THE ORDINARY WITHIN ISLAM: JAVĒD AḤMAD GHĀMIDĪ AND THE REPRESENTATION OF PROPHETHOOD IN THE QUR'ĀN

Muhammad Faisal Khalil
St. Antony's College,
University of Oxford

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Religious Studies for the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford

Student # 1126827

ABSTRACT
‘THE ORDINARY WITHIN ISLAM: JAVĒD AḤMAD GHĀMIDĪ AND THE REPRESENTATION OF PROPHETHOOD IN THE QUR’ĀN’

This thesis argues for the significance of ‘the ordinary’ within Islam, closely examining and building upon the work of Pakistani Islamic thinker Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī (b. 1952). It makes the case that moral life, according to Islam, primarily consists of our everyday thoughts, feelings, and actions, in comparison to Islamic traditions in contemporary South Asia, which often resist the prominence of the ordinary. Instead, most Islamic traditions assert that ‘the extraordinary’, an event beyond our everyday actions and causes, shapes our moral lives.

This thesis explores the intellectual tension over the ordinariness of moral life in Islam within the context of prophethood. It is argued that for many Islamic traditions, prophethood represents the extraordinary par excellence, viewing post-prophetic moral life as characterised by a genre of prophetic events, namely transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. Ghāmidī instead maintains that the event of prophethood cannot be experienced again but remains morally significant to everyday life.

The thesis examines these contrasting views of prophethood through two analytical endeavours. Firstly, it utilises recent scholarship in everyday life studies to formally identify and evaluate various forms of the ordinary and extraordinary in contemporary Islamic discourses on prophethood. Secondly, it builds upon Ghāmidī’s unique literary exegesis of the Qur’ān as the narrative representation of prophethood to classify different representations of prophethood in Islamic traditions.

Focusing on Ghāmidī’s intellectual context of contemporary South Asia, this thesis closely examines his body of work, which exists entirely in Urdu, alongside relevant Sufi, Islamist, and Sunnī texts from South Asia. This examination is supported by relevant secondary literature, including everyday life scholarship on twentieth-century European and American literary modernism. The thesis comprises six chapters: an introduction, four core chapters, and a conclusion. The core chapters trace conflicting representations of prophethood across four selected topics: prophethood, politics, eschatology, and moral life.

STATEMENT OF LENGTH AND ORIGINALITY

This thesis totals 93,394 words (excluding glossary and bibliography) and does not exceed the stated word limit of 100,000 words.

This thesis is entirely the result of my own work. While it includes a small amount of research also used in my MSc dissertation, *Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī and the Exegetical Clarification of Political Sharī'ah in Islam* (Department of International History, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2010), its contribution is minor, and none of the material presented here remains in the same form.

Muhammad Faisal Khalil
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I have just started to piece together this work. But even now, I am reminded that there are nine and sixty ways of doing this. And I know, I know that writing this work has been simply nothing more than a grammar growing around someone ineffably beautiful. I wrote it mostly because I wanted to see you, Fatima.

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

This thesis employs the American Library Association and Library of Congress (ALA-LC) Romanization scheme for transliterating Urdu and Arabic texts. Please note that some customizations have been made to the standard ALA-LC Romanization system to better suit the specific requirements of this thesis. These customizations are made the relevant sections of the text. In citations of and quotations from other sources, vernacular words and the names of people, places, publications, and organisations are written as they appear in the original text, romanizations of texts are left unchanged to preserve the original representation and style of the source material. In cases where the quoted text employs a different Romanization system, the reader is advised to refer to the original source for a clear understanding of the Romanized text.

When dealing with compound words and phrases, the thesis follows the rules of the ALA-LC Romanization system, the thesis represents Urdu iẓāfat and Arabic iḍāfah constructions as follows:

- Urdu iẓāfat: Use a hyphen (-) to represent the unstressed "e" sound that connects the two words in the iẓāfat construction.
- Arabic iḍāfah: Use a hyphen (-) to connect the nouns in the iḍāfah construction.

These representations are intended to comprehend the relationships and possessions indicated in the source languages.

The following table provides an alphabet-wise representation of the transliteration system used.

Urdu ALA-LC Romanization		**Arabic ALA-LC Romanization**	
Urdu Letter	*Romanization*	*Arabic Letter*	*Romanization*
ء	ʻ	ء	ʻ
ا	ā	ا	ā
ب	b	ب	b
پ	p	ت	t
ت	t	ث	th
ٹ	ṭ	ج	j
ث	s	ح	ḥ
ج	j	خ	kh
چ	ch	د	d

ح	ḥ	ذ	dh
خ	kh	ر	r
د	d	ز	z
ڈ	ḍ	س	s
ذ	z	ش	sh
ر	r	ص	ṣ
ڑ	ṛ	ض	ḍ
ز	z	ط	ṭ
ژ	zh	ظ	ẓ
س	s	ع	‘
ش	sh	غ	gh
ص	ṣ	ف	f
ض	ẓ	ق	q
ط	ṭ	ك	k
ظ	ẓ	ل	l
ع	‘	م	m
غ	gh	ن	n
ف	f	ه	h
ق	q	و	w, ū
ک	k	ى	ạ
گ	g	ي	y, ī
ل	l		
م	m		
ن	n		
و	v, ū		
ه	h		
ى	y, ī		
ے	ē		

INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues for the significance of 'the ordinary' within Islam. By closely examining and building upon the work of the Pakistani Islamic thinker Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī (b. 1952), it makes the case that moral life according to Islam mainly consists of our everyday thoughts, feelings, or actions. This case is made in comparison with Islamic traditions in contemporary South Asia, which it is argued often resist the prominence of the ordinary. Most Islamic traditions claim that 'the extraordinary', an event beyond the reach of our everyday actions and causes, does shape our moral lives. This thesis explores the intellectual tension over the ordinariness of moral life in Islam with the example of prophethood. For many Islamic traditions, it is argued, prophethood is the extraordinary par excellence: Islamic traditions view post-prophetic moral life as characterised by the genre of prophetic events, namely transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. Ghāmidī instead asserts that the event of prophethood cannot be experienced again, but nevertheless, it remains morally significant to everyday life.[1]

I. Contributions to Existing Scholarship

This thesis makes two distinct contributions to existing scholarship. Firstly, it makes an additive contribution by offering new knowledge to important niches in existing literature. Specifically, it fills important gaps in existing scholarship on Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī while also bringing to light so far unrecognized developments in the contemporary exegesis of the Qur'ān. Secondly, it makes a reformulative contribution by identifying and addressing new problems not yet captured in existing literature. Specifically, it opens up a new direction for evaluating Islamic thought with the interdisciplinary concept of the ordinary, and highlights how prophethood is a major factor in determining the intellectual tension over the ordinary.

1. Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī

Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī[2] was born on April 18, 1952, in Jīvan Shāh village, District Sahīwal,

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[1] This thesis critically engages with the concept of 'the ordinary' in Islam through the scholarship of Ghāmidī. Contrary to arguing that Ghāmidī's scholarship has a monopoly on the ordinary, it should be asserted that the gamut of Islamic traditions inherently incorporates elements of the ordinary. Ghāmidī's approach, notable for emphasising the ordinary in moral life, does not negate the extraordinary, acknowledging aspects such as the apocalyptic nature of prophethood. However, it is in the domain of prophethood that a discernible binary arises between the ordinary and the extraordinary; traditional interpretations are often imbued with the divine or the supererogatory, whereas Ghāmidī focuses on benefiting from prophethood within the confines of our usual experience. Notwithstanding this, there is a complex interplay between the ordinary and the extraordinary in Islamic thought. This interplay manifests in diverse configurations—sometimes as a binary opposition, particularly in prophethood, other times as a spectrum, a dialogic dyad, or more intricate forms such as hierarchical arrangements, cyclical patterns, nested configurations, and dialectical synthesis. Through a juxtaposition of Ghāmidī's oeuvre with Sufi, Islamist, and Sunnī texts, underpinned by modern scholarship in everyday life studies, this thesis seeks to focus on a special case of this interplay but with the expectation that it will act as a springboard that offers the academic legitimacy to examine other interplays between the ordinary and the extraordinary across Islamic traditions, both within and beyond South Asia.

[2] In his book, Maqāmāt, Ghāmidī shares an essay titled 'Maira Nām', where he shares the story behind his surname which might seem unfamiliar in the Indian Subcontinent. During his childhood, he longed to create a connection between his name and his grandfather Nūr Elāhī, who was renowned for his ability to settle disputes, earning him the title of a peacemaker (muṣliḥ). One day, a Sufi friend of his father visited

Punjab.[3] He pursued both modern education and traditional Islamic training, learning the Qur'ān, Arabic, and Persian early in life.[4] In 1968, Ghāmidī attended Government College Lahore, where he became closely associated with Sayyid Abū al-A'lā al-Mawdūdī and his political party, Jamā'at-e-Islāmī.[5] However, intellectual disagreements led to his expulsion from the party in 1977.[6] During his Jamā'at years, Ghāmidī began studying Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī's[7] (d. 1930) literary exegesis of the Qur'ān in 1973 under Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī[8] (d. 1997), one of Farāhī's personal students. Isḷāhī, a founder and former Jamā'at-e-Islāmī member, left the party in 1958 after disputing Mawdūdī's use of aḥwan al-balītayn ('lesser of two evils'). [9]

Starting his independent work in 1983, Ghāmidī emerged as a Muslim thinker and critic of

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and recounted the tale of the patriarch of the Banū Ghamid tribe in Arabia, who was also recognized as a skilled peacemaker. The proximity of these two events in Ghāmidī's mind made him decide to include the name Ghāmidī to his given name, Javēd Aḥmad. See Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*, 15–19.

[3] 'Early Life of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi'.

[4] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a', 357.

[5] Masud, 357.

[6] Iftikhar, 'Jihad and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative Study of the Worldviews and Interpretative Approaches of Abü al-A'la Mawdüdi and Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī (Master's Thesis)', 5.

[7] Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī, born in 1862 in Phriha, India, was a distinguished Islamic scholar who made substantial contributions to the literary and rhetorical exegesis of the Qur'ān. Initially learning Arabic from his maternal first cousin, Shiblī Nūmanī, Farāhī advanced his studies in literary Arabic at the Oriental College Lahore under Mawlānā Fayḍ al-Ḥasan Sahrānpūrī. Farāhī's intellectual focus lay in pre-Islamic high Arabic poetry, which he employed to decipher the Qur'ān's style and meaning. Employing high Arabic poetry, Ḥadīth, and the statements of Prophet Muḥammad's Companions, Farāhī argued for the coherence of the Qur'ān's structure and theme. His work has been influential in Qur'ānic studies, introducing new approaches and frameworks for understanding the text. Although Farāhī did not complete most of his works, his completed publications, such as "Majmū'ah-e-Tafāsīr-e-Farāhī," "Mufradāt-ul-Qur'ān," "Al-Am'ān fī Aqsām-il-Qur'ān," "Jamharatul Balāghah," "Asālīb-ul-Qur'ān," and "Dalāil-un-Niẓām," have been instrumental in shaping the sub-disciplines required for Qur'ānic studies. Dā'irah-e-Ḥamīdīyah in Sarai Mīr, India, an institution established to promote and propagate Farāhī's thoughts and views, has published these writings. See: Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*, 62–102., and Yūsufī, *Fikr-e-Farahi - Shakhsiyaat Aur Khidmaat*.

[8] Amīn Aḥsan Isḷāhī, born in 1904 in Bamhur, India, was a prominent Islamic scholar and a pivotal figure in the development and dissemination of Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī's exegetical thought. Isḷāhī initially encountered Farāhī while studying Arabic literature at Madrasatul Islāh. In 1925, he left his journalism career to study the Qur'ān and Arabic literature under Farāhī, remaining his student until Farāhī's death in 1930. From 1936 to 1939, Isḷāhī established Da'irah-e-Ḥamīdīyyah, which promoted Farāhī's ideas through the monthly Urdu journal, Al-Islāh. In 1941, Isḷāhī co-founded Jamā'at-e-Islāmī with Mawdūdī, providing intellectual leadership for 17 years. After departing from the Jamā'at in 1958, he concentrated on developing a Qur'ānic commentary based on Farāhī's thought, resulting in the publication of Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān in 1980. Isḷāhī's Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān critically developed, refined, and applied Farāhī's coherence methodology. In 1981, he founded the Idārah-e-Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān-u-Ḥadīth, which functioned as the platform for his intellectual activities until his death in 1997. Through this institution, Isḷāhī led a quarterly journal, Tadabbur, and delivered regular lectures on the Qur'ān, the Mu'atta of Imām Mālik, and Imām Bukhārī's Ṣaḥīḥ, many of which were published in Tadabbur. His work has had a lasting impact on Qur'ānic studies and Islamic thought. See: Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*, 62–102., and Yūsufī, *Fikr-e-Farahi - Shakhsiyaat Aur Khidmaat*.

[9] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a', 367.

political Islam during General Zīā ul Ḥaq's Islamization in Pakistan.[10] He founded two Islamic journals, *Renaissance*[11] and *Isḥrāq*[12], and established the Islamic research institution, Al-Mawrid. In 2006, he joined the Council of Islamic Ideology in Pakistan under Dr Muḥammad Khalīd Masūd.[13] After facing terrorist threats for criticizing Tehrīk-e-Tālibān Pākistān, the Tālibān, and al-Qaeda, Ghāmidī left Pakistan in 2010 for self-exile. Initially finding sanctuary in Malaysia, he eventually relocated to Dallas, Texas, in 2019 due to increased religious opposition. In the United States, Ghāmidī established the Ghāmidī Center for Islamic Learning[14], which complements his primary research institution, Al-Mawrid. The centre promotes and shares his ideas through public engagement and knowledge dissemination via online videos, courses, forums, and public speaking events.

