devotes a special place to Lütfi Pasha and especially his *Āṣafnāmah*. After an examination of the literature on the construction of imperial legitimacy giving Süleyman a central position, the chapter touches upon the criticisms of the legal and political structure through writers like Şehzade Korkud and Çivizade Muhyiddin Mehmed Efendi.

The fourth chapter is titled "'Mirrors for Princes': the Decline Theorists." The chapter focuses on works criticizing the major political and social changes at the beginning of the 17th century as deviations from the old law (*qānūn-i qadīm*). The texts in this genre were discovered and analyzed by the Western academy much earlier than others. The chapter addresses the ideas of the anonymous writers of such works as *Kitāb Maṣāliḥ al-Muslimīn* and *Ḥirz al-*

mulūk, as well as the works of such writers as Mustafa Ali, Mustafa Selaniki, and Hasan Kafi Akhisari.

The fifth chapter is devoted to "The 'Golden Age' as a Political Agenda: the Reform Literature." As an extension of the previous chapter, here the author analyzes texts regarded as embodying a kind of search for the golden age and defending a return to the ancient law (*qānūn-i qadīm*). These texts include the anonymous *Kitāb-i Mustaṭāb*, the treatise of Koçi Bey, and the *Talkhīṣ* of Veliyyuddin. These texts were all written during the reign of Ahmed I in a period that, following the defeat of the last major Celali forces by Kuyucu Murad Pasha, seemed to mark a new rise in Ottoman power, or at least a turning of the tide (p. 188).

Written by Ekin Tuşalp, the sixth chapter, "The 'Sunna-Minded' Trend," treats the fundamentalist tradition represented by the Kadizadelis as a dominant element and focuses on the discussions within this framework. Tuşalp, in this chapter, tries to place "sunna-minded trends" on the historical map of Ottoman political thought (p. 233). According to her, "Sunna-minded trends did not pose the same theoretical challenge as did the older genres of Ottoman political thought but instead served as a discursive field that covered as many issues as possible, ranging from promiscuity to the corruption of judges" (p. 278).

The seventh chapter is entitled "Khaldunist Philosophy: Innovation Justified." In this chapter, the text of *Dustūr al-ʿamal* by Katip Çelebi is evaluated in the context of Ibn Khaldūn's vision of states, as Çelebi had utilized the perspective of Ibn Khaldūn in writing the work, which blended different philosophical-political traditions – such as *al-akhlāṭ al-arbaʿah*, self-theory, body-country metaphor, and the circle of justice – in search of solutions to the economic crises of the period. Later in the chapter, Sariyannis discusses the theory developed by Naima, which he also claims was influenced by Ibn Khaldūn's point of view. Sariyannis emphasizes that Naima, who devoted an unprecedentedly large portion of his history to the Ḥudaybiyyah peace treaty, proposed peace as a means of ending Ottoman decline.

The last two chapters focus on two different aspects of the same century. The eighth chapter, under the title of "The Eighteenth Century: the Traditionalists," deals with the views of authors such as Defterdar Sarı Mehmet Pasha and Nahifi Süleyman Efendi in relation

to the army, land system, and economy, and analyzes the concrete solutions proposed by these and other writers. The ninth and final chapter, "The Eighteenth Century: the Westernizers," focuses on the writings of authors who aimed at the modern restructuring of the army. He also discusses the approaches of İbrahim Müteferrika, which Sariyannis says paralleled those of the translation movements of the time, especially those based on Western literature.

In the conclusion, the author returns to the themes of the preceding chapters to elucidate the relationship between political ideas and power politics in the Ottoman state. He discusses the development of several political concepts, including justice (*ʿadālah*), law and the old law (*qānūn*, *qānūn-i qadīm*), innovation (*bidʿah*), world order (*niẓām-i ʿālam*), keeping one's place (*ḥadd*), and consultation (*mashwarah*).

