



Islamic Theology:
UNITING DIVERSE VOICES

*A conference dedicated to the recovery and appreciation
of Islamic theology in its widest possible sense*

ST ANDREWS ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF THEOLOGY
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ISTAC-IUM

18–19 JANUARY 2024

PROGRAMME BOOKLET

WELCOME NOTE

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you, honoured guests, distinguished speakers, and respected participants, to the international conference *Islamic Theology: Uniting Diverse Voices*. We hope these two days of discussion, exploration, and intellectual innovation will inspire and enrich all who attend, whether in-person or online.

In a world increasingly divided by extremist ideologies, both secular and religious, this conference is dedicated to the recovery and appreciation of a more moderate and tolerant approach – one characteristic of Islam’s religious and intellectual origins. By considering Islamic theology in its widest possible sense and for a modern Muslim audience, this conference aims to foster a balanced perspective, eschewing literalism in favour of a creative integration of *kalam* (theology) with the fields of *tafsir* (Qur’anic interpretation), *falsafa* (philosophy), *tasawwuf* (mysticism), and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). While other conferences have surveyed Islamic theology, over the next few days we will be privileged to experience a much broader disciplinary range of senior and talented younger scholarship than is usually encountered during an event of this sort. We hope the juxtaposition of these varying approaches will lead to a fruitful and rewarding exchange of ideas.

A project such as this cannot succeed without the help and support of a wide variety of institutions and individuals. Particular thanks are due to the John Templeton Foundation and St Mary’s College of the University of St Andrews (UK), whose generous support of the St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology has

made this event possible. Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dato’ Dzulkifli Abd Razak (Rector of IIUM) and Professor Abdelaziz Berghout (Dean of ISTAC-IIUM) have also graciously assisted our project, allowing us to host it at one of the Islamic world’s most prestigious centres of learning. We express our gratitude to the conference’s organizing committee, headed by Dr Alexander Wain (University of St Andrews), whose tireless efforts have helped realise a long-held aspiration. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to YB Dr Zulkifli Hasan, Deputy Minister (Islamic Affairs) in the Office of the Prime Minister (Malaysia), and to our keynote speakers, Professor Timothy Winter (University of Cambridge), Professor Andrew Peacock (University of St Andrews), and Associate Professor Khairudin Aljunied (National University of Singapore), whose inspired contributions will, we are sure, be of benefit to all.

May our efforts lead to the enrichment of Islamic thought and civilisation.

Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar, al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal, ISTAC-IIUM (Malaysia).

Dr Brendan N. Wolfe, Principal Editor, St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology, University of St Andrews (UK)



*St Mary's College, University of St Andrews (UK),
home to the St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*

ST ANDREWS ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF THEOLOGY

The St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology is a new, free-to-access online encyclopaedia of the highest academic standards, treating the full discipline of theology across several religious traditions with both rigour and clarity. In collaboration with leading Islamic scholars, many of whom are present at this conference, it is in the process of creating a world-leading resource in Islamic theology. The first articles in its Islam section will begin to appear in early 2024 at www.saet.ac.uk/islam, and will illustrate the breadth and significance of Islamic religious thought, as well as the benefits of encyclopaedic presentation.

The Encyclopaedia's scholarly team includes the project's Senior Editors, Prof. Timothy Winter (University of Cambridge, UK), Prof. Lejla Demiri (University of Tübingen, Germany), and Dr Maria Dakake (George Mason University, USA). They are joined by Editorial Advisers Prof. Datuk Osman Bakar (ISTAC-IIUM), Assoc. Prof. Khairudin Aljunied (National University of Singapore), Dato' Dr Afifi al-Akiti (University of Oxford, UK), Prof. Sait Özerverli (Yıldız Technical University, Türkiye), and Dr Emin Poljarevic (Uppsala University, Sweden). Its many authors are drawn from prominent academics worldwide, with an emphasis on religious scholars for whom Islam is a living tradition.

The Encyclopaedia offers in-depth, peer-reviewed articles of approximately 10,000 words each. Rooted in insider (or emic) rather than outsider (etic) perspectives, articles are historically informed but conceptually focused and

treat theology in the broadest sense. While western academia limits 'Islamic theology' to *kalam* (literally: speech, discourse), an Arabic term signifying the formalized, systematic, and rational presentation of Islamic doctrine in the discursive language of the Mediterranean philosophical tradition, the Encyclopaedia follows traditional Islamic scholarship to adopt a more holistic approach. In common with the themes of this conference, the Encyclopaedia's Islamic editors have seen in Islam's emphasis on *tawhid* (Divine Oneness) the opportunity for the Encyclopaedia to draw connections between *kalam* and other, seemingly disparate fields of knowledge, permitting authors to examine ostensibly discrete religious issues across different subject areas, including *tafsir* (Qur'anic interpretation), *falsafa* (philosophy), *tasawwuf* (mysticism), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and other Islamic disciplines of learning. In this spirit of inclusivity, the Encyclopaedia also seeks to recognize the full breadth of Islamic thought as it has evolved across the entire Muslim world and throughout the religion's long history. This 'interdisciplinary' approach to the nature of ultimate things is true 'God-talk' (Theo-logy), as it reflects and demonstrates divine nature, revealing God's unifying presence within all things.