The existing scholarship on Ghāmidī can be described as limited but growing. This scholarship has examined Ghāmidī in three major ways: his Islamic thought, how his thought challenges established concepts in understanding Islam, and his role in the development of Islamic modernism in Pakistan.

One significant published work devoted to his thought is Khalid Masud's paper on Ghāmidī[15], which offers a biography and outlines his intellectual method before examining his critique of the punishment of rajm (stoning to death) as enacted by the Hudood Ordinance of 1979 in Pakistan. It sheds light on one of Ghāmidī's most foundational arguments: that divine law (in this case for punishment) is not ambiguously disclosed through an event, but it is unambiguously revealed in the Qur'ān or Sunnah. His critical study of the cases of rajm decided by the Prophet show that these were not to simple cases of zina but in fact belonged "to the offence of fasad fi-l-ard and haraba, for which extra-ordinary punishments available at that time were given."[16] Another important study is Asif Iftikhar's unpublished dissertation[17], which compares Ghāmidī's and Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī's respective views of jihad and examines how and why Ghāmidī critiques Mawdūdī's argument that war can be waged to propagate religion or eradicate a non-Islamic 'system'. Iftikhar concluded that in contrast to Mawdūdī's notion of jihad, Ghāmidī's views offer a unique perspective on jihad. Of particular import are this assertions that all the killing and assassinations by the Prophet and this companions, their conquests of certain territories, their jihad, and the choices they gave of "Islam or death" [18] or of "Islam or death or subjugation and jizyah" [19] were all under the

[10] Masud, 367.

[11] 'Renaissance'.

[12] 'Isḥrāq'.

[13] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a', 358.

[14] 'Ghāmidī Center of Islamic Learning | Al- Mawrid U.S.'

[15] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a'.

[16] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a', 370.

[17] Asif Iftikhar, 'Jihad and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative Study of the Worldviews and Interpretative Approaches of Abü al-A'la Mawdüdi and Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī (Master's Thesis)' (Montreal, McGill University Libraries, 2005).

[18] Iftikhar, 99.

[19] Iftikhar, 99.

rubric of a *Divine judgment against a Divinely specified people in a Divinely specified territory in a Divinely specified time.*"[20] More recently, Adnan Zulfiqar has written about Ghāmidī's opposition to long-term imprisonment.[21] Comparing him to American political activist Angela Davis, Zulfiqar shows that Ghāmidī's anti-carceral ideas are strictly moral. While Davis draws on her personal experience of imprisonment and its historical injustices, Ghāmidī sees prison as fundamentally immoral because the prison is an institution created by humans rather than divinely ordained: "Ghāmidī suggests that prison forces an individual to suppress their innate desire for emotional connection to their kin, a hardship that, he says with reference to Muslim scripture, even God never demands. The subtext is clear: this human institution is not only inhumane, but ungodly."[22]

Papers by Humeira Iqtidar[23] and Sadaf Aziz[24] have examined Ghāmidī's relationship with the Pakistani state to problematize widely-accepted concepts used to label Islamic thought. These papers argue that these labels oversimplify the complex debates within the Islamic tradition. Aziz argues that because of his "serviceability"[25] to liberal reforms such as 'Enlightened Moderation' by the Pakistani state, Ghāmidī is often categorized with 'good' (as opposed to 'bad') Muslims or 'authentic' (as opposed to 'inauthentic') Islamic spokespersons.[26] She notes that a closer examination of Ghāmidī reveals that he cannot be easily labelled in this way. She argues that his views that are amenable to liberalism are in fact independently driven by his reformist concerns about Islam's normativity.[27] Iqtidar makes similar interventions about Ghāmidī. While discussing the difficulty in categorizing religious ideas as either 'traditional' or 'modern,' she argues that Ghāmidī's focus on achieving a balance between method and sensibility, rather than accepting or rejecting modernity, casts doubt on the idea of pitting traditionalists against modernists or Islamists against militants.[28] Iqtidar advances this case within the context of labelling thinkers as 'liberal'. By showing that Ghāmidī defends tolerance not on the basis of liberalism but based on a Sharī'ah-inspired account of individual responsibility and state minimalism, she argues that religious thinkers such as him cannot be labelled as liberal Islamic thinkers: "Ghāmidī's insistence that he is not a liberal alerts us to differences between his vision and liberal conceptions of tolerance. It is clear that he is not interested in the question of individual freedom."[29] Moreover, this non-liberal conception of tolerance call into question the naturalized relationship between

[20] Iftikhar, 99.

[21] Iftikhar, 99.

[22] Zulfiqar, 'The Immorality of Incarceration: Between Jāvēd Ahmad Ghāmidī and Angela Y. Davis'.

[23] Iqtidar, 'Is Tolerance Liberal?'

[24] Sadaf Aziz, 'Making a Sovereign State: Javed Ghāmidī and "Enlightened Moderation"', *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (2011): 597–629.

[25] Aziz.

[26] Aziz.

[27] Aziz, 620.

[28] Iqtidar, 'Is Tolerance Liberal?'

[29] Iqtidar.

liberalism and tolerance: "Ghāmidī's nonliberal tolerance affords us an opportunity to reconsider the strength of the relationship between liberalism and tolerance."[30]

Recent scholarship on post-Islamism has attempted to revisit Ghāmidī's treatment as a fundamentalist, modernist, or Islamist. Inspired by Iranian sociologist Asef Bayat's work on post-Islamism[31], which describes a shift in the Muslim world away from radical Islamist movements[32], this scholarship has sought to reconcile different facets of Ghāmidī's thought as representative of his journey towards post-Islamism. While Ghāmidī has remained a fundamentalist throughout this journey, his evolving views of Islamic politics have moved him from an Islamist to a modernist, or more properly, a post-Islamist. Iqtidar, therefore, classifies Ghāmidī's school as a depoliticized spin-off of the Jamā'at-e-Islāmī[33], while Husnul Amin describes Ghāmidī as "the iconic figure, grand intellectual, in post-Islamism."[34] While this scholarship rests on the key assumption that Ghāmidī's thought developed in direct dialectic with important theorists of political Islam, such as Mawdūdī, which eventually resulted in a critique of political Islam and an embracing of a more nuanced and pluralistic approach to politics in Islam.

Existing scholarship on Ghāmidī, therefore, can be characterized as nascent. It gives limited attention to Ghāmidī's broader Islamic thought beyond his critique of specific issues such as politics, criminal law, or war. It can also be said to be limited in its comparative and contextual analyses. It does not assess Ghāmidī's thought in broader intellectual and social movements beyond Islamic modernism and Islamism in Pakistan. Lastly, while this scholarship recognizes how Ghāmidī's thought problematizes common conceptual distinctions to analyse contemporary Islam, it does not offer alternative conceptual distinctions that can more adequately or fully categorize his thought while also engaging with his wider intellectual and social context. References that describe him as a fundamentalist, modernist, Islamist, and post-Islamist tend to show no supporting evidence to make that assessment and can also be seen as too broad and open-ended, overlooking important idiosyncrasies or differences within the Muslim world. In other words, scholarship has often lumped Ghāmidī together with different religious movements and actors under a single umbrella term. Nevertheless, Iqtidar's recent work, in particular, does recognize this.

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[30] Iqtidar.

[31] Bayat, *Post-Islamism*.

[32] The 'two-phase' thesis of Islamism to post-Islamism has emphasized both Islamism's lack of success and its, at times pragmatic and at times intellectually sincere, acceptance of democracy, pluralism, and power-sharing. See, for example: Imad, 'Post-Islamism: Ideological Delusions and Sociological Realities'. This transition from Islamism to post-Islamism has been a predominant academic framework, even in the more innovative scholarship, and has arguable obscured conceptualizations of politics by Muslims thinkers that may not necessarily be may neither be seeking to reform Islamism nor reimagine politics in Islam in a dedicating way but may nevertheless offer strong counterpoints to Islamism if examined. See, for example: March, *The Caliphate of Man*.

[33] Iqtidar, 'Post-Islamist Strands in Pakistan'.

[34] Amin, *Post-Islamism*.

2. Exegesis of the Qur'ān

The thesis also brings to light important developments in the contemporary indigenous exegesis of the Qur'ān, to not only include Ghāmidī into the fold of academic scholarship, but to also to use his developments for analytical purposes.

Ghāmidī maintains that the Qur'ān has a distinctive literary style (uṣlūb).[35] While historical-critical scholarship and twentieth-century Islamic exegesis have both used this style to uncover its literary structure, the mapping of this structure is largely limited to the identification of literary units consisting of one or more Qur'ānic chapters[36] (sūrahs). Based on how certain sūrahs dovetail into other sūrahs, for example, Neal Robinson postulated that literary units may consist of at least pairs of sūrahs.[37] However, both Islamic and historical-critical scholarship struggle to identify literary structure within the sūrah and across the Qur'ān. Richard Bell[38] and William Montgomery Watt[39] proposed that there may be a literary unit within a sūrah that consists of verse groups, while Angelika Neuwirth detected a three-unit structure in sūrahs, with the middle unit communicating a narrative much like Jewish and Christian scripture.[40] Similarly, based on the literary coherence between sūrahs, Neal Robinson[41] as well as Mathias Zahniser[42] postulated that the Qur'ān may have a sustained literary structure as a whole. However, both Robinson and Zahniser have not been able to identify what this sustained literary structure actually is.

Ghāmidī advances the scholarship on the literary structure of the Qur'ān. He builds upon the scholarship of his predecessors, Farāhī and Iṣlāḥī, to identify not only literary units between sūrahs, but also within sūrahs and the across text of the Qur'ān. Unlike Neuwirth, Ghāmidī does not offer a formula for literary units within a sūrah; rather, his exegesis systematically frames, segments, and connects the constituent passages of a sūrah. Ghāmidī's argues that the Qur'ān's overall literary structure is that of narrative representing prophetic apocalypse.[43] This view is unique among both traditional and historical-critical scholarship, which have at most argued that the prophet Muḥammad warned of an imminent apocalypse. Recognising the rhetoric (balāgha) the Qur'ān, Angelika Neuwirth, for example, views it as product of an interaction between the Prophet and his audience.[44] While unearthing a chronological account of Muḥammad's mission from the Qur'ān, she argues that prophethood may consist of at least two stages. The first stage consists of the prophet delivering his transcendent message to the individual, while the second stage consists of the prophet focusing exclusively on the

[35] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 21.

[36] Ghāmidī, 54.

[37] Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 279.

[38] Bell, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān.*, 86–107.

[39] Watt, 'The Dating of the Qur'ān', 51–53.

[40] Neuwirth, *Der Koran Als Text Der Spätantike*, 362–63.

[41] Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 201–23.

[42] Zahniser, 'Major Transitions and Thematic Borders in Two Long Sūras: Al-Baqara and al-Nisā'', 26–55.

[43] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 49.

[44] Neuwirth, *Der Koran Als Text Der Spätantike*.

community. By highlighting the 'eschatological diptychs' that recur in the Qur'ānic passages, Neuwirth asserts that the prophet's central messages were about the end of times.[45] This eschatological reading of prophethood is reinforced by Nicolai Sinai in his analysis of the Qur'ān's primary message, 'kerygma'.[46] He proposes that the early Qur'ān, at least, was "an innovative cultural translation or Arabic naturalization of Syriac eschatology."[47] This means that according to the Qur'ān, the prophet archetypically performs two functions. First, he offers a certain moral vision that involves both a radical critique of 'man' (al-insān) in general, as well as the endorsement of specific social and religious virtues. Second, he delivers eschatological messages, ranging from terse threats and warnings asserting a posthumous reckoning to graphic depictions of the ultimate disintegration of the cosmos and of paradise and hell.[48] Stephen J. Shoemaker makes a similar case, arguing that when the Qur'ān is evaluated against the historical-critical standards used to reconstruct the historical Jesus, the prophet in Islam appears less an agent of social justice and more the archetypically "eschatological warner"[49] who stands at the origin of the Judeo-Christian tradition of prophets: "Indeed, when the eschatological traditions of the Qurʾān and early Islam are evaluated according to the same standards used in reconstructing the historical Jesus, the results suggest a need to move beyond modern scholarship's prophet of social justice in order to recover, as once was similarly necessary in the study of the historical Jesus, the eschatological warner who stands at the origin of this global religious tradition."[50]

Ghāmidī claims that this prophetic apocalypse, in part or whole, cannot occur during our everyday life. He is able to support this claim by uniquely stating that the Qur'ān is a narrative representation of the Muḥammad's prophethood (peghambar kī sargazashat-e-Indhār): "The Qur'ān is the representation of Muhāmmad's warning (indhār). Every page of the Qur'ān speaks of this reality. The reason for this is that the Qur'ān has not merely been revealed as an amalgam of Sharī'ah and ḥikmah."[51] The Qur'ān, in other words, takes the form of the object it describes. This is unique literary transformation, which makes the apocalyptic events of Muḥammad's prophethood available solely to fulfil our everyday moral needs. This narrative representation tells the stories of the apocalypses that the Ishmaelites[52]

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[45] Neuwirth, *Studien Zur Komposition Der Mekkanischen Suren*, 180.