This detailed book, undoubtedly quite comprehensive and a product of intense efforts, has however several problems. To start with its methodology, even though the author claims to adopt the emic approach that privileges the perspective of the subject over that of the analyst, he fails to deliver on his promise. For he often interprets the primary sources based on different (and sometimes conflicting) assumptions and arguments derived from the modern scholarship, particularly the English-language secondary literature which leads at times to consistency problems as well as distancing him from the emic approach. In addition, although the author sets out to cover an extremely wide time span and pool of sources, the primary sources he utilizes were mostly selected from among the already well-known and mostly published books that may not necessarily represent the Ottoman political thought, ignoring many potentially important manuscripts in Arabic and Persian. This is probably unavoidable, since he is limited to sources in circulation.

A case that exemplifies several of these issues is the book's discussion of the secularism debate. On the one hand, the study mentions that there is a sharp secular distinction in the Ottoman Empire (pp. 100-101); on the other hand, another part within the same chapter states: "A cautionary remark seems useful here: there can be a tendency to revert to an oppositional, religious vs. secular understanding of the world in the post-Enlightenment sense. However, for the sixteenth-century Ottoman this opposition simply did not exist" (p. 114). These contradictory statements stem in part

from the secondary literature which constitutes the source of the chapters and the interpretations it contains. But it is also due to the author's use of the emic-etic distinction without internal consistency.

For instance, the author explicitly utilizes the emic approach while expressing his conviction that there was no distinction between the secular and the religious in the sixteenth century. However, the following question arises: Is the emic approach adopted selectively for counter argument purposes? While the author rightly says that all the laws of both sharīʿah and the sultan were understood in a religious framework, why is the sultan's imagination not taken into consideration? Whether or not a secular approach really existed at the time is left unclear in the book. Similarly, if Çivizade is considered as an extension of the emic approach, then what is the position of Ebussuud?

Another problematic issue is the categorization of the book's chapters according to particular genres of literature. While the author himself appears to recognize this issue, he does little to help his readers on this point. For example, the seventeenth century is depicted as sharia-minded, which suggests to the reader that the following centuries were not. While this is not the author's intent, the general flow and impression of the book causes the reader to think that the irrelevant prevailing imagery represents different centuries.

Yet another issue is that the work neglects discussion of the context of the texts, it focuses on and largely ignores newly discovered texts that do not represent the main themes of the book's chapters. This is undoubtedly understandable for a study that is a first in its field.

Apart from these issues, another point worth mentioning is that the author is perhaps overly quick to generalize and has a tendency to rush to judgment. A case in point is his claim that "from the late sixteenth-century *adaletname*s to the early seventeenth century 'declinist' authors, justice was increasingly identified as meaning following the old laws on taxation in order to protect the *reaya*" (p. 440). The principle of maintaining/observing the *raʿāyā*, which is at the center of almost all the texts of Islamic political thought, cannot be ignored by the Ottoman political thinkers who follow this tradition. Such claims need more substantive evidence.

The author also appears to have prioritized the sources produced and/or influenced by the Persian ulema, implying that the Ottoman political thought was an extension of the Persian one. (This seems to be a general problem in the wider literature, mainly caused by the fact that many of the available sources from the formative period of the Ottoman political thought were translated from Persian). In doing so, he neglected the Egyptian/Cairene experience in particular. He also failed to use the texts of Ottoman political thought written in Arabic as direct sources, and to treat the texts of the *ʿulamāʾ* and their works in Islamic sciences, particularly in the field of *fiqh*, as political texts. In addition, few of the many jihad treatises written in almost every century find any place in the book, yet it is impossible to produce a complete picture of Ottoman political thought, at least as it is represented in the primary sources, without sufficiently considering these texts.