*International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC-IIUM)
home to the Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal*

AL-GHAZALI CHAIR OF EPISTEMOLOGY AND CIVILISATIONAL STUDIES AND RENEWAL, ISTAC-IIUM

The al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal is presently located at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC), a postgraduate institute of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). First established on 29 September 1987, the Chair's current holder is Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar, who was appointed to this prestigious position in September 2018. The present Chair continues the original al-Ghazali Chair, created in 1993 by Professor Tan Sri Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (ISTAC's Founder-Director) and which was officially launched on 14 December 1993 at ISTAC's old campus in Jalan Damansara, Kuala Lumpur. During the official launch, YAB Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim, then President and Chairman of the Board of Governors of IIUM and Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Malaysia, announced the appointment of al-Attas as the first occupant of the distinguished Chair.

The title "Al-Ghazali Chair of Islamic Thought" was chosen both in honour of al-Ghazali (1058-1111), one of the greatest thinkers in Islamic history, and in recognition of Professor al-Attas' status as a world-leading scholar of Islamic thought who was himself deeply influenced by al-Ghazali. Professor al-Attas occupied the Chair for nine years, from December 1993 until 2002, the year his academic position at ISTAC came to an end. The Chair was not occupied again until September 2018, when Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Osman Bakar was appointed by IIUM as its second occupant.

As the second holder of the Chair, Professor Osman Bakar, also an authority on al-Ghazali, has sought to concentrate its focus around the disciplines of epistemology and civilisational studies. Hence, the Chair's new title: "al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal." The Chair is now dedicated to research, publication, and the training of doctoral and master's students in Islamic thought and civilisation, as well as inter-civilisational dialogue. More specifically, the Chair is highly visible in delivering lectures and convening seminars and conferences on Islamic-Confucian dialogue.

THURSDAY • 18 JANUARY 2024

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST
9:30 AM - 10:25 AM	FORMAL OPENING
	<p><i>WELCOME</i></p> <p><i>RECITATION OF THE QUR'AN AND DU'A</i></p> <p><i>WELCOME ADDRESS</i> Dr Brendan N. Wolfe, Principal Editor, St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology (University of St Andrews, UK)</p> <p><i>WELCOME ADDRESS</i> Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abd Razak, Rector of IIUM</p> <p><i>INAUGURAL ADDRESS</i> YB Dr Zulkifli Hasan, Deputy Minister (Islamic Affairs), Office of the Prime Minister (Malaysia)</p>
10:25 AM – 11:00 AM	BREAK
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	KEYNOTE 1
	<p><i>“One God, Many Prophets: Islam’s Approach to Theological Diversity”</i> Prof. Emeritus Datuk Dr Osman Bakar (Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal, ISTAC-IIUM, Malaysia)</p>
12:00 AM – 12:15 PM	BREAK
12:15 PM – 1:30 PM	SESSION 1
	<p><i>“Tawhid, Modern Thinking, and the Fragmented Self: Some Reflections”</i> Dr Muhammad Faruque (University of Cincinnati, USA)</p> <p><i>“Beyond Creed: Prophethood and Miracles in Sufi Exegesis”</i> Dr Gavin N. Picken (Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar)</p> <p><i>“Harmony Amidst Diversity: Islamic Theology’s Quest for Unity in a Pluralistic World”</i> Dr Syeda Nada Qadri, Dr Mohd Waseem, and Dr Mir Sanobar (Aligarh Muslim University, India) (online)</p>
1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	LUNCH BREAK
2:30 PM – 3:45 PM	SESSION 2
	<p><i>“Witnessing the Dynamism of Tawhid: The Theological Implications of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Radical Nominalism and Inverted Ontology in his Fusus al-hikam”</i> Dr Aiyub Palmer (University of Kentucky, USA)</p> <p><i>“The Unifying Terminologies of the Tribe: Ibn al-‘Arabi and the Sciences of Grammar, Number, Engineering, Healing, Theology, and Law”</i> Dr Eric Winkel (The Futuhat Foundation, Switzerland)</p> <p><i>“The Emir’s Commentary on the Fusus al-hikam”</i> Dr Faris Abdelhadi (Independent Research, Jordan)</p>
3:45 PM – 3:50 AM	BREAK
3:50PM – 5:05 PM	SESSION 3
	<p><i>“The Qur’anic Objective of Knowing Allah as the Basis for an Islamic Methodology”</i> Prof. Dr Jasser Auda, (Maqasid Institute, Canada)</p> <p><i>“From Maqasid al-shari’a to Maqasid al-‘aqida.</i> Dr Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour (al-Azhar, Egypt) (online).</p> <p><i>“Tawhid as Structuring Principle in Islamic Epistemology”</i> Dr Claire Gallien (Cambridge Muslim College, UK) (online)</p>

5:05 PM – 6:00 PM	KEYNOTE 2 (VIDEO) <i>“Klossowski’s Reading of Nietzsche from an Islamic Viewpoint”</i> Prof. Dr Timothy Winter (University of Cambridge, UK) (Video)
6:00 PM	END OF DAY 1