[46] Nicolai Sinai, 'The Eschatological Kerygma of the Early Qur'ān', in *Apocalypticism and Eschatology in Late Antiquity: Encounters in the Abrahamic Religions, 6th-8th Centuries*, ed. Emmanouela Grypeou, Guy G. Stroumsa, and Lady Margaret Hall (University of Oxford), Late Antique History and Religion, volume 17 (Visions of the End: Apocalypticism and Eschatology in the Abrahamic Religions (Conference), Leuven ; Paris ; Bristol, CT: Peeters, 2017).

[47] Sinai, 254.

[48] Sinai, 226.

[49] Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, 136.

[50] Shoemaker, 136.

[51] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 49.

[52] In Muḥammad's context, the Ishmaelites represent the Arab people who trace their lineage back to Ishmael, son of Abraham. The Quraysh tribe, to which Muḥammad belonged, considered themselves Ishmaelites. Islamic tradition holds that Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba in Mecca, a sacred site in Islam. As a prophet, Muḥammad sought to restore the original monotheistic faith of his Ishmaelite ancestors by purifying the worship of the Kaaba and removing polytheistic rituals.

and Israelites[53] experience. The Qur'ān is able to tell both stories at the same time by narratively representing Muḥammad's prophethood with a 'stereoscopic perspective'[54], in which the reader is carried both backward and forward. The apocalypse of the Ishmaelites is told backward, starting from end of the Qur'ān, while the apocalypse of the Israelites is told forward, starting from the beginning of the Qur'ān.[55] These two apocalyptic stories dramatically end in the 'middle' of the Qur'ān at Sūrah Tawbah, which announces the end of God's mercy to narrate the absolute reckoning of both the Ishmaelites and the Israelites. [56]

According to Islāhī and Ghāmidī's shared framework, the Qur'ān consists of escalating thematic parts, each part making a whole: verses (āyāt) constitute chapters (sūrahs), which constitute chapter-pairs (mathanī), which constitute sūrah-groups (abwāb), which constitute the Qur'ān.[57] Āyāt are organised into a sūrah on the basis of a shared theme; one sūrah is paired with the sūrah directly following it on the basis of a shared theme; each sūrah-pair is joined with other sūrah-pairs on the basis of a shared theme to form a sūrah-group (bāb); and each sūrah-group is joined with other sūrah-groups to fully compose the Qur'ān.[58] (Ibid.) Each sūrah-group started with one or more Meccan sūrahs to end with one or more Medinese sūrahs.[59] The following, accordingly, is the composition of each sūrah-group[60]:

1. The first sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Fatihah (1) to Sūrah Maidah (5), with Sūrah 1 Meccan and Sūrahs 2 to 5 Medinese.
2. The second sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Anam (6) to Sūrah Tawbah (9), with Sūrahs 6 to 7 Meccan and Sūrahs 8 to 9 Medinese.
3. The third sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Yunus (10) to Sūrah Nur (24), with Sūrahs 10 to 23 Meccan and Sūrah 24 Medinese.
4. The fourth sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Furqan (25) to Sūrah Ahzab (33), with Sūrahs 25 to 32 Meccan and Sūrah 33 Medinese.
5. The fifth sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Saba (34) to Sūrah Hujrat (49), with Sūrahs 34 to 36 Meccan and Sūrahs 47 to 49 Medinese.

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[53] In Muḥammad's context, the Israelites are descendants of Isaac, son of Abraham, and central to the Abrahamic faiths. Islamic tradition recognizes Israelite prophets and considers them "People of the Book." While sharing lineage with Ishmaelites, Muḥammad's mission was to unite both groups under monotheism and the Islamic faith as the final prophet. In addition to the Ishmaelites, The Nazarenes were early followers of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. They, along with the Israelites, were recognized as "People of the Book" in Islamic tradition, receiving divine revelations through their respective sacred texts. The thesis has primarily referred to the Israelite and Ishmaelites given the prophetic and covenantal relevance of these two labels.

[54] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 159.

[55] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 51.

[56] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 54-6.

[57] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 54-6.

[58] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 54-6.

[59] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 54-6.

[60] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 54-6.

6. The sixth sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Qaf (50) to Sūrah Tihrim (66), with Sūrahs 50 to 56 Meccan and Sūrahs 57 to 66 Medinese.
7. The seventh sūrah-group begins from Sūrah Mulk (67) to Sūrah Nas (114), with Sūrahs 67 to 112 Meccan and Sūrahs 113 to 14 Medinese.

It is noteworthy that different levels of the Qur'ān's literary coherence were discovered over time. The sūrah as a thematic unity of āyāt was discovered by Farāhī,[61] the sūrah-pairs and sūrah-groups by Islāhī[62] and the Qur'ān as the narrative representation of Muḥammad's prophethood by Ghāmidī.[63] This progressive discovery indicates that their school of thought was not a moral paradigm conveying a static argument, but a self-evaluative succession of thinkers, critically developing and rearranging their shared argument over time. What we finally see in the Qur'ān is that the smaller narratives share the same structure as the larger narratives, each persistently echoing the apocalypse that the Prophet delivered upon his people.

Ghāmidī's unique understanding of the event of prophethood as an apocalypse, and how the Qur'ān assimilates this apocalypse into a morally useful story of apocalypse is the outcome of his approach to the Qur'ān's language. Accepting the Qur'ān's claim that it was "sent down" bi-lisānin 'arabiyyin mubīn, "in clear Arabic" (26:195), he argues that the language in which the Qur'ān was revealed in is the vernacular Arabic of the Ishmaelites.[64] This vernacular Arabic is, of course, the Ḥijāzī dialect spoken in the region of Western Arabian Peninsula where we find Mecca and Medina.[65] Ghāmidī's position stands in stark contrast to Western scholarship, not only traditional orientalist but also historical-critical, which treats the Qur'ān as written in classical Arabic instead of a vernacular of Arabic. An early exception to this was Karl Vollers' quickly-buried 1906 work on Qur'ānic Arabic being vernacular.[66] More recently, Marijn van Putten's has also argued that dialectical differences in the Qur'ānic consonantal text—the linguistic layer of the Qur'ān stemming from a time close to the revelation—consistently agree with the ḥijāzī dialect.[67]

The basis for Ghāmidī's claim can be found, however, in late traditional Qur'ānic scholarship in the South Asia, specifically the works of Farāhī's. In *Asālīb al Qur'ān* ['Style of the Qur'ān'] (1930), Farāhī argued that the Qur'ān was revealed in vernacular Arabic and that this vernacular language gave the Qur'ān a distinctive literary style (uṣlūb).[68] Farāhī applied this definite literary style on the Qur'ān to conclude was that it was a text that possessed deep

[61] al-Farāhī, *Majmū'ah Tafāsīr*., and al-Farāhī, *Rasā'il Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'Ān*.

[62] Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*.

[63] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 49.

[64] Ghāmidī, 20.

[65] van Putten, 'The Quranic Consonantal Text':

[66] Vollers, *Volkssprache Und Schriftsprache Im Alten Arabien*.

[67] van Putten, 'The Quranic Consonantal Text':

[68] al-Farāhī, *Asalib al Qur'ān*.

literary coherence (naẓm).[69] The view that the Qur'ān has a significant degree of literary coherence shares is a characteristic shared with late historical-critical as well as twentieth-century Islamic exegesis. As Sinai notes, Islamic exegesis has increasingly determined that the Qur'ān's chapters, sūrahs, are structured around "thematic "hubs" (sg. ʿamūd), "aims" (sg. gharaḍ), or "pivots" (sg. miḥwār)"[70] while late historical-critical exegesis has now accepted that at least short and medium-sized sūrahs are unified and sophisticated literary compositions. [71] Farāhī supported Islamic exegesis's view of sūrahs-based hubs, claiming that the Qur'ān consists of nine sūrah-groups (abwāb).[72] His student, Islāhī, revised this number to seven sūrah-groups.[73] Ghāmidī, who is arguably Islāhī's most prominent student, agreed with Islāhī's revision[74], and sanctioned this number with the following Qur'ānic verse: "And We have bestowed upon you seven mathānī [75], which is this great Qur'ān."(15:87)

The thesis derives a unique set of analytical categories based on Ghāmidī's view that the Qur'ān is a narrative representation of prophetic apocalypse to frame and assess intellectual tension over ordinariness. As the thesis argues over the course of its analysis, Islamic traditions might be seen as 'inferentially reconstructing'[76] prophethood from a number of genres—tafsīr[77], Ḥadīth[78], sīrah[79], kalām[80], and falsafah[81]—for the purpose of using prophethood as a model for moral life. This process of making inferences and drawing conclusions about prophethood based on available information and then reconstructing or piecing together a more complete understanding or representation of prophethood invariably leads to representations that are incomplete, inaccurate, or uncertain in certain aspects. To borrow Brian A. Catlos's striking observation about the challenge of historical interpretation and the limits of knowledge in studying the past:

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[69] al-Farāhī.

[70] Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Quran', 142.

[71] See, example, Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'ān*.; Mir, 'The Sūra as a Unity: A Twentieth Century Development in Qur'ānExegesis'.; Sinai, 'Reading Sūrat Al-Anʿām with Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā and Sayyid Quṭb'.

[72] al-Farāhī, *Asalib al Qur'ān*.

[73] Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*, IV:377–78.

[74] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān 54*.

[75] Mathānī is the plural of mathnā and it means that which occurs in pairs. On Isḷāhī's sanction, Neal Robinson says: "The weakest element in Isḷāhī's thesis is his claim that the existence of the sūrah pairs and of the seven groups of sūrahs is sanctioned by tradition." Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an*, 279.

[76] The deduction of missing or unclear information by analysing available evidence and drawing logical conclusions based on that evidence.

[77] Exegesis or interpretation of the Qur'ān, aimed at explaining its meanings and providing context.

[78] Recorded sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet Muḥammad, used as a source of Islamic law and guidance.

[79] Biographical accounts of the Prophet Muḥammad's life, providing context for understanding his teachings and actions.

[80] Islamic theological discourse, focusing on rational arguments to address questions related to faith and doctrine.

[81] Islamic philosophy, engaging with both Greek philosophical traditions and Islamic thought to explore metaphysics, ethics, and other philosophical topics.

> "In sum, there exists a tremendous range of evidence, all of it compelling in its own way, but almost all of it ambiguous, and subject to multiple readings and interpretations. It is as if in seeking to understand the past of this distant, vanished people, we reach out to pluck up the slivers of a shattered mirror, and in regarding each, see some distorted fraction of ourselves, which we carefully arrange with others into what seems to us to be a coherent representation of the past. Shards of love, and shards of hate . . . of hope, of fear, and pride . . . of shame. The pursuit of empirical proof, of evidence, becomes an exercise that is at once obligatory, yet futile. It may be, indeed, that History must be grounded in some sense of objective fact, but how can our evidence be read objectively when we can so easily make of it what we will, and when our conclusions so obviously reflect our own agendas and anachronistic preoccupations, no matter how well intentioned?"[82]

Catlos proceeds to call the result of historical interpretation to be a "two-dimensional realism, neatly verisimilar but inevitably incomplete."[83] As will be asserted, the traditional treatments of prophethood are arguably verisimilar but incomplete accounts—"shards"[84]—of prophethood that claim to be real but are only approximations of reality. Ghāmidī's holistic account of the Qur'ān and how it discloses the apocalyptic reality of prophethood can be used as an empirical yardstick to measure in some objective sense the verisimilitude of these traditional treatments.

Using Ghāmidī's literary exegesis for an explicitly heuristic purpose, in which the Qur'ānic representation of prophethood has analytical value which we can apply to not only the Qur'ān but by extension the Islamic traditions, carries a number of risks. It firstly challenges the underlying premise of Euro-American scholarship, which epistemologically resists using the broader Islamic tradition for any analytical value, especially the Qur'ānic text itself. Current academic scholarship on Qur'ānic studies remains focused on the late-antique biblicised Qur'ān, notably advocated by Nicolai Sinai's five-year research project 'Qur'ānic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm'[85], and the scholarship generated especially around the International Qur'ānic Studies Association (IQSA).[86] Sinai's project examines pre-Islamic Arabic to decipher the keywords of the Qur'ān in order to one day build a historical-critical commentary of the Qur'ān.[87] This historical-critical scholarship contextualises the Qur'ān in biblical literature and uses traditional literature only as a secondary source. A key feature of this scholarship is that, in the words of Lowry, it "feels that Muslims are too

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[82] Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c*, 519.

[83] Catlos, 519.

[84] Catlos, 519.

[85] 'Qur'anic Commentary: An Integrative Paradigm | QuCIP Project | Fact Sheet | H2020 | CORDIS | European Commission'.

[86] 'International Qur'anic Studies Association | الجمعية الدولية للدراسات القرآنية'.