There are also grave mistakes caused by not having a mastery of classical Islamic sciences and literature. His claim that the Muslim conquest of Constantinople was "an ancient Islamic dream foretold in the Quran" (p. 63) is an example of these mistakes. Anyone with minimum knowledge of the Islamic sources knows that there is no Qurʾānic verse that Constantinople will be conquered and that this expression is instead mentioned in the hadith sources. There are also some typographical and information errors in the book which raise questions about the author's facility with Arabic and Ottoman Turkish: Ulemaya, not ülemaya; ahiret, not ahret (p. 38); *Mirsâd al-ʿibâd*, not *Mirshâd al-ʿibâd* (p. 48); *al-ulûm gayr an-nâfia*, not *ulumi'l-gayrin-nafıa* (p. 58); hikmet-i medeniyye, not hikmet-i medeni; ilm-i tabiî, not ilm-i tabiiyye (p. 75); kuvve-i nazariyye, kuvve-i ameliyye, kuvve-i şeheviyye, kuvve-i gazabiyye, not kuvvet-i nazari, kuvvet-i amelî, kuvvet-i şehevi, kuvvet-i gazabi (p. 77); saltanat-ı suriyye, not saltanat-ı suri (p. 95); *Risâla fî mâ yalzamu*, not *Risâla fî mâ yelzim* (p. 125); *al-Siyâsa al-sharʿiyya*, not *siyasat al-shariyya* (p. 254, 441); *Kitâb al-siyar al-kabîr*, not *Kitâb siyar al-kebir* (p. 277); Ibn Khaldunist, not Khaldunist (p. 278); *al-shubuhât al-qâsima*, not *al-shibhat al-qâsima* (p. 499, and also this book is not Birgivi's); etc.

As this book, the first comprehensive study of the history of Ottoman political thought, shows that Ottoman political thought encompasses the practical philosophical literature, the theological-*fiqhī* literature, and the mystical and moral literature, as well as the

Islamic political thought corpus. In addition, a number of other sorts of works can also be evaluated within this field, including chronicles/history books, *işlāḥātnāmah* and *adab al-wazīr* books (which can be seen as an extension of the *adab* literature), *lāyiḥah*s of different types, official documents, works of art/architectural works, and *silsilahnāmah*s. Therefore, with a variety of sources waiting to be studied, the question of how Ottoman political thought can be understood and examined through texts and practices continues to stand out.

Özgür Kavak

İstanbul Şehir University – Istanbul -Turkey
ozgurkavak@sehir.edu.tr
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1769-5668

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Full name(s) of author(s) must be listed, along with university or professional affiliation, address, city, state, country, phone/fax number(s), and email address where you can be reached. Provide a two-sentence biography that we can use in your article. Current information only.

All papers must include an abstract of no more 150 words.

It is strongly advised that the length of the article should not exceed 12.000 words. Book reviews and conference reports must not exceed 1500 words. All pages should be numbered consecutively.

All papers should have an introductory section in which the objectives and methodology of the article are explained and a final section, which summarizes the main points, discussed and the conclusions reached.

Manuscripts should be typed double-spaced on one side of the A4 only. Tables, graphs and figures should be on separate pages. All submissions should be in MS-Word (2003, 2007 or higher) format. Leave margins of at least 4 cm on top, bottom, and sides.

Text and references must follow the format outlined in ***Ilahiyat Studies Style Sheet***, available at www.ilahiyatstudies.org, the homepage of the journal.

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Aydınlı, Abdullah. "Ebû Zer el-Gıfârî." In *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, X, 266-269.

Book

Kātib Chalabī, Ḥājī Khalīfa Muṣṭafā ibn ʿAbd Allāh. *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī l-kutub wa-l-funūn*. 2 vols. Edited by M. Şerefeddin Yaltkaya and Kilisli Rifat Bilge. Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941-1943.

Michot, Yahya M. *Ibn Sīnā: Lettre au Vizir Abū Saʿd: Editio princeps d'après le manuscrit de Bursa, traduction de l'arabe, introduction, notes et lexique.* Beirut: al-Burāq, 2000.

Book Chapter

Janssens, Jules. "The Reception of Avicenna's *Physics* in the Latin Middle Ages." In *O ye Gentlemen*: *Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture in honour of Remke Kruk,* edited by I. Vrolijk and J. P. Hogendijk, 55-64. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Online Citation

Frank, Richard. "Elements in the Development of the Teaching of al-Ashʿarī." *Le Muséon*: *Revue D'Études Orientales* 104 (1991), 141-190. https://doi.org/10.2143/MUS.104.1.2006086.

Page references to works referred to in the text should take the following form: (Touraine 1995, 9-10). The verses of the Qurʾān should be referred to as follows: Q 2:23; Q 17:108; the references from the Old and New Testament should carry chapter name and number, and verse number.

Arabic words should be transliterated according the style used by the Library of Congress, as shown in the *Ilahiyat Studies Style Sheet*.

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