FRIDAY • 19 JANUARY 2024

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	BREAKFAST
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	KEYNOTE 3 <i>“Southeast Asia’s Contribution to the History of Islamic Theology”</i> Prof. Dr Andrew C.S. Peacock (University of St Andrews, UK)
11:00 AM – 12:15 PM	SESSION 4 <i>“Early Malay Muslim Political Theology: The Raja as Ibn ‘Arabi’s Perfect Human”</i> Dr Alexander Wain (University of St Andrews, UK) <i>“Mysticism as a Catalyst for Interfaith Dialogue in Islamic Theology”</i> Mir Sanobar, Shaista Akhter, and Mohd Waseem (Aligarh Muslim University, India) <i>“Can the Justification for God’s Actions be Known? An Analysis in the Context of the Concept of “Cause” (‘illat) in Divine Actions within the Maturidi-Hanafī Tradition of Thought and the Verses of the Qur’an that Declare Justification”</i> Dr Bilal Taşkın (Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye) (online)
12:15 PM – 3:00 PM	LUNCH AND JUMAAH
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	KEYNOTE 4 <i>“Towards An Islamic Theology of Global Change”</i> Prof. Dr Khairudin Aljunied (National University of Singapore, Singapore)
4:00 PM – 5:15 PM	SESSION 5 <i>“Tawhid vs. Sola Scriptura: Competing Theologies of Qur’anic Sufficiency”</i> Dr Sohaib Saeed (Ibn Ashur Centre, UK) (online) <i>“Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas and the Development of a Modern Tawhidic Epistemology”</i> Ms Fadila Ezzat (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, France) (online) <i>“The Islamic Tradition at European Universities”</i> Dr Tobias Andersson (Uppsala University, Sweden) (online)
5:15 PM – 5:20 PM	BREAK
5:20 PM – 6:15 PM	SESSION 6 <i>“The Anthropocene Era and the Living Earth: New Tasks for Islamic Theology”</i> Prof. Dr Karim D. Crow (Catholic University of America, USA) and Prof. Dr Asna Husin (UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Indonesia) <i>“Islamic theology as a Consolidation of Scientific Systems: Fragmenting or Unifying”</i> Dr Khalina Mohammed Khalili (Independent Researcher, Malaysia)
6:15 PM – 6:30 PM	CLOSING REMARKS
6:30 PM	END OF CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE 1*“One God, Many Prophets: Islam’s Approach to Theological Diversity”***PROF. EMERITUS DATUK DR OSMAN BAKAR**

AL-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal, ISTAC - IIUM, Malaysia

Prof. Emeritus Datuk Dr Osman Bakar is one of the contemporary Muslim world’s most prominent philosophers. Holder of the al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal at ISTAC-IIUM (Malaysia), he is emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Malaya, a fellow at both the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue (University of Malaya) and Doshisha University (Japan), and former President of the Islamic Academy of Sciences (Malaysia).

He holds a doctorate in Islamic philosophy from Temple University (1981) and has been a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Harvard University (1992). The author of 15 books and over 250 articles on Islamic thought and civilization, his most notable works include *Tawhid and Science* (1991), *Islam and Civilizational Dialogue* (1997), *Classification of Knowledge in Islam* (1998), and *Islamic Civilisation and the Modern World* (2015). Recognized globally, Professor Osman has been included within the list of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world several times.

ABSTRACT

A fundamental premise in Islam is that it is possible for man to know the Divine Reality, or God. Islam, in fact, categorically asserts that knowing God is the highest purpose of human existence. This very purpose is implied in many verses of the Qur’an. For example, the Prophet Muhammad’s maiden revelation (96:1-5), received in the Hira Cave through the divine agency of Gabriel, emphasised the necessity of knowing the Creator as the foundation of man’s pursuit of knowledge of creation. In another example, the Qur’an tells us that Adam’s earthly career as God’s first vicegerent and first prophet began with him being taught “the names of all things,” (2:30-33), which Ibn ‘Arabi interpreted as essentially meaning “God’s Names and Qualities.” In yet another example, the Qur’an (51:56) informs us that the purpose of man’s creation is the “worship of God.” But true worship will help advance man’s knowledge of God. These Qur’anic examples illustrate the fundamentality of theology – the study or science of God – in man’s life and thought.

But the same verses and others also show that the advent of Islam opened a new chapter in man’s spiritual history, at least in terms of introducing new features to the theological discourse, if not in other respects. Islam appeared in history to democratise the pursuit of theology hand-in-hand with an emphasis on the universal theory of divine revelation, which dictated a belief in many prophets, and on the ideas of absolutisation and universalisation of God. The democratisation of theology has one importance consequence for religious thought. It brought the phenomenon of theological diversity to an ever-greater degree of visibility within each of the existing religions, including Islam. In this paper I will attempt to explain the major shapers of the theological diversity within Islam and show how the Qur’anic “genius” has been employed by some of its thinkers to bring about theological unity in diversity.

“Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche from an Islamic viewpoint”

PROFESSOR DR TIMOTHY WINTER

University of Cambridge, UK

Professor Dr Timothy Winter, also known as Sheikh Abdal-Hakim Murad, is currently the Sheikh Zayed Lecturer of Islamic Studies at the Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge, and Director of Studies in Theology at Wolfson College. He has published and contributed to numerous academic works on Islam, including the St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology, with his best-known works being his translations from Imam Al-Ghazali's *Ihya* (1995), a series of aphorisms (*Commentary on the Eleventh Contentions*, 2012), and his most recent book, *Travelling Home: Essays on Islam in Europe* (2020). He is founder of the Cambridge Muslim College, which has offered Diploma courses for British Dar Al-Ulum graduates and now has an accredited BA programme offered to graduate religious leaders who are confident, competent, and conversant with the issues of the age. He is a much sought-after speaker and contributes regularly to the media and is fluent in several languages. Hundreds of YouTube videos of his lectures and talks form an important source of knowledge for English-speaking Muslims worldwide. His *Paradigms of Leadership* lecture series focuses on exemplary figures in Islamic history and has proved to be particularly popular. Professor Winter was the main force behind the decade-long project to build the Cambridge Central Mosque, Europe's first eco-mosque, which opened in April 2019 and has become an iconic standard for all places of worship in the country.