[87] *Nicolai Sinai: Qur'anic Semantics and the Nascency of an Islamic Lexicon*.

unsophisticated to pursue the study of what the Qur'ān really meant."[88] Lowry's observation resonates with the recent critique from Joseph Lumbard, who warns that the legacy of colonialism continues to affect the study of the Qur'ān in the Euro-American academy[89], with Eurocentric approaches to knowledge production being prioritized over modes of analysis developed in the Islamic world.[90] This epistemic hegemony results in a reductionist approach that rejects the analytical tools of the classical Islamic tradition and inhibits effective discourse in the international community of Qur'ānic studies scholars.[91] Such hegemony has also led to the marginalization of indigenous Muslim approaches to the text, relegating them to the status of "information supply."[92] The rejection of diverse epistemological frameworks from different cultural paradigms is commonplace in the field.[93] The disregard for the commentary tradition, Qur'ānic sciences, ḥadīth literature, and sīrah literature as a methodological principle is also widespread, with the quest for "historical accuracy" often used to discount sources.[94] This methodology has resulted in approaches to the Qur'ānic text that have excluded the use of tafsīr for reconstructing the historical context of the text, and have perpetuated "the colonialist project of producing epistemologically domesticated and pacified subjects."[95] Acknowledging the obstacles to which the coloniality of knowledge has given rise can help develop more inclusive approaches that incorporate multiple modes of analysis and foster a more effective dialogue.

The other focus of academic scholarship is the traditional Muslim Qur'ān. This scholarship prioritises traditional literature over late antiquity or biblical intertexts. It was recently reinvigorated by the publication of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *The Study Qur'ān* (2015).[96] Sinai's late-antique biblicised Qur'ān does not adequately engage with the century-long work in developing a comparably sophisticated understanding of the Qur'ān already completed by contemporary indigenous Muslim scholars. The traditional Muslim Qur'ān also does not adequately engage with the full geography of Muslim scholars. The classification of 'traditional' scholars remains Arabic and medieval. For example, Nasr's The Study Qur'ān, is dominated by medieval sources in Arabic, with only two of its 41 sources dated within the 20th century.[97]

While both forms of scholarship study the Qur'ān in their distinct ways, neither side is able to talk to each other about their methods and evidence. Moreover, and critically within the context of this thesis, both strands of scholarship remain for the most part focused on keeping

[88] *Nicolai Sinai: Qur'anic Semantics and the Nascency of an Islamic Lexicon*.

[89] Lumbard, 'Decolonizing Qurʾanic Studies'.

[90] Lumbard, 1.

[91] Lumbard, 1.

[92] Lumbard, 3.

[93] Lumbard, 3.

[94] Lumbard, 3.

[95] Lumbard, 11.

[96] Nasr, *The Study Quran*.

[97] Bruce Fudge, 'Study the Quran or The Study Quran?', 577.

the Qur'ānic text the subject of analysis rather than the source of analysis. There is, therefore, a lack of 'viewpoint diversity'[98]—the exclusion of a third viewpoint by two predominant ways to study the Qur'ān. The inclusion of indigenous Muslim scholarship on the Qur'ān into academic scholarship would expand the field and its interpretative repertoire. Moreover, such an inclusion should not be a simple "bridge between Qur'ānic studies in the Muslim world and the Euro-American academy that remains grounded in assumptions of the epistemic sovereignty and heuristic superiority of Euro-American thought will only serve to perpetuate the hermeneutical marginalization of Muslim scholars."[99] This inclusion should be meaningful, in that it involves the reformulation of the epistemic relationship between the two forms of scholarship. To revisit Lowry, not only are Muslims 'sophisticated' enough to pursue the study of what the Qur'ān really meant, but the Qur'ān is 'sophisticated' enough for study the Islamic tradition. This study can be valid, even desirable, in the context of research, teaching, and learning in universities. As Lowry, himself said, "The Islamic tradition is one of the great humanistic traditions, and the Qur'ān is also at its centre. And it would be a shame, I think to lose sight of the Qur'ān's role in Islamic intellectual history, which is what I worry will happen if the Qur'ān, as an academic pursuit, becomes exclusively the preserve of [a few] people."[100] By seeing analytical value of the Qur'ān, the thesis attempts to contribute to the reformulation of the epistemic relationship between traditional and historical-critical scholarship. Precisely because of this reformulation, it is worth noting that the use of South Asian reading of the Qur'ān for its heuristic should not lead to an over-emphasis on the indigenous texture of the South Asian Qur'ān translation and commentary tradition. It is not for any exotic interest that this reformulation is being proposed. South Asian scholarship is already intimately entangled with and relies upon the wider Qur'ān commentary tradition and its key sources and textual archives, and this thesis only seeks to formally recognise and capitalise on its embeddedness in this scholarship.

To be sure, putting the spotlight on Ghāmidī's South Asian discourse, the thesis does seek to straightforwardly include contemporary non-Arabic sources. Expanding beyond biblical intertextual and medieval Arabic sources, and emphasizing Ghāmidī's work, this approach potentially contributes to the ongoing historiographical revision of the centre-periphery perspective in Islamic revival and reform. This perspective traditionally frames "the Middle East as the seat of authoritative religious reasoning vis-à-vis a marginal South Asian Islam."[101] Fuchs's work shows that South Asian thinkers were not simply been creative or

[98] "Viewpoint diversity" in academia refers to the intentional inclusion and consideration of diverse intellectual and ideological positions in scholarly discussions, research, and educational activities. This concept emphasizes the importance of engaging with different ways of thinking to foster critical inquiry, promote intellectual growth, and enhance the quality of education. Viewpoint diversity can stimulate innovation, creativity, and challenge established assumptions or biases, ultimately creating a more robust and inclusive educational experience for all students and scholars.

[99] Lumbard, 'Decolonizing Qurʾanic Studies', 13.

[100] *Nicolai Sinai: Qur'anic Semantics and the Nascency of an Islamic Lexicon*.

[101] Fuchs, *Relocating the Centers of Shīʾī Islam: Religious Authority, Sectarianism, and the Limits of the Transnational in Colonial India and Pakistan. (Ph.D. Thesis)*, 3.

disruptive brokers and translators of historical and contemporary Islamic thought.[102] They are, in fact, self-confident pioneers[103] of Islamic revival and reform. This recalibration of South Asian thinkers from brokers to pioneers is confirmed by SherAli Tareen in his maiden review of South Asian Qur'ānic translations and commentaries.[104] He notes that what is particularly "South Asian" about early modern and modern scholarship on the Qur'ān lies in its relationship to, and impact on, global Muslim traditions of Qur'ān scholarship outside South Asia.[105] It is scholarship that uniquely represents the most linguistically vast engagement with Islamic scholarship, both absorbing and producing translations and commentaries in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. Moreover, its impact has not been limited to one time or region either.[106] Driven by its new approaches to the Qur'ān and hermeneutical populism, it has influenced scholarship outside South Asia with "trans-regional"[107] and "cross-temporal"[108] intellectual interactions.

This point particularly applies to Ghāmidī's contribution to Qur'ānic exegesis and the religious heuristics resulting from it. But Ghāmidī's exegetical contributions remain at the margins of academic attention. SherAli Tareen precisely highlights this: "After all, despite South Asia's voluminous and intellectually diverse and distinguished contributions to this knowledge tradition-rendered in at least three major Islamicate languages simultaneously (Arabic, Persian, and Urdu), these contributions are rarely accorded the canonicity of major pre-modern or for that matter modern Arabic and in some cases Persian Qur'ān commentaries from the Middle East. And it is perhaps this sidelining of South Asian Qur'ān scholarship within the tradition that explains the paucity of attention it has attracted in the Euro-American academy."[109] This is especially felt in the case of Ghāmidī's tradition, as Lumbard notes: "Amin Ahsan Islāhī (d. 1997) and his teacher Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī (d. 1930) in Pakistan have done ground-breaking work on coherence and order in the Qur'ān that is often ignored or occluded in Euro-American discussions of the order of the Qur'ān. Nonetheless, many of these scholars are rarely, if ever, referenced in studies of the Qur'ān in the Euro-American academy."[110] As a result, Qur'ānic scholarship in South Asia has largely survived in a non-academic world of self-funded, independent institutions, conducting research on subsistence, and teaching future generations of scholars through indigenous forms of voluntary learning, such as durūs (lessons) and majālis (gatherings). The inclusion of this scholarship has a lot in common with some other recent scholarship, notably Johanna Pink's 'The Global Qur'ān'

[102] Fuchs, *Relocating the Centers of Shī'ī Islam: Religious Authority, Sectarianism, and the Limits of the Transnational in Colonial India and Pakistan. (Ph.D. Thesis)*.

[103] Fuchs.

[104] SherAli Tareen, 'South Asian Qur'ān Commentaries and Translations: A Preliminary Intellectual History', *ReOrient* 5, no. 2 (1 April 2020), https://doi.org/10.13169/reorient.5.2.0233.

[105] Tareen, 252.

[106] Tareen, 252.

[107] Tareen, 252.

[108] Tareen, 252.

[109] Tareen, 253.

[110] Lumbard, 'Decolonizing Qurʾanic Studies', 12.

project[111], which makes the case for extending our study of the Qur'ān beyond the medieval Middle East to include modern Muslim scholarship from Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Thus far, the bridge crossing between Qur'ānic studies in the Muslim world and the Euro-American academy has involved a two-way exchange: historical-critical method travelling to scholars in the Islamic world and conversely premodern Islamic work being incorporated into the modern Western study of the Qur'ān. While cautioning against "merely cannibalizing earlier Islamic works"[112], Sinai advocates for the former, arguing that "the historical-critical method has yielded results that may well prove of interest to scholars in the Islamic world, even scholars who are not prepared to embrace the historical-critical method without significant qualifications."[113] Nasr, on the other hand, calls for the highest level of scholarship, which is not "determined or guided by assertions presented in studies by non-Muslim Western scholars".[114] He instead calls for a 'modernistic' commentary[115] that is "nonetheless based completely on traditional Islamic thought and the earlier commentary traditions"[116] in the hope "that this exposition will enable readers to interact on various levels with the Qur'ān and remove the erroneous view, held in some non-Muslim quarters, that because Muslims consider the Qur'ān to be the Word of God, they do not think about it or interact intellectually with it, whereas the Qur'ān itself invites its readers to mediate upon and think about its teachings."[117]

Against this backdrop, the thesis aims to establish a new exchange. It seeks to not only move contemporary Islamic scholarship to the modern Western study of the Qur'ān, but also seeks to bring what can be described as an Islamic analogue of the historical-critical method into historical-critical scholarship of Euro-American academy. While there are differences and qualifications, Ghāmidī's literary exegesis of the Qur'ān is arguably comparable to Western historical-critical scholarship. The hope is that this cross-cultural compatibility will not only lead to new ideas, insights, and solutions that enhance problem-solving in historical-critical scholarship, but also provide a more comprehensive understanding of and access to the scholarly study of the Qur'ān. As Sinai himself notes, historical-critical scholarship has only caught up to the point of Iṣlāḥī while tracing the journey of Farāhī's literary exegesis:

> "What I would like to highlight in the present context is the crucial role that references to premodern and modern Islamic scholarship have played in the modern Western conversation about sūrah coherence. One of the earliest scholarly monographs in English to explore a holistic view of Qur'ānic sūrahs was

[111] 'GloQur- The Global Qur'an'.

[112] Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Quran', 114.

[113] Sinai, 140.

[114] Nasr, *The Study Quran*, xl.

[115] Nasr, xl.

[116] Nasr, xliv.

[117] Nasr, xliii.

> Mustansir Mir's 1986 book on Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī,[118] and although few Western scholars of the Qur'ān read Urdu, Iṣlāḥī's understanding of the structure of some of the long Medinan sūrahs and the arrangement of the Qur'ānic corpus as a whole is discussed in important publications by Neal Robinson and Mathias Zahniser, among others. Incidentally, the first two volumes of Iṣlāḥī's nine-volume commentary *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* are now available in English."[119]

In so far as the 'historical' component of historical-critical scholarship is concerned, Ghāmidī works hard to distinguish between what is historically analogous about the Qur'ān and what is not. On the one hand, neither is prophethood governed by the same natural laws as the present, nor is the Prophet morally or intellectually "comparable to present human agents"[120]. On the other hand, the moral and intellectual abilities of past human agents—including the Companions of the Prophet—are comparable to those of present human agents.

Ghāmidī's emphasis on historical analogy extends to two further aspects of the Qur'ānic text: its language, and it how it was transmitted. Ghāmidī strongly emphasizes the historicity—as opposed to divinity—of the Qur'ānic Arabic. To a great extent, the language happened in the context which defined the kind of language it was: "The Qur'ān has been revealed in the classical Arabic spoken in Mecca. It was spoken in the age of ignorance by the tribe of Quraysh. No doubt the Almighty has endowed it with inimitable eloquence and articulacy in the Qur'ān, yet as far as its substance is concerned, it is no different from the one spoken by the Messenger of God and which in those times was the tongue of the people of Mecca."[121] So Qur'ānic semantics should not view the Qur'ān as an act of linguistic creation from nothingness, but rather a product of extended and very complicated processes of semantic transformation, a product of what Michael Pregill has called the "substantial degree of indigenization of monotheist scriptural and parascriptural traditions."[122]

Similarly, the transmission of the prophet's scripture and religion were also historically conditioned. In contrast to the claims that the Qur'ān and Islam were infallibly transmitted—preternaturally by either post-prophetic consensus of the ummah or the precedent of imāms—Ghāmidī maintains that both were transmitted through generational and intergenerational

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[118] Sinai's reference to Mustansir Mir is telling. It highlights the elision of Muslim scholarship that does not conform to the epistemologies of the Euro-American academy, whether in terms of language or scholarship methods. Mir was a member of a small group led by Ghāmidī that studied Islāhī and was eventually exiled from the Jamā'at-e-Islāmī for it. Mir, who moved to Euro-American scholarship, is now a Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Islamic Studies at Youngstown State University, and his work is widely cited in Western scholarship on the Qur'ān. In contrast, the academy largely ignores Ghāmidī's work because he chose to remain within his indigenous and traditional setting.

[119] See Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'ān*.; and Mir, 'The Sūra as a Unity: A Twentieth Century Development in Qur'ān Exegesis'.

[120] Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Quran', 138.

[121] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 157.

[122] Pregill, 'Method and Context in the Study of Bible and Qur'an: The Calf Narrative as Case Study', 32.

processes that are embedded in our natural permanent order.[123] Regarding the Qur'ān, Ghāmidī states the following:

> This was revealed to Muḥammad (sws), the last Prophet of God…. The Prophet (sws) presented it to his people and from them it was transferred through the consensus and through the verbal and written perpetuation of the Muslims. Consequently, in divine literature, this is the only Book about which it can be said with full certainty that it is present with us in its original form, shape, language, and arrangement without the slightest bit of change. The way it has been transmitted through tawātur (perpetuation) is a miracle in itself because this is the only Book in this world which even at this time can be read out verbatim from its beginning to the end by thousands who have memorized it. History tells us that in the last fourteen hundred years this mode of transmission has not ceased for a single day. It is evident from this that it is the Almighty Who has made arrangements to protect the Qur'ān."[124]

In so far as the 'critical' component is concerned, Ghāmidī does suspend judgment about what the Qur'ān says. Only after having undertaken the interpretation of the Qur'ān is he willing to conclude what it may say—and what it may not. This suspension of judgement extends most significantly to traditional certainties about the meaning of the Qur'ān. It does not, however, extend to the traditional certainties about origin of the Qur'ān. Ghāmidī, as a Muslim exegete, considers the Qur'ān to in fact be true and divine. It was, according to him as well as the traditional Islamic scholarship, authored by God and revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad.[125] Ghāmidī, therefore, is 'critical traditionist' in the spirit, if not substance, of how Khalid Masud described him. Despite rethinking Sharī'ah, "Ghāmidī is not apologetic; he rarely refers to Western criticism. He seldom differs with the Islamic modernists, but he never leaves the traditional framework. Ghāmidī is not unaware of the modern context but since his discourse is primarily with the traditionalists on the one hand and Jama'at Islami and its seceding groups on the other, he is more a critical traditionist than an Islamic modernist."[126] Ghāmidī takes great care in classifying himself within the broader intellectual landscape of Islamic revival and reform in South Asia since the nineteenth century. He identifies himself as a muḥaqqiq (critical-intellectual), a type of intellectual actor who engages with the Qur'ān to interpret religion while suspending judgment on the veracity of traditional religious doctrines. This approach contrasts with that of the mu'alim (traditional-intellectual), who focuses on interpreting religion to revive traditional doctrines. Ghāmidī identifies Shiblī Nomānī (d. 1914) as the intellectual figure who exemplifies the mantle of the muḥaqqiq. Unlike the modernist apologies of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898), Nomānī problematized religious knowledge while still maintaining specific theological commitments found in traditional religious doctrines.

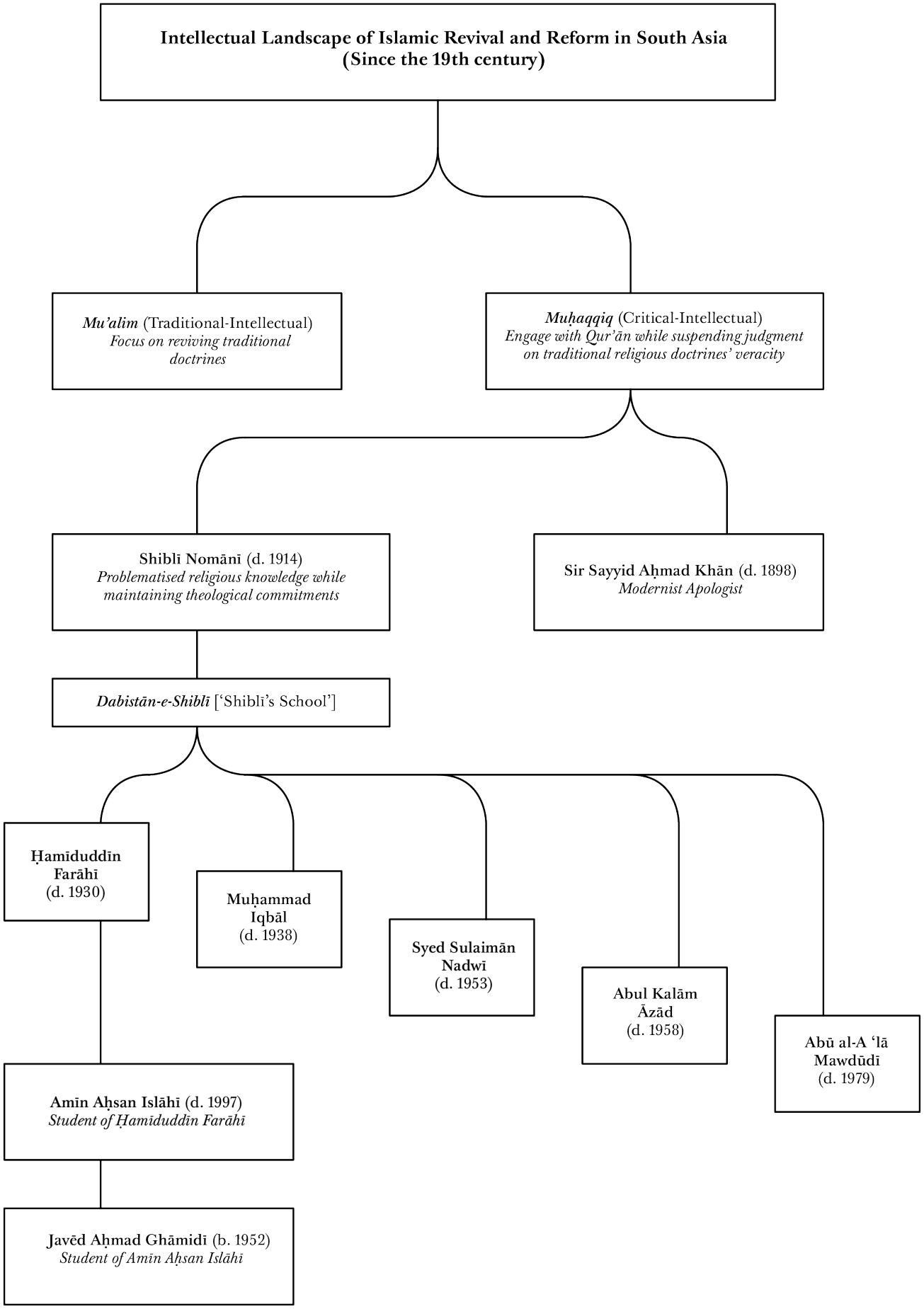
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[123] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 15–21.

[124] Ghāmidī, 157.

[125] *Dabistan-e-Shibli Ki Wall of Fame*.

[126] Masud, 'Rethinking Sharī'a', 356.


Intellectual Landscape of Islamic Revival and Reform in South Asia
(Since the 19th century)
Mu'alim (Traditional-Intellectual)
Focus on reviving traditional doctrines
Muḥaqqiq (Critical-Intellectual)
Engage with Qur'ān while suspending judgment on traditional religious doctrines' veracity
Shiblī Nomānī (d. 1914)
Problematised religious knowledge while maintaining theological commitments
Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898)
Modernist Apologist
Dabistān-e-Shiblī ['Shiblī's School']
Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī (d. 1930)
Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938)
Syed Sulaimān Nadwī (d. 1953)
Abul Kalām Āzād (d. 1958)
Abū al-A 'lā Mawdūdī (d. 1979)
Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī (d. 1997)
Student of Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī
Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī (b. 1952)
Student of Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī

Ghāmidī casts himself alongside other intellectual figures in Shiblī's "school," "Dabistān-e-Shiblī," including Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938), Syed Sulaimān Nadwī (d. 1953), Abul Kalām Āzād (d. 1958), Abū al-A ʻlā Mawdūdī (d. 1979), Ḥamīduddīn Farāhī (d. 1930), Amīn Aḥsan Islāhī (d. 1997), and Waḥīd al-Dīn Khān (d. 2021). However, he most closely identifies with the lineage of Farāhī and Islāhī, both of whom he believes cast the Qur'ān at the heart of their intellectual pursuits.

Ghāmidī's commitment to critical judgment is, therefore, extensive but also curtailed by compelling theological reasons. He believes that if there is a critical justification for treating the Qur'ān as true and divine, it lies in its self-understanding as God's true word. This truth, therefore, can be tested in theological, ethical, and moral terms, but not in scientific or historical contexts. It can be concluded, therefore, that Ghāmidī's comparison with the historical-critical method is one of intellectual negotiation. Rather than making a binary decision for or against the full range of the historical-critical method, he is arguably aligned with both components of the method to varying degrees. His methodological commitment to both components is considerable but qualified by theological commitments. As such, Ghāmidī's has the potential to negotiate a truce between tradition and criticism in two ways, as described by Sinai:

> "This tension may play out in two different ways: one may revise or reinterpret traditional religious doctrines; or one may qualify one's commitment to the historical-critical method. The latter could, for instance, take the form of rejecting or severely curtailing the principle of historical analogy. Hence, we are not confronted with a binary decision for or against the full panoply of the historical-critical method. The question is, rather, what specific truce between historical criticism and traditional belief is negotiated by a given theologian or scholar."[127]

Ghāmidī's negotiation embodies both predictions: he revises or reinterprets traditional religious doctrines; and he also qualifies his commitment to the historical-critical method.

Ghāmidī also does not conventionally use the earlier Judeo-Christian tradition in his scriptural exegesis. He does believe there is an important intertextual relationship between the Qur'ān and the Judeo-Christian scriptures of the Torah and the Bible.[128] Like Taqi al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyyah (d. 1328)[129] and Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Biqāʿī (d. 1480)[130], Ghāmidī holds the hermeneutical view that the Torah and the Bible consist of, if only in part, divine

[127] Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Quran', 139.

[128] *Bible Ke Tareekhi Waqiat Ki Haisiyat*.

[129] Yücedoğru, 'Ibn Taymiyya's Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics in Al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ/The Correct Response (PhD. Dissertation) [İbn Teymiyye'nin El-Cevâbü's-Sahîh İsimli Eserindeki Kitâb-ı Mukaddes Metinlerinin Yorumu (Doktora Tezi)]'.

[130] Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*.

scripture because they come from the same divine speaker.[131] As long as the Torah and the Bible do not clearly contradict something the Qur'ān believes to be true or if there is no strong evidence or reason to believe that the scriptural text is not authentic, he treats it as the word of God.[132] Ghāmidī, accordingly, uses it to interpret the Qur'ān. Unlike the historical-critical tradition, however, Ghāmidī's predominant focus is not on the use of Judeo-Christian scriptures in the interpretation of the Qur'ān but the other way around. The historical-critical tradition attempts to historically reconstruct Qur'ānic Arabic by examining its close counterparts in the Judeo-Christian languages of rabbinic Aramaic, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Hebrew. Ghāmidī, in contrast, uses his claim that the Islamic and Judeo-Christian scriptures emanate from the same divine voice to argue that the Qur'ān represents the most complete and well-preserved benchmark of this divine voice and against which all other artefacts of this voice need to be measured.[133] He specifically uses the literary and rhetorical style of the divine voice in the Qur'ān to exegetically clarify the Judeo-Christian scriptures. His tafsīr, *Al-Bayān* ['The Exposition'] (2021),[134] for example, offers a rich—albeit intermittent—repository of exegetical annotations on the Torah as well as the Bible.

Ghāmidī's historical and critical commitments inform his pronounced emphasis on Qur'ān's literary and rhetorical features. Instead of harnessing doctrinal preconceptions from the Qur'ān, he focuses, just as Sinai describes in the case of the rest of Islamic tradition of scriptural exegesis on "the linguistic (lexicographical, grammatical, and rhetorical) analysis"[135] of the Qur'ān that is partly or even primarily philological in nature.[136] He shares this characteristic view with both the premodern Islamic as well as the late historical-critical traditions. He carries out close intertextual comparisons to consistently produce literary and rhetorical observations and insights. Unlike both traditions, however, he is far more selective in the semantic prehistory—the earlier texts and traditions—that he uses to illuminate the Qur'ān's literary and rhetorical features. Unlike contemporary historical-critical research, for example, he does not straightforwardly derive the meaning of the Qur'ān from the earlier Judeo-Christian tradition, or from early or classical Arabic usage, such as poetry or epigraphy.

3. Representations of Prophethood, in the Qur'ān and Beyond

The effort to evaluate other Islamic traditions based on how they inferentially reconstruct prophethood also contributes to existing scholarship on prophethood in two ways. The thesis first expands the scope of academic evaluations of how Islamic traditions draw continuity between themselves and prophethood. The discussion so far has especially focused on the question of whether the highest point in Sufi hierarchies, khātm al-walāyah (the seal of sainthood), is prophetic. The most accessible example of such scholarship is on the Sufi

[131] *Bible Ke Tareekhi Waqiat Ki Haisiyat*.

[132] *Bible Ke Tareekhi Waqiat Ki Haisiyat*.

[133] *Bible Ke Tareekhi Waqiat Ki Haisiyat*.

[134] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*.