KEYNOTE 2 (Video)

ABSTRACT

Islam's characteristic integration of a full monotheism with social and denominational difference lies at the heart of its attempt at a Dionysian supersession of Apollonian religion. Recent studies of the Muslim 'culture of ambiguity' by Wael Hallaq, Thomas Bauer and others, have emphasised the pre-modern Muslim love of provisionality, but offer few clues about its source. In this lecture we will be considering how one of Nietzsche's most important interpreters may shed light on the nexus between *tawhid* and the celebration of a biotic order which by its nature remains in creative flux and indeterminacy.

KEYNOTE 3*“Southeast Asia’s Contribution to the History of Islamic Theology”*

PROFESSOR DR ANDREW PEACOCK

University of St Andrews, UK



Professor Dr. Andrew Peacock is Bishop Wardlaw Professor of Islamic History at the University of St Andrews and a Fellow of the British Academy. His research interests encompass the intellectual history of the pre-modern Islamic world, as well as Islam in Southeast Asia and Islamic manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Malay. Recent publications include *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia* (Cambridge, 2019) and *Arabic Literary Culture in*

Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Brill, 2024), as well as the edited volume *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, 2017).

ABSTRACT

Southeast Asia is often regarded as an area rather marginal to Islamic studies, despite being home to some of the largest Muslim populations worldwide, and this is particularly true of its role in Islamic intellectual history. However, from the seventeenth century onwards, Southeast Asian Muslims played an important role in developing an Islamic intellectual culture of their own, expressed in both Arabic and local languages such as Malay and Javanese, and in contributing to developments in theological thought in the Hijaz which at this point was in many respects the centre of Islamic intellectual life despite its political marginality.

In this lecture, I examine both how Southeast Asians contributed to Islamic theology and to the place of Southeast Asia in the broader intellectual and theological history of the period. Far from being marginal, debates in Southeast Asia on the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*, which acquired a particular importance in the seventeenth century, reverberated across the Muslim world, and sparked interest not just in the Hijaz, but also places as diverse as Fes, Damascus and Istanbul. I discuss the reasons for the controversy over *wahdat al-wujud*, with its implications for understandings of sharia and Sufism, and the contributions of Southeast Asian authors and theologians such as Shams al-Din al-Sumatra'i (d. 1630) and Nur al-Din al-Raniri (1658) to its development. I also discuss developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when ever increasing numbers of Southeast Asians studied in the Hijaz, and their role in promoting new developments in Sufism and debates over the relationship between *sharia*, *haqiqah* and *tariqa*. I also trace the features of Islamic theology in Southeast Asia, notably its tendency to embrace both Ash'arism and Maturidism, creating a distinctive Southeast Asian synthesis.

*“Towards an Islamic Theology of Global Change”***KEYNOTE 4****PROFESSOR DR KHAIRUDIN ALJUNIED**

National University of Singapore, Singapore



Professor Dr. Khairudin Aljunied, a Senior Fellow at the Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS), holds a doctorate from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (2008). His extensive research spans multiple countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, Netherlands, and the UK. Notable publications include *Colonialism Violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (2009), *Radicals: Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya* (2015), and *Shapers of Islam in Southeast Asia* (2022). His recent work, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism: Southeast Asian Islam in Comparative Perspective* (2017), explores cosmopolitan ideals in Southeast Asia.

ABSTRACT

Recent events in the Muslim world reveal the stark divisions, contradictions, and inequalities riddling the ummah. Surging Islamophobia, widespread poverty, religious extremisms, environmental degradation and violent conflicts, all point to the need for far-reaching transformations in how Muslims think and act. In this talk, I focus on one fundamental area that necessitates critical attention: the theological suppositions and premises governing contemporary Muslim minds. I argue for a radical movement beyond the millennium-old disputes between dominant classical strands of Islamic theology – Maturidi, Ash’ari, Athari, and Shi’ite schools being the most prominent ones. All adherents of theological schools agree with the fact that the ummah is in a state of deep crisis and disunity. Change at the global level is necessary.

Building on the works of Muhammad Abduh and Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah (Hamka), among others, I will offer a tentative outline of an Islamic theology of global change. The talk will discuss the limits of possibility in Muslim minds which stem from prevailing conceptions of divine plan, eschatology, declinism, obeisance, as well as ethnic, cultural, ideological, and national divides. Following that, I bring to light a few universal challenges namely post-humanism, secular fundamentalism, repressive states, and intellectual treason. An Islamic theology of global change provides a viable intellectual framework to address these and many other challenges in the path to move beyond parochial discords and interests that have debilitated the ummah and, by implication, humanity.

*“Tawhid, Modern Thinking, and the Fragmented Self: Some Reflections”***DR MUHAMMAD FARUQUE**

University of Cincinnati, USA

ABSTRACT

Modern thinking—despite its usefulness and innovations in some areas—is characterized by its pursuit of extremes in the forms of exaggerated objectivist and subjectivist propensities and an unrestrained rationalism and irrationalism at the same time. These modes of thinking are manifest in the mechanistic paradigm of modern science and modernist art and literature, and these contradictory tendencies may be understood either as expressions of extreme self-consciousness or as rather desperate attempts to escape from alienation and hyperawareness. One notable effect of such thinking is the increasing fragmentation and fragility of the modern self. This is discussed in terms of the loss of a unified self and higher purpose in life, leading to a culture of materialistic convenience and consumerism which produces disorders that range from depression to attention deficit disorder to borderline personality disorder. Even religious people in such circumstances are not immune to the lure of materialism. Drawing on the metaphysical conceptions of tawhīd or unity as found in Sufi metaphysics and later Islamic philosophy, this paper argues that Islamic views on the self provide a remedy to the hyper objectivist and subjectivist orientations of modern thinking. This is because the “unity of the self” in Islam teaches that cosmos and soul are not two separate realities, but two sides of the same coin, a coin that was minted in the image of God. Hence, in contrast to the Cartesian divide of mind and matter (or objectivism and subjectivism), tawhīd helps us to integrate the science of the cosmos with the science of the self.