[135] Sinai, 'Historical Criticism and Recent Trends in Western Scholarship on the Quran', 139–40.

[136] Sinai, 139–40.

thinker, Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn ʻArabī (d. 1240), whose examination of sainthood vis-à-vis prophecy in his oeuvre—*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* [ʻBezels of Wisdom']137 and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* [ʻMeccan Revelations'] (1238)138—stressed that ʻspiritual unveiling' (kashf) is a form of continuing divine revelation that is bequeathed to the spiritual elite or saint (awliyā'). Michael Chodkiewicz139, for example, explores whether Ibn ʿArabī doctrine of sainthood situated *khātm al-walāyah* within or beyond prophetic inheritance. Ronald Nettler140 more formally studies of Ibn ʿArabi's prophetology, which he shows esoterically reimagines Abrahamic prophetic figures in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* to the build a continuity the revelation of prophets and the revelation of divinely-inspired Sufi gnostics.141 Another focus of how Islamic traditions create continuity with prophethood is on the question of seal of the prophets (khātam al-nabīyīn), especially within the context of modern "prophetic" movement of the Aḥmadiyyah. On the question of whether Muḥammad is the seal of the prophets (khātam al-nabīyīn), the German orientalist Hartmut Bobzin analyses Sūrah Ahzab to conclude that, "the mere fact that 'prophetic' movements within Islam have arisen again and again shows that the word 'seal' (*khātam*) has also been understood differently … in the sense of confirmation i.e. as a form of continuity with earlier prophets."142 While examining the Aḥmadiyyah, Israeli scholar Yohanan Friedmann shows that the spectrum of interpretations in Islamic discourse very commonly break the 'finality' of Muḥammad's prophethood.143 Based on his extensive examination of Mīrzā Ghulām Aḥmad's (d. 1908) intellectual roots, Friedmann argues that Ghulām Aḥmad's concept of himself as the recipient of divine revelation was not marginal but mainstream.144 It was rooted as far back as medieval Islamic notions of prophethood, which supported the idea that human beings could also acquire prophetic perfections through spiritual efforts. Adil Hussain Khan145 synthesizes the scholarship on Sufism and the Aḥmadiyyah, by arguing that this transnational movement originates from a small Sufi-style brotherhood.

The key inadequacy of this scholarship is that limits its analysis of the continuity between prophets and traditions to the dramatic and obvious cases where religious movements clearly resist the traditional position about the abolition of prophethood with Muḥammad. This thesis, therefore, engages with question of the continuity between prophethood and traditions in less obvious, less well-worn directions remains entirely unexplored. It does so not only by adding new analyses on Sufism and the Aḥmadiyyah, but by going further to extend its focus from Sufism to other Islamic traditions, namely political Islam, and Sunnī Islam. It also uniformly reframes this scholarship by arguing that the continuities that these traditions build between prophethood are part of a uniform genre of extraordinary events, the primary source

137 Ibn al-ʻArabī and Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom*.

138 Ibn-al-ʿArabī and Chittick, *The Meccan Revelations. 1*.

139 Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*.

140 Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'ānic Prophets*.

141 Nettler.

142 Bobzin, 'The "Seal Of The Prophets", 565.

143 Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*.

144 Friedmann.

145 Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*.

which is prophethood. The only specialised scholarship on this direction literature is Islamic scholar Fazlur Rahman's 1983 monograph on the doctrine of prophetic revelation, *Prophecy in Islam*.[146] Fazlur Rahman's work focused on how classical Muslim philosophers, especially Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (d. 950) and Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), developed this doctrine and how their ideas were subsequently received by Muslim 'orthodoxy'. Relying on Greek thought, these philosophers constructed a comprehensive and complex doctrine of prophethood that aimed to give an "adequate picture of the Prophet and his actual performance"[147]. Rahman shows that according to this doctrine, there is no substantive difference between a mystic, a philosopher and a prophet.[148] They are human beings who intellectually acquire divine truth and are illuminated by it.[149] The one difference that makes us consider the prophet to be distinctive from the other two is that the prophet has one non-intellectual—*technical*—advantage over the mystic and philosopher.[150] The prophet is capable of communicating the divine truth to the masses in worldly or material forms, such a morality and law. This communicable truth, revelation (waḥy), puts the prophet a step ahead of the mystic and philosopher, both of whom experience spiritual truth, inspiration (Ilhām), and can at best support others like them—a spiritual, accidental elite—to also achieve inspiration.[151] Rahman shows that the orthodox reception of this doctrine, by Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), variably questioned this doctrine's notion of the prophet.[152] It did, however, insist that in the case of the mystic, the philosopher and the prophet, the intellectual acquisition of divine truth has to lead to moral action, only not by the prophet and his masses, but also the mystic and the philosopher.[153]

The second way in which the thesis sheds light on how Islamic traditions use prophethood is by emphasizing how these traditions rely upon unique epistemologies, as well as mechanisms to realize this use. As indicated above, these epistemologies consist of various types of religious knowledge synthesized to reconstruct certain representations of prophethood that can propose, describe, model, and justify moral life. These syntheses involve the mobilization of scholarly genres (e.g., tafsīr) and their sources, disciplines (e.g., ʿulūm al-Qur'ān), methodologies, and principles (e.g., uṣūl al-tafsīr). The thesis will examine such syntheses across a select number of topics and Ghāmidī's critique of them. This examination, however, will be largely limited to syntheses occurring at the level of genres, especially tafsīr and majmūʿ al-ḥadīth (collections of Ḥadīth), because undertaking a full examination at all levels requires significant space to define and deploy Ghāmidī's own epistemology.

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[146] Rahman and Sells, *Prophecy in Islam*.

[147] Rahman and Sells, 63.

[148] Rahman and Sells, 35–36.

[149] Rahman and Sells, 15.

[150] Rahman and Sells, 35.

[151] Rahman and Sells, 36.

[152] Rahman and Sells, 92–108.

[153] Rahman and Sells, 92–108.

Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that Ghāmidī's focus on genres that emphasize the Qur'ān and Sunnah is a result of his exegetical epistemology, which prioritizes the Qur'ān and Sunnah as the only epistemologically certain and coeval sources constituting the Dīn, the religion of Islam. This explains his synthesis of the Qur'ān and Sunnah for his own generic work and his concentration on scholarly genres limited to tafsīr and majmūʿ al-ḥadīth, especially in relation to how the Qur'ān uses Ḥadīth. Ghāmidī's exegetical methodology specifically divides its epistemological sources (wāsāil) for interpretation along two lines: external and internal. It regards as its categorical (qaṭʿī) and therefore indispensable sources the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.[154] The Qur'ān itself contains all the possible internal sources for interpretation, which are three: the pre-Islamic Arabic language, Qur'ānic parallels and—the most novel and central—Qur'ānic coherence (naẓm).[155] The Sunnah on the other hand is the only external source considered categorical, with the remaining five external sources regarded as non-categorical (dhannī) and therefore dispensable sources. These five are: the Ḥadīth, asbāb al nuzul, statements of the Companions, earlier Qur'ānic commentaries, previous scriptures, and ancient Arab history.[156] What is critical to note here is that Sunnah and ḥadīth are differentiated from each other. This is so because, according to Ghāmidī, only the Qur'ān and Sunnah constitute the 'one utterance', the epistemologically doubtless revelation. Their epistemological certainty is guaranteed by the tāwātur and ijmāʿ, the mass and unbroken transmission by universal consensus of the community within which Muḥammad established his religion.[157] It follows that only Sunnah mutawātirah, universally known practice of the Prophet Muḥammad, is considered Sunnah.[158] Moreover, while he considers the Sunnah as a categorical and coeval source with the Qur'ān, he does not regard Sunnah as adding anything further to what the Qur'ān has already stated. The Sunnah elaborates in practice what the Qur'ān has already stated, and can only be independently looked upon when the Qur'ān is silent. False attribution is of course the critical issue of Ḥadīth, which largely consists of akhbār ahad, isolated narratives. Ghāmidī accordingly regards ḥadīth as non-categorical: "Ahādīth (plural of Hadīth) are narratives which record the words, deeds, and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muḥammad (sws). They are mostly akhbār-e-ahād (isolate reports). It is absolutely evident that they do not add to the contents of religion stated in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In technical terms, they do not add any article of faith or any deed to religion."[159]

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[154] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 15–61.

[155] Ghāmidī, 51.

[156] Ghāmidī, 62–66.

[157] Ghāmidī, 62.

[158] Ghāmidī, 62.

[159] Ghāmidī, 62. Ghāmidī's epistemological perspective leads him to reject the traditional definition of ijmāʿ and its infallibility. The concept of ijmāʿ is generally believed to be the consensus or agreement of Islamic scholars that divinely protects the Muslim community from errors in interpreting and applying Islamic teachings. This consensus often relies on an extensive corpus of ḥadīth literature. However, Ghāmidī considers the ijmāʿ of the community where Prophet Muḥammad established his faith as the only Divinely ensured one. Consequently, he does not accept any consensus of the post-prophetic Muslim community. According to Ghāmidī's perspective, traditional notions of ijmāʿ are no longer operational in exegesis.

Not only does his epistemology not conform to standard labels and definitions of traditional genres, disciplines, methodologies, and principles, but it also seeks to transform them. For example, Ghāmidī's book *Mīzān* ['The Scale'] (2022) does not fall into any standard genre.[160] As a book intending to comprehensively present Islam on the basis of the Qur'ān and Sunnah (and not Ḥadīth), it does not examine any problems of application (iṭlāqī masāʾil).[161] Ghāmidī deliberately does this in order to critique fiqh genres, such as fiqh commentaries and manuals, which not only discuss Sharī'ah but also its application to contemporary issues. Shehzad Saleem makes this decision explicit, in his translation of *Mīzān*[162]: "The Sharī'ah portion of the book has been entirely cleansed from fiqh. It is based purely on the author's understanding of the divine law. Areas of fiqh like the application of Sharī'ah to specific circumstances or judgements in which the Sharī'ah is silent and ijtihād is needed are not touched upon. This is because all these areas belong to human intellect and are prone to change with change in circumstances and to variation because of a variance in intellect."[163] Ghāmidī's own applied examination of contemporary issues is undertaken in his two anthologies, *Maqāmāt* ['Stations'] (2021)[164] (which is self-consciously public in its form), and *Burhān* ['Evidence'] (2021)[165] (which is self-consciously scholarly in its form).

During its examination of genres, the thesis also highlights the mechanisms that Islamic traditions use to deliver and maintain their respective representations of prophethood. These mechanisms, as the thesis will show, include a host of practices ranging from pedagogical methods to moral practices to political institutions, such as the chains or lineages (silsilah) of the Sufis, education and learning (taʿlīm-o-taʿallum) of the Dēōbandi movement, Islamic State (Islāmī Riyāsat) of the Islamists, and self-purification (taz̲kīyah-e-nafs) across most Islamic traditions. Ghāmidī, as the thesis will show, does not propose specific mechanisms to shape moral life on the basis of prophethood, since he does not consider his representation of prophethood to be relevant and possible within the context of prophetic apocalypse. Moreover, he emphasizes no specific extraordinary mechanisms to ratify moral life but instead considers all aspects of everyday life—the ordinary—to be sources of moral life. The thesis, therefore, makes the central observation of the examination of genres and mechanisms is that Islamic traditions locate tafsīr within other genres, so that their generic representations of prophethood are transposed onto tafsīr.

Using Ghāmidī's prophetic apocalypse as a foundation, the thesis aims to develop a classification of how prophethood is employed by Islamic traditions. This classification will help to identify and evaluate the various representations of prophethood found in Islamic traditions. According to Ghāmidī, Muḥammad's apocalypse consisted of an absolute warning by the Prophet to his people Ishmaelites and Israelites assigned to Abraham's colony to

[160] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*.

[161] Ghāmidī.

[162] Ghāmidī.

[163] G̲h̲āmidī, *Islam*, 12.

[164] Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*.

[165] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*.

accept God, followed by the absolute reckoning of his people based on whether they accepted God or not:

> "It is known that Muḥammad (sws) was not merely a nabī (prophet), he was also a rasūl (messenger). Prophets are personalities whom the Almighty reveals divine guidance so that they can guide people. However, not every prophet is a messenger. Messengerhood is a position bestowed to only some prophets. According to its details furnished by the Qur'ān, a rasūl decides the fate of his addressees and implements the judgement of God on them in this very world." [166]

This prophetic apocalypse consisted of five stages (marāḥil):[167]

1. Stage 1 - Indhār (Private Warning of God's Apocalypse): The first stage of the prophetic apocalypse involves the prophet delivering God's warning interpersonally. Prophet Muḥammad privately warned the Ishmaelites in Mecca during this stage, which sets the foundation for the upcoming stages.[168]

2. Stage 2 - Indhār-e-Ām (Public Warning of God's Apocalypse): The second stage involves the prophet delivering God's warning publicly to spread the message to a wider audience. Prophet Muḥammad continued to warn the Ishmaelites publicly in Mecca.[169]

3. Stage 3 - Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Manifestation of God's Truth): The third stage involves the prophet making God's warning absolute, leaving people without any excuse to deny it: "So that after the coming of these prophets, mankind is left with no excuse against God." (4:165). Prophet Muḥammad broke the world's faith-giving conventions to establish God's truth self-evident and undeniable to the Ishmaelites and Israelites. [170]

4. Stage 4 - Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Abandonment and Migration): The fourth stage involves the prophet abandoning those who reject his warning and emigrating with his followers to another place in order to prepare for God's reckoning. This stage signifies the separation between believers and non-believers. Prophet Muḥammad's left Mecca with his followers to Medina after the Meccans rejected his message.[171]

5. Stage 5 - Jazā-o-Sazā (Reward and Punishment): In the fifth and final stage of the prophetic apocalypse, the Prophet delivers God's reckoning by rewarding the believers and punishing the disbelievers. This is a literal occurrence of the day of judgement, but on

[166] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 49.

[167] Ghāmidī, 534–43.

[168] Ghāmidī, 536.

[169] Ghāmidī, 537.

[170] Ghāmidī, 540.

[171] Ghāmidī, 541.

a smaller scale. It can either be delivered directly by God if the prophet does not have worldly power to do so, or indirectly, through the prophet if he does indeed have this worldly power. It is the ultimate event and the only opportunity for a pious community to appear in this world. Muḥammad delivered his reward and punishment (Jazā-o-Sazā) himself, given he was granted the necessary worldly power to do so. The reward for those who followed Muḥammad was their moral purification and the confirmation of their pious community. On the other hand, the Ishmaelites who continued to practice polytheism were punished with death, while the Israelites who believed in God but rejected Muḥammad's prophethood were subjected to subservience and jizyah payment. [172]

Ghāmidī does not formally organise his account of prophethood into a treatise on prophethood. It remains dispersed across numerous essays, books, translations, and commentaries. In *Mīzān*, Ghāmidī discusses the concept of prophethood in the chapter titled 'The Sharī'ah of Preaching'. Ghāmidī states that prophethood exists on two levels, the individual and the community, as follows:[173]

1. Individual Prophethood: Ghāmidī states that individual prophets are tasked by God to communicate a warning (indhār) to their people. These prophets started with Adam.[174] Ghāmidī reinterprets the traditional Islamic classification of prophets, differentiating between nabī and rasūl as two levels within prophethood. A nabī can only accomplish the first two stages (Indhār and Indhār-e-Ām), while a rasūl can progress through all five stages (Indhār, Indhār-e-Ām, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā). This redefinition contrasts with the conventional classification, which designates a nabī as one who does not receive a book of revelation (kitāb) or a revealed law (Sharī'ah), and a rasūl as one who receives both a book of revelation (kitāb) and a revealed law (Sharī'ah).

2. Community Prophethood: After a series of individual prophets, God introduced prophethood at the scale of the community. The descendants of prophet Abraham were specifically tasked with reminding people of God's truth. [175] The two descendant communities of Abraham are the Israelites and Ishmaelites. The Qur'ān specifies this responsibility in Sūrah Ḥajj as follows: "He has chosen you [for this responsibility] and laid on you no burdens in the observance of your faith. He has chosen for you the way of Abraham, your father. He has named you Muslims earlier and in this [period of the last prophet] as well. [He has chosen you] so that the prophet may bear witness against you, and that you yourselves may bear witness [to this religion] against other people of this world." (22:78) In order to become community prophets, the Israelites and Ishmaelites received rasūls, so that they not only bear witness to God's truth (shahādah) but also warn

[172] Ghāmidī, 543.

[173] Ghāmidī, 536–49.

[174] Ghāmidī, 532.

[175] Ghāmidī, 549.

other communities about God's truth and judgement.[176] God describes this responsibility in the case of the Ishmaelites, for example, as follows: "And similarly, We have made you an intermediate community so that you be witnesses [to the truth] before the people, and the Prophet [Muḥammad] be such a witness before you." (2:143) Ghāmidī makes the significant claim that God offers rewards (jazā) to the Israelites and Ishmaelites in this world if they fulfil their responsibility, and punishment (sazā) in this world if they forfeit it. He further observes that at present, "both the Israelites and the Ishmaelites are facing this punishment."[177] Similar to individual prophets, community prophets also exhibit two levels of distinction within prophethood. Some communities are limited to providing warnings, completing only the first two stages (Indhār and Indhār-e-Ām), while others are able to deliver rewards and punishments by progressing through all five stages (indhār, Indhār-e-Ām, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā).

Both individual and community prophets in Islam, therefore, bring a 'prophetic apocalypse' to people, delivering either revelation, reckoning, or both.

Building on Ghāmidī's differentiation, the thesis proposes a new framework for reclassifying prophethood. The four types of individual and community prophets can be identified based on how an Islamic tradition's representation of prophethood corresponds to 'prophetic apocalypse'. Recognising that the four types of individual and community prophets are not separate categories but two different graduations across the structure of prophethood, it argues that the classifications of prophethood in Islam can be redefined as follows:

1. Individual-Prophets:

a) Warner-Prophets: An individual prophet who is limited to the first two stages of prophethood, the nabī, can be reclassified as a warner-prophet. This type of prophet warns people about the apocalypse.

b) Reckoner-Prophets: An individual prophet who is capable of progressing through all five stages, the rasūl, can be reclassified as a reckoner-prophet. This type of prophet not only warns people about the apocalypse but also delivers it.

2. Community-Prophets:

a) Warner-Communities: Communities that are restricted to the first two stages of prophethood can be reclassified as warner-communities. This type of community warns other communities about the apocalypse.

[176] Ghāmidī, 549–51.

[177] Ghāmidī, 551.

b) Reckoner-Communities: A community prophet who is able to advance through all five stages can be reclassified as a reckoner-community. This type of community not only warns other communities about the apocalypse but also delivers it.

It follows the prophetic apocalypse has two types of stages: the first three (Indhār, Indhār-e-Ām, and Itmām-e-Ḥujjat) are revelatory stages, while the last two (Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā) are stages of reckoning. It follows that warner-prophets are individual prophets who deliver the revelatory stages of the prophetic apocalypse to their chosen community. Reckoner-prophets are individual prophets who deliver revelation and reckoning of the prophetic apocalypse to their chosen community. Warner-communities are divinely-chosen communities that deliver the revelatory stages of the prophetic apocalypse to other communities. Reckoner-communities are divinely-chosen communities that deliver revelation and reckoning of the prophetic apocalypse to other communities.

4. The ordinary and extraordinary within Islamic traditions

In order to structure and guide its analysis, the thesis uses the concept of 'the ordinary' to frame its examination of competing representations of prophethood. This scaffolding approach offers two analytical benefits. It provides an alternative conceptual distinction that can more adequately categorize Ghāmidī's thought as well as the wider intellectual tension, described as the tension over ordinariness, that exists between his school of thought and other Islamic tradition. It also provides a framework for understanding underlying structures and processes at play during this tension, and can help guide the analysis towards more meaningful insights and conclusions.

This thesis derives its scaffolding concept from recent scholarship in everyday life studies.[178] Recent developments in this scholarship call for a new understanding of twentieth-century European and American literary modernism[179]. Critical interpretations of literary modernism

[178] See Olson, 'Everyday Life Studies'. 'Everyday life studies' is an interdisciplinary field of research that investigates the ordinary and mundane aspects of daily life, exploring their significance and meaning. This field emerged with the works of several influential thinkers, such as Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes, Michel de Certeau, and Georges Perec, whose ideas were shaped by the cultural, historical, and social contexts they lived in. Everyday life studies can be divided into two main approaches: philosophies of everyday life and literary and cultural representations of the everyday. The paradox of everyday life studies lies in assigning significance to the insignificant or ordinary aspects of life. Scholars attempt to overcome this paradox by maintaining a theoretical distance from actual practices or by exploring how people experience the everyday, rather than focusing on specific manifestations of it. Literary modernism, which predated the theories of everyday life, played a crucial role in developing these theories by shedding light on impact of capitalism, consumerism, and technological advancements on everyday life. The works of Lefebvre and other theorists aimed to liberate everyday life from these stifling forces, finding inspiration in the modernist literature of their time. The field has since evolved, and contemporary studies of everyday life are now interested in examining the political, ethical, and social implications of the everyday, as well as theorizing it rather than merely describing it as a set of practices.

[179] 'Literary modernism' is a cultural movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, characterized by its innovative and experimental approach to representing reality in literature and other arts. It sought to push the boundaries of traditional literary techniques and styles, with a focus on subjective experience, alienation, and the exploration of inner lives. Some key features of literary

most usually say that European and American modernists focused on representing the extraordinary.[180] Modernists writers were understood to often transform everyday thoughts, feelings, acts or objects into unusual forms that exist beyond the everyday. For example, both Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats emphasised "exalted moments"[181], which would allow them to, to echo Walter Pater's (one of literary modernism's key precursors) words, "focus on where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy"[182]. In *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009), however, Liesl Olson argues that modernist writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Wallace Stevens, and Marcel Proust, did not implement the "aesthetic of heightened affect with which modernism is often associated."[183] They instead prioritized the representation of the ordinary. For example, as Wallace Stevens put it, "round and round, the merely going round, / Until merely going round is a final good."[184]

According to this scholarship, the 'ordinary' consists of things that we or we may think, feel, do, experience, or interact with during our everyday lives. The 'everyday' here stands for the autonomous and unchanging context[185] within which the ordinary happens. The extraordinary, on the other hand, consists of things that we may think, feel, do, experience, or interact with beyond our everyday lives. It follows that the everyday is seen here as something that has been interrupted by 'extraordinary' events that do not originate from or be explained with human action and natural causes.

The two different aesthetics of literary modernism, one focused on representing the extraordinary and the other prioritizing the representation of the ordinary, can be applied to understand how Islamic traditions represent prophethood. Ghāmidī asserts that the event of prophethood cannot be experienced again, but nevertheless, it remains morally significant to everyday life. For many Islamic traditions, however, prophethood is the extraordinary par excellence: Islamic traditions view post-prophetic moral life as still being characterised by prophetic events. As the thesis will show during the course of its analysis, these prophetic events can be seen to belong to a specific category or type of event that is defined in its purpose, format, audience, or theme to capture certain features of the prophet or certain stages of prophethood.

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modernism include the use of stream of consciousness, interior monologue, distortions in time, and multiple or shifting perspectives. Prominent modernist writers include Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein, among others. Virginia Woolf, for example, uses these techniques in her works to enter the internal experiences of her characters, exploring their psychological depths and the disparity between their inner and outer worlds. Woolf's works often revolve around themes such as the passage of time, collective consciousness, and the fluidity of identity, as seen in novels like "To the Lighthouse," "The Waves," and "Orlando."

[180] Olson, 4. A representative example of such scholarship is Tigges, *Moments of Moment*.

[181] Yeats, *The Secret Rose, Stories by W.B. Yeats: A Variorum Edition*, 142–43. For an in-depth examination, see for example: Liebregts, '"A Little Light ... to Lead Back to Splendour": Ezra Pound and Epiphany'.

[182] Pater and Buckler, *Walter Pater, Three Major Texts*, 186.

[183] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 67.

[184] Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*, 405.

[185] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 18.

The thesis, thus, proposes that these events represent a genre of prophetic events. The present analysis has been able to identify three main variations of these events: transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. Since these types of events differ in their specific meanings and contexts, they prove important in determining different representations of prophethood. Each event represents a different way in which traditions explored the complexities of the world and the human experience. This, of course, is not a comprehensive list of variations, since a complete analysis of how prophets and prophethood are captured will likely identify further variants.

4.1 The Extraordinary

Through its analysis, this thesis demonstrates that prophetic events can be classified into a specific category or type based on their purpose, format, audience, or theme. These events can be viewed as a genre of prophetic events. There are three primary variations within this genre: transcendence, shock, and apocalypse.

4.1.1 Transcendence

In literary modernism, transcendence refers to the idea of surpassing the limits of the ordinary world and experiencing something beyond the physical realm in the search for meaning and purpose in life. Ezra Pound's "magic moment"[186] and T. S. Eliot's "still point of the turning world"[187] both stand among literary modernism's most significant moments of transcendent understanding. Both had their differences. Eliot saw poetic language as a means to crossover from subjective experience to objective reality—the transcendental realm—while Pound viewed language itself as the end and the ultimate source of meaning and experience in poetry. Yet, whether the sacrament was God or language, their interest remained the possibility of how the "soul,"[188] to borrow Andrew Marvell's *The Garden*[189], like a singing bird, transcends "the body's vest"[190]:

The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find,
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.
Here at the fountain's sliding foot,

[186] Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, 210.

[187] T.S. Eliot's "still point of the turning world"—From "Burnt Norton": "At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;/ Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is, / But neither arrest nor movement."

[188] Gardner, *The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1950*, 336.

[189] Gardner, 336.

[190] Gardner, 336.

Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There like a bird it sits and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

While Ezra Pound never mentioned "magic moment"[191] as a specific phrase in his modernist epic poem *The Cantos*,[192] he did allude to it in the poem's ephemera[193]. The structure of the poem is based on these moments, he tells his father in a letter, where the ordinary breaks through into the divine or more permanent world:

> A.A. Live man goes down into world of Dead
> C.B. The "repeat in history"
> B.C. The "magic moment" or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidien into "divine or permanent world."[194]

Within Islamic traditions, transcendence occurs in the form of spiritual transformation from a mystical experience. As the thesis will demonstrate, the desired outcome is becoming a prophet.