*“Beyond Creed: Prophethood and Miracles in Sufi Exegesis”***DR GAVIN N. PICKEN**

Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar

ABSTRACT

The normative position of Muslim creedal treatises is to confirm the ability of prophets to perform miracles, as both an assertion of their claim to prophethood, and as a supernatural challenge to the peoples to whom they are sent. In this sense, the Qur’an is regarded as the miracle par excellence in the Islamic context. In addition to the Qur’an, however, Muslims consider the Prophet to have been endowed with numerous additional miracles to add credence to his claim to prophethood. Arguably, the greatest of these miraculous occurrences is the Prophet’s night journey to Jerusalem and subsequent ascension into the heavens (*al-isra’ wa ‘l-mi‘raj*), where it is intimated that he ultimately encountered the Divine Presence. This supernatural event is primarily alluded to in verse 17: 1 of the Qur’an and has been the subject of considerable interest in Muslim scholarship, not least within the genre of Sufi allusory exegesis (*al-tafsir bi ‘l-ishara*). Perhaps the last two great exponents of this form of

Qur'anic commentary were Isma'il Haqqi al-Bursawi (d.1127/1724-5), in his *Ruh al-Bayan*, and Ahmad Ibn 'Ajiba (d.1224/1809), in his *al-Bahr al-Madid*. This paper attempts a comparative analysis of the ways in which al-Bursawi and Ibn 'Ajiba treat *al-isra' wa 'l-mi'raj*, specifically focusing on their mystical expositions of this miraculous occurrence vis-à-vis standard doctrinal articulations.

"Harmony Amidst Diversity: Islamic Theology's Quest for Unity in a Pluralistic World"

DR SYEDA NADA QADRI, DR MOHD WASEEM, and DR MIR SANOBAR

Aligarh Muslim University, India (online)

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores how Islamic theology endeavors to establish harmony and unity in a world characterized by religious, cultural, and ideological diversity. In an era marked by globalization and multiculturalism, the need for promoting interfaith dialogue and coexistence among diverse communities is increasingly urgent. This study examines how Islamic theology, rooted in a rich history and multifaceted traditions, addresses the challenges of a pluralistic world while preserving its fundamental principles. Through an extensive review of scholarly literature, historical accounts, and contemporary case studies, the paper explores the theological underpinnings within Islam that allow the religion to accommodate a range of voices. It closely examines Quranic principles of tolerance, compassion, and justice and analyzes the teachings of influential Islamic scholars who advocate unity among believers and peaceful coexistence with individuals of different faiths.

Furthermore, the research investigates the role of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and its adaptability in addressing the needs and rights of diverse communities within the Islamic framework. It also explores historical instances of Islamic empires and societies successfully integrating diverse cultures and religious traditions, illustrating practical applications of unity within diversity. In conclusion, this research asserts that Islamic theology's enduring pursuit of unity in diversity holds the potential to offer valuable insights and solutions for fostering peaceful coexistence in today's pluralistic world. Emphasizing shared values, promoting dialogue, and upholding principles of justice and compassion, Islamic theology continues to play a crucial role in advancing harmony amidst diversity on a global scale.

"Witnessing the Dynamism of Tawhid: The Theological Implications of Ibn al-'Arabi's Radical Nominalism and Inverted Ontology in his Fusus al-hikam"

DR AIYUB PALMER

University of Kentucky, USA

ABSTRACT

Modern critics of Ibn al-'Arabi, such as the Shaykh al-Islam, Mustafa al-Ṣabri, have echoed Ibn Taymiyya's contention that Ibn al-'Arabi is covertly introducing Hellenistic doctrines into Islam through his *Fusus al-hikam*. Even scholars of Ibn al-'Arabi's teachings, such as the late Mahmud Mahmud al-Ghurab, have gone so far as to claim that the *Fusus al-hikam* has been incorrectly attributed to Ibn al-'Arabi, despite strong scholarly disagreement about such claims. The thesis of this paper is that Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus* has often been criticized based on an Ash'ari reading. In order to seriously engage with the *Fusus*, however, a reappraisal of both its terminology as well as philosophical and theological paradigms is necessary. Two main propositions are presented here with respect to the *Fusus*. The first is that Ibn al-'Arabi formulates a radical nominalism that rejects the hierarchy of *dhat-sifat-af'al*, which is so central to the Ash'ari ontological system. His flattening of this hierarchy is substituted with a different ontological hierarchy in which the name represents the deepest reality of God's existence beyond the *dhat*. The second proposition is that Ibn al-'Arabi inverts the hierarchy of those existents that have *thubut* (affirmation) by God, such that the visible world, when it is exemplified in living perfected hearts that witness God, becomes more primary in the *tajalli* (manifestation) of God than his names.

"The Unifying Terminologies of the Tribe: Ibn al-'Arabi and the Sciences of Grammar, Number, Engineering, Healing, Theology, and Law"

DR ERIC WINKEL

The Futuhat Foundation, Switzerland

ABSTRACT

Ibn al-'Arabi is like no other, and his great work *The Openings Revealed in Makkah* can only be understood by its self. And still in his effort to convey the counsel of the True to his audience, he engages the contemporary sciences and their terminologies. But he engages to a point – and then he tells us how things really are. These sciences are variously described by him as hitting the mark and missing the mark – but more often missing; and, they hit the mark and they miss the mark, when the conclusion is true but how they got there is false. About terminologies, he says, "And learn that the Tribe has made conventional terminologies of words and phrases to provide different meanings they have affirmed inside themselves, using them to converse with one another. It is just as does each group for the sciences they take on as their own (i.e. they adopt a specialized terminology), like the grammarians, and the masters of numbers, and the engineers, and the healers, and the theologians, and the legal scholars, and others. What this Tribe makes as a conventional terminology includes the *huwiyat* (*hu*),

the *inniyat inni* (Indeed, I am that I am), and the *annayah ana* (I), and the *innayat inna* (Indeed, We), for the object to be conveyed they have inside themselves" (*al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah*, Chapter 287, Book 19). Here we explore how Ibn al-‘Arabī engages diverse sciences and terminologies, in his endeavor to reach his diverse audience.

“The Emir’s Commentary on the Fusus al-hikam”

DR FARIS ABDELHADI

Independent Research, Jordan

ABSTRACT

The Emīr ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jaza’iri (d. 1883) remains one of the most important figures in our time for the purposes of unifying diverse voices and different sciences across the Islamic world. He was known for the extraordinary and enriching life he led on the social and political spectrum; and equally important, he is the foremost scholar pertaining to the Akbarian school of thought, i.e. of the famous Sufi Andalusian Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 638). Pertinently, the Emīr is a lucid commentator, penetrating expositor and deep thinker for the Akbarian sciences in spirituality and metaphysics, as demonstrated in his seminal *Mawaqif*. It is from two chapters of the *Mawaqif* that the Emīr, at the request of his friend, penned large commentaries on two chapters from Ibn ‘Arabī’s decisively influential *Fusus al-Hikam*: the *Fass* of *Shu‘ayb* and *Isma‘il*.

Both chapters, urgently requiring scholarly analysis apart from the work of Bakri Aladdin, display their unifying attributes and features in all their multifaceted dimensions: fostering interfaith dialogue through the Akbarian doctrine of God’s presence in belief-systems (*al-i‘tiqadat*), the intimate relationship between the letter of the law found in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and sincere, devotional Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and of metaphysics that underlies each and every science. This is particularly emphasized in the intimate relationship between belief-systems and metaphysics (*al-ilahiyyat*). Hence this paper will seek to draw out the salient strands of unity clearly strewn throughout these two pertinent chapters, and present them in order to illustrate the holistic nature of an Akbarian vision for our world today.

*"The Qur'anic Objective of Knowing Allah as the Basis for an Islamic Methodology"***PROF. DR JASSER AUDA**

Maqasid Institute, Canada

ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of worshipping Allah cannot be achieved without knowing Him, and knowing Him cannot be achieved without learning how the Qur'an describes Him. Thus, towards a renewed Islamic methodology that meets the theoretical needs of our time, the purpose of discovering elements of perceptualization is intertwined with the purpose of studying Allah's attributes in the Qur'an. This article describes the outcome of numerous cycles of reflection upon the Quran and Sunnah capable of generating a composite framework. The framework defines the Islamic worldview and describes reality via its "seven elements": concepts, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, parties, and proofs. The implication of the new framework for the renewal of Islamic thought is also outlined.

*"From Maqasid al-shari'a to Maqasid al-'aqida"***DR MOHAMMED GAMAL ABDELNOUR**

Al-Azhar, Egypt (online)

ABSTRACT

Islamic law is the twin science of Islamic theology, with the former being regarded as the science of *furu' al-din* (matters complementary to the faith), as compared to the latter, which is considered as the science of *usul al-din* (matters primary to the faith). However, while scholars of Islamic law have largely managed to produce a holistic framework embodied in *maqasid al-shari'a* (higher objectives of Islamic law), Islamic theology is largely limited to definitions and deliberations about the nature and qualities of the transcendent God. It therefore lacks a systematic theory of higher objectives. In this context, this paper aims to achieve two goals. Firstly, it attends to the reasons that may have contributed to the underdevelopment of a holistic framework for Islamic theology. Secondly, it proposes a new analytical tool that may rectify this deficiency: *maqasid al-'aqida* (higher objectives of Islamic theology). In doing so, the paper utilizes the tools of *maqasid al-shari'a*, bringing Islamic law into conversation with Islamic theology towards a more synthetic understanding of the Islamic tradition.

“Tawhid as Structuring Principle in Islamic Epistemology”

DR CLAIRE GALLIEN

Cambridge Muslim College, UK (online)

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the genre of *tartib al-‘ulum* (classification of the sciences) in the work of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Islamic scholars. By the early modern period, this genre had already undergone change, from Aristotelian – or encyclopaedic – inspired models to those more directly serving practical pedagogical needs. While there is arguably no systematic model, my study shows the strong holistic dimension of the epistemic systems devised by early modern scholars, who built a cohesive and interdependent model of interactions between Islamic and non-Islamic, revealed and non-revealed, sciences relevant to their contexts. In particular, I focus on *al-Qanun fi ahkam al-‘ilm wa ahkam al-‘alim wa ahkam al-muta‘allim*, written by the seventeenth-century Moroccan Sufi scholar Abu ‘Ali al-Ḥasan b. Mas‘ud al-Yusi. I argue that in this book, which has received considerable attention in Islamic knowledge circles, the implicit structure of the sciences is neither drawn from ancient nor from madrasa syllabi, but is theological. My paper will explain how the interdependent, cohesive, and holistic dimensions of al-Yusi’s Islamic episteme is directly premised on Islamic theology. More specifically, I explore the role of the tri-partite *iman-islam-ihsan* organisation of Islamic theology and its emphasis on *tawhid* (unity) in devising a modern Islamic epistemology.