4.1.2 Shock

Shock refers to the occurrence of unexpected or jarring events that provoke a strong reaction, either permanent or temporary, in whoever experiences it. Shock is most closely associated with the German philosopher, cultural critic, and essayist Walter Benjamin (d. 1940), who argued that the modern city and its technology are rife with "shock experience" [Chockerlebnis].[195] While our consciousness defends us imperfectly from the trauma of constant shock, the work of art, such as cinema or theatre, takes away our agency to parry shock. According to Benjamin, this "price for which the sensation of the modern could be

[191] Ezra Pound referred to a "magic moment" in some of his writings, for example: Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, 210. This term is proposed to be related to the actualization of bridging the gap between recognizing a word and accessing its meaning, as studied in various lexical access theories. Additionally, Pound's *Cathay* (1915) was largely based on a set of notebooks titled "Fenollosa's Notes", which were written by Earnest F. Fenollosa in 1901 during his study of Chinese classical literature in Tokyo. These notes formed the framework of Pound's work, and influenced his translations of Chinese poetry by Li Bai. It should be noted that the term "magic moment" has also been used by various authors to describe moments of transcendental understanding, but there is no evidence that Pound's use of the term was related to such phenomena.

[192] Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*.

[193] Huseby, 'This "Magic Moment": Ephemera in Ezra Pound's Cantos as Literary Readymades'.

[194] Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, 210.

[195] Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 328–30.

had"[196] is worth paying. He argues that the unique capacity of art to shatter our guard can be used to convert the destructive force of shock into a constructive one. This, in turn, can perhaps awaken the conscience of a traumatized public to the causes of its own destruction.[197] Benjamin hailed art's radical shock as the ability to create "orchid [Blaue Blume] in the land of technology,"[198] acclaiming the epic theatre's abolition of the "abyss"[199] between "performance and audience"[200] and surrealism's explosion of things to liberate them from their commodified existence. In Islamic traditions, shock is delivered constructively through political institutions. As this thesis will demonstrate, Islamism uses shock to achieve the desired outcome of creating a prophetic community.

4.1.3 Apocalypse

Apocalypse refers to a catastrophic event that leads to the sudden unveiling or the end of the world, a significant historical period, or an individual. The pull of apocalypse can be found throughout literary modernism. It appears as a moment of clarity and revelation[201], either in the midst of chaos, as in T.S. Eliot's "At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is, But neither arrest nor movement," [202] or during the move from chaos to consciousness, as in Wallace Steven's "It must be that in time / The real will from its crude compoundings come, / Seeming, at first, a beast disgorged, unlike, Warmed by a desperate milk." [203] Apocalypse also appears as a moment of destruction, either individual, as in Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which traumatized World War I veteran Septimus Warren Smith experiences the end of his own world with a mental breakdown, or communal, as in William Butler Yeats' poem *The Second Coming*, in which he speaks of the "widening gyre" [204] to suggest a spiralling and expanding twisting motion, representing a world coming apart at the seams and a prophetic community rising from the ashes of this chaotic and destructive world[205]:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

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[196] Benjamin, 343.

[197] Polgovsky Ezcurra, 'On 'Shock'.

[198] Benjamin and Osborne, *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy*, 212.

[199] Benjamin and Bostock, *Understanding Brecht (New Edition)*, 22.

[200] Benjamin and Bostock, 22.

[201] Robert Pippin's works on Hegel, Nietzsche, and modernism, such as "Hegel's Practical Philosophy" and "Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy," can offer insights into the theme of apocalypse in literary modernism. Pippin's discussions of the dialectical process of history and the breakdown of traditional philosophical systems can be seen as a form of intellectual apocalypse that underlies the transformation of thought and society in the modernist era.

[202] Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909 - 1962*.

[203] ADAMSON, 'Apocalyptic Hysteria in Stevens', 8.

[204] 'The Second Coming by William Butler Yeats | Poetry Foundation'.

[205] Stumpe, *W.B. Yeats 'The Second Coming'. Analysis of an Apocalyptic Poem*.

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Within Islamic traditions, the idea of the apocalypse is used to not only refers to an end characterised by chaos, destruction, and the breakdown of society, but also a beginning. As the thesis will demonstrate, the desired outcomes include a radical individual apocalypse, or the appearance of a prophetic community.

4.2 Ordinary

Ghāmidī responds to this genre by emphasising the ordinary in four ways: as a rejection of definite moral outcomes, as a realism of moral life, as a source of moral life, and as a literary style.

4.2.1 The Rejection of Moral Outcomes

He refuses to assign the definite moral outcomes that Islamic traditions do through transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. The Sufi's and Sunnī's reading of prayer, the Islamist's claim about politics, and the Sunnī's prediction about the messiah, all assign a prophetic impact. Ghāmidī, in contrast, believes that prayer, politics or the end of history do not offer any specific moral direction or eventual outcome, whether it is prophetic or more generally moral.

These events, and all other aspects of moral life, resemble Wallace Stevens' theory of the "commonplace." This theory refers to a circular, meditative poetic style that never pins down the elusive subject. It also refers to the elusive subject itself: ordinary experiences. These experiences include contemporary events, patterns of work, changes in the weather, and mundane tasks like buying bread and fruit. Stevens's commitment to the commonplace is exceptionally demonstrated in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven." The poem repeats beginnings and endings, "Alpha continues to begin. / Omega is refreshed at every end"[206], and continually returns to "The strength at the center"[207]. Olson describes the poem's "never-ending meditation"[208] as the "inability to convert experience into something transcendent or idealized."[209] The commonplace, as embodied by "Ordinary Evening," is not a complete or finished phenomenon. Instead, it is always transpiring. Ordinary experience, therefore, is always elusive. Stanley Cavell, in "In Quest of the Ordinary," argues that apprehending the ordinary is an active, ongoing (performative) process rather than a simple statement of fact

[206] Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*, 469.

[207] Stevens, 477.

[208] Stevens, 465.

[209] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*.

(constative).[210] To be in pursuit of the ordinary requires an understanding that it can never be completely grasped, though one is always moving toward it.

Ghāmidī's approach to understanding Islamic traditions and morality echoes the pursuit of the ordinary, as he rejects the idea of definite moral outcomes and prophetic impacts. He emphasizes that prayer, politics, and the end of history are not fixed or finite events with predetermined moral conclusions. Instead, he suggests that these aspects of life, like the commonplace in Stevens' theory, are ongoing and ever-evolving experiences that require continuous reflection and engagement.

4.2.2 The Everyday Realism of Moral Life

Ghāmidī counters the extraordinary experiences of transcendence, shock, and apocalypse by insisting on the everyday realism of moral life. For Ghāmidī, our moral lives are not only not separate from our everyday experiences and activities, but deeply intertwined with and flooded with the everyday world we inhabit. According to this realism, we exist in a banal daily life of a recognizable world, characterised by habit and other less drastic modes of choice as well as the genre of everyday objects and events. In other words, this realism stands as an abolition of the prophetic apocalypse that the Islamist seeks to realise in history or the Sunnī seeks to return to at the end of history. It also stands as an abolition of the radically individual apocalypse of the Sufi, where the mystic's self is annihilated during its final union with God. The abolition of prophethood is, therefore, the abolition of apocalypse. The view that our reality is grounded in an unvarnished, authentically ordinary experience is strongly felt in Gertrude Stein's emphasis on habit in her lectures, autobiographical works, fiction, and poetry. In "What Is English Literature," the first of her 1934–35 *Lectures in America*, Stein traces the success of English literature to its focus on "daily island life" and the "enumeration" of everyday things:

> "The thing that has made the glory of English literature is description simple concentrated description not of what happened nor what is thought or what is dreamed but what exists and so makes the life the island daily island life. It is natural that an island life should be that. What could interest an island as much as the daily the completely daily island life. And in the descriptions the daily, the hourly descriptions of this island life as it exists, and it does exist it does really exist English literature has gone on and on from Chaucer until now."[211]

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[210] Cavell's philosophy distinguishes between the performative and passionate utterance. This understanding of language emphasizes the idea that to say something is to do something. Cavell's views on language and meaning have been influenced by late Wittgenstein's performative account of language. According to Cavell, any speech act is a claim addressed to a particular community that can either acknowledge or refuse the legitimacy of its use of language. Cavell also suggests that religious forms can be replaced by art in eliciting engagement with an immanent sublime, which is relevant to Thoreau's idea of Walden as a sacrament. Moreover, Cavell's idea of language is projective, as rule-following does not finally determine future usage but is always open to new development.

[211] Stein, *Lectures in America*, 13–14.

Stein's emphasis on "daily island life" rather than events, thoughts, or dreams is based on her claim that habit enables us to live as fully as we can. In her novel *Mrs. Reynolds*, she describes the Reynoldses' satisfaction with everyday life:

> "Well they had eaten a great deal and that made them tired, they were not used to eating so much and they went to bed early and after all they did sleep very well, they thought they would not but they did. Yes, said Mrs. Reynolds waking up not early but late, yes life is strife, dear life, dear life. And she sighed a little."[212]

Mrs. Reynolds's "sigh" is an acknowledgement that habits function not only as a guard against the drastic but also conveys a deeper understanding of life's struggles: "All the world knows how to cry but not all the world knows how to sigh. Sighing is extra."[213]

Virginia Woolf's "the cotton wool of daily life"[214] affirms Stein's view of habit. In her autobiographical essay, *Sketch of the Past*, Woolf argues that repetition of everyday actions is what we use to orient and control our lives, relying on the sameness of what has gone before. Woolf believes that life cannot be arranged into distinct events or moments. Much like Stein's habit, Woolf envisions the ordinary surrounding us: "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged. Life is a luminous halo, a semitransparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."[215] Both Woolf and Stein call attention to "ordinary experiences in a world full of ordinary things"[216]. This ongoing flow of ordinariness, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, indicates that the "everyday's astructural quality" is the cornerstone of our reality. In fact, as Olson notes, Stein's habit, and Woolf's soft cotton wool "surround and guard against too many "moments of being" while habits represent an attempt to stabilize and protect against uncertainty."[217] Even in case there is a "sudden spiritual manifestation"[218], life inevitably returns to ordinary experience. Such manifestations are, as Lefebvre argues, anomalies that only confirm the ordinary.

Olson concludes that Stein and Woolf "dwell on the detail not as synecdoche for some larger ideal, but as a source of realism."[219] She draws in George Eliot to emphasize this point. Eliot's detailed descriptions of provincial life in Middlemarch during the years before the First Reform Bill tries to represent the unrepresented lives of women. This underwrites Eliot's intractable belief in "the real." Eliot, Olson argues, is implicitly responding to G.W.F.

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[212] Stein, *Mrs. Reynolds, and Five Earlier Novelettes*, 2:197.

[213] Stein, 2:197.

[214] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 57–88.

[215] Rainey, *Modernism*, 899.

[216] Lefebvre and Elliot, *Critique of Everyday Life. Vol. 3, From Modernity to Modernism (Towards a Metaphilosophy of Daily Life)*, 163.

[217] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 97.

[218] Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 133:210–11.

[219] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 25.

Hegel's idealism. In "The Ideal as Such"[220], he describes the pleasure of daily activities—"in their taverns, at weddings and dances, at feasting and drinking, everything goes on merrily and jovially"[221]—only to ultimately argue that these activities "are always inherently insignificant details,"[222] subsumed into a larger, higher vision. The rejection of Hegel's idealism is characteristic of literary modernism. James Joyce, for example, declared that "we would be better off"[223] without idealism, which is "the ruin of man."[224] Joyce chose banality instead: "In Ulysses I tried to keep close to fact."[225]

Like Stein, Woolf, Eliot, and Joyce, Ghāmidī also champions the moral value of everyday life. By emphasizing the significance of the ordinary and habitual in shaping our moral experiences, Ghāmidī's realism opposes prophetic apocalypse and radical individualism. Instead, it advocates for a more grounded, authentic, and relatable moral landscape, where our moral choices stem from the ordinary experiences that permeate our daily existence.

4.2.3 The Ordinary as the Source of Moral Life

Ghāmidī also draws our attention to the richness, complexity, and unavoidability of ordinary experience, which for him is the source of our moral life. This undercuts the belief in specialised opportunities for moral life that characterise the traditional calls to the transcendence of prayer, the shock of politics, or the apocalypse of the messiah. Alternatively, moral life is banal, relying on the comparable moral value and worth of the variety of ordinary experiences and objects that surround us. This equality of opportunity works against the desire to read and interpret particular events in moral life as more or less important. This equality is exemplified in Steven's idea of the 'commonplace'. In his letter to José Rodríguez Feo, for example, he highlighted the importance of finding meaning and satisfaction in life's mundane moments:

> "Tomorrow I am going to New York to do a number of errands and otherwise nothing at all. Perhaps I shall have my hair cut. I know almost no one there anymore, so that I am like a ghost in a cemetery reading epitaphs. I am going to visit a bookbinder, a dealer in autographs, Brooks about pajamas, try to find a copy of *Revue de Paris* for December because of an article about Alain that it contains, visit a baker, a fruit dealer, and, as it may be, a barber. An ordinary day like that does more for me than an extraordinary day: the bread of life is better than any soufflé."[226]

The moral worth of banal moments is more explicit in William James's beliefs about habit, who like his follower Stein, highlighted the significance of habit in shaping our moral lives:

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[220] Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 1:153–74.

[221] Hegel, 1:153–74.

[222] Hegel, 1:153–74.

[223] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 33.

[224] Olson, 33.

[225] Olson, 33.

[226] Stevens and Stevens, *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, 741.

"Sow a habit & you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."[227] Unlike Samuel Beckett, both Stein and James deepened habit's moral valency but predicating it on choice. In his plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, Beckett's characters are preoccupied with the controlled routines of the banal—weather, food, each other