*“Early Malay Muslim Political Theology: The Raja as Ibn ‘Arabi’s Perfect Human”***DR ALEXANDER WAIN**

University of St Andrews, UK

ABSTRACT

This paper considers early Malay Muslim political theology as a complex form of philosophical Sufism rooted in the doctrine of the Perfect Human (*al-insan al-kamil*). From the 7th century CE and throughout the Malay world, political authority was justified in religious terms. The principal pivot of pre-Islamic Malay civilisation, the Hindu-Buddhist mandala of Srivijaya (south Sumatra), habitually depicted its maharajas as bodhisattvas – as enlightened beings who, while postponing their own entry into nirvana, remained on earth to assist others towards spiritual perfection, rewarding acts of reverence towards their person with “spiritual grace.” Early Malay inscriptions, therefore, referred to the maharajas of Srivijaya as “Mahasattva(s) with incomparable power,” capable of bestowing an “immaculate tantra” and “eternal peace” upon their “loyal” subjects. This conceptualization established a social contract between ruler and ruled, obedience in this life being justified in terms of reward in the next. From the fourteenth century onwards, as Majapahit’s dewarajas (god-kings) undermined the political hegemony of Sumatra’s Malay rajas, the latter began to appropriate Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical doctrine of the Perfect Human as a means of reasserting their political prestige. As a saintly figure capable of embodying the cosmic process of divine self-disclosure, within Sufi thought the Perfect Human assumed responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their followers, aligning with the demands of pre-Islamic Malay political culture. Rather than a passively received accretion (as is often assumed), the mystical doctrine of the Perfect Human therefore constituted a purposively adapted tool, used by Malays to reinforce the social contract between ruler and ruled via an act of intentional Islamization.

*“Mysticism as a Catalyst for Interfaith Dialogue in Islamic Theology”***MIR SANOBAR, SHAISTA AKHTER, and MOHD WASEEM**

Aligarh Muslim University, India (online)

ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the intricate relationship between mysticism within Islamic theology, commonly known as Sufism, and its role as a catalyst for fostering interfaith dialogue. Islamic mysticism is a significant dimension of Islamic thought, characterized by profound spiritual experiences, introspective practices, and an inclusive worldview. The primary objective of this study is to shed light on how mysticism can facilitate interfaith understanding, harmony, and cooperation within the context of Islamic theology.

The paper conducts a comprehensive review of scholarly literature, historical accounts, and contemporary case studies to delve into the historical development of mysticism within Islam. It emphasizes the philosophical foundations of mysticism and its focus

on transcendent experiences and inner unity. Additionally, it explores how mystical concepts like the "oneness of being" (*wahdat al-wujud*) have played a crucial role in bridging theological gaps between Islam and other faith traditions. Examining instances where Sufi mystics engaged in dialogues and interactions with representatives of different religions, the research demonstrates mysticism's ability to transcend doctrinal differences and foster meaningful connections. It also addresses potential challenges and criticisms faced by mysticism in interfaith dialogue, including concerns about syncretism and exclusivity.

In conclusion, the paper asserts that mysticism, with its emphasis on the universal quest for divine union and the transcendence of religious boundaries, acts as a valuable catalyst for promoting interfaith dialogue within Islamic theology. By highlighting the common spiritual experiences shared by diverse faiths, mysticism facilitates constructive dialogue, mutual respect, and enhanced understanding among followers of different religious traditions.

"Can the Justification for God's Actions be Known? An Analysis in the Context of the Concept of "Cause" ('illat) in Divine Actions within the Maturidi-Hanafi Tradition of Thought and the Verses of the Qur'an that Declare Justification"

DR BILAL TAŞKIN

Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

For people of faith today, a primary concern is understanding the reasons for God's actions and judgments. When people know the reasons for God's actions, they have an opportunity to more accurately understand and interpret the good or bad things that happen to them. In Islamic thought, a fundamental concept for understanding the justification of God's actions is "divine cause". In the disciplines of theology (*kalam*) and jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), "causes" are analyzed in order to understand the justification of God's actions and judgments. This paper examines the concept of "cause" in God's actions. In this context, the paper consists of two parts. In the first, "cause" will be discussed within the Maturidi-Hanafi tradition of thought. The Maturidi-Hanafi tradition argues that God's actions are based on a justification, with every divine action and judgment being based on reason. In the second part, we will examine God's statements in the Qur'an regarding the justification of His actions in the light of the Maturidi-Hanafi scholar Abu al-Barakat al-Nafsi's *Madarik al-tanzil wa haqa'iq al-ta'wil*.

*“Tawhid vs. Sola Scriptura: Competing Theologies of Qur’anic Sufficiency”***DR SOHAIB SAEED**

Ibn Ashur Centre, UK (online)

ABSTRACT

Despite the diversity of hermeneutical approaches to the Qur’an over the centuries, and the early emergence of debates about its nature as a revealed text, the exegetical corpus displays remarkable stability in its core assumptions. Even as competing theological schools argued over particular verses, there was a shared understanding that they should be understood both internally – what became known as tafsir al-Qur’an bi-l-Qur’an – and in harmony with relevant texts and principles external to the Qur’an. It is this stability which has allowed tafsir to be a cumulative genre, with varying formats but little disruption to this general approach among the mainstream schools until the modern period. This paper discusses the ‘Qur’an-only’ trend which emerged in several contexts in the last century and enjoys some support among new interpreters. It should also be acknowledged that similar ideas appeared at the time of Imam al-Shafi‘i and in the seventh/thirteenth-century commentary by Jamal al-Din al-Safadi. Our focus is on the theological questions thrown up by these thinkers, particularly the question of whether the Qur’an is ‘sufficient’ (as this group maintains) or in some sense ‘needy’ (as sometimes articulated by adherents to the mainstream). This is considered on the theoretical plane and with reference to the practicalities of understanding the Qur’an. It is argued that while ‘Qur’an-only’ proponents frame their case in terms of tawhid, the integrative approaches of mainstream exegetes is more worthy of this term.

*“Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas and the Development of a Modern Tawhidic Epistemology”***MS FADILA EZZAT**

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, France) (online)

ABSTRACT

In the introduction to his *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (1995), Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (b.1931) makes several broad and potent claims about Islamic thought. Al-Attas considers that the intellectual history of Islam did not undergo the consistent dialectical shifts and turns that have – according to him – characterized Western civilization. Rather, there are fundamental elements that have persevered as part and parcel of an Islamic worldview. He attributes this process to what he describes as the “*tawhid* method of knowledge”: an approach and conception of knowledge which can be found in the works of various representatives of Islamic thought, be they philosophers, theologians, or Sufis. This suggests that distinctions between these various schools of thought are not to be made along strictly methodological lines. This paper discusses how al-Attas illustrates his “*tawhid* method of knowledge” by selecting several scholarly works belonging to different eras, from al-Ghazali (d.1111) to Nur al-Din ‘Abd al-Rahman Jami (d.1492) to Nuruddin al-Raniri

(d.1658). By so doing, he illustrates the process of “canonization” and preservation of the fundamental elements of this Islamic worldview.

“The Islamic Tradition at European Universities”

DR TOBIAS ANDERSSON

Uppsala University, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the integration of Islamic theology into theological and philosophical disciplines at European universities, particularly secular ones, in light of Alasdair MacIntyre’s notion of tradition as “an historically extended, socially embodied argument.” It argues that the historical extension of the Islamic traditions of intellectual enquiry cannot easily be detached from their social embodiment if one seeks to maintain them in historically recognisable ways and that Muslim theologians should be aware of this when working at secular universities that embody other traditions. The main conclusion is that Muslim theologians who, for good reasons, participate in the ongoing academic conversations at secular universities should not forget their primary participation in the historically extended, socially embodied arguments that constitute the established Islamic traditions of enquiry. The purpose of the paper is to initiate a discussion about what happens to Islamic intellectual traditions when they enter theological disciplines at secular universities.

“The Anthropocene Era and the Living Earth: New Tasks for Islamic Theology”

PROF. DR KARIM D. CROW (Catholic University of America, USA) and **PROF. DR ASNA HUSIN** (UIN Ar-Raniry Darussalam, Indonesia)

ABSTRACT

Technology increasingly rules most aspects of human individual and communal lives, realizing the Enlightenment conviction that science makes everything possible. The utopian promise of this ANTHROPOCENE era asserts human control over all aspects of nature and society through advanced technology. Our creative applications bring significant benefits, yet are inflicting baneful harm upon our species and planet. Technology reflects us ethically—reflects humans as we now find ourselves to be—an alarming prospect given that our current ethical regimes are clearly not in order. The Human factor is intertwined with pervasive misuse of technology. ‘Instrumental Rationality’ operates at the heart of new forms of digital intelligence relying on algorithms exploiting ‘Big Data’ posing as ‘Deep Mind’. Its unrestrained use in social media, the WorldWide Web, Artificial Intelligence, as well as economic and military fields, raises genuine concerns for human abuse of technology bringing unforeseen consequences.

The cardinal principle of *tawhīd* ‘Oneness’ at the heart of Islam’s worldview affirms the integral unity of Humans, knowledge and Cosmos in a hierarchic scale. Digital intelligence magnifies our imperfect reality as incomplete creatures endowed with embodied biological intelligence, whereby human rationality is mingled with emotion and instinct. Theology may offer significant resources profiting from recent advances in Earth System science on the biosphere, by advocating ecologic–ethical practices reflecting Oneness. Muslim leaders and intelligentsia should offer better informed guidance by actively contributing in global engagement, and educating ourselves on the perils of unbridled technology and unrestrained consumerism.

“Islamic theology as a Consolidation of Scientific Systems: Fragmenting or Unifying”

DR KHALINA MOHAMMED KHALILI

Independent Researcher, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a preliminary attempt to unify the theological divergence that results from seemingly opposed conceptualizations and formulations of Islamic philosophy, *kalam*, and theoretical Sufism when dealing with the natural world (physical sciences). The status quo serves as a point of departure, by which the semantic differences between these disciplines are analyzed and compared. This analytical and philosophical study attempts to nurture an epistemological uniformity that is subsumed within a framework of unicity, known as the *Tawhid* Method. A

semantic bracketing of keywords into their respective conceptual frameworks is followed by a comparative analysis of terminology, with the former being re-aligned into the semantic network of the philosophy of science. Pertinent questions driving this research are: in what ways do diverse theological arguments embrace the realist and anti-realist views of modern science? Can Islamic philosophy of science unify and clarify conceptions of nature?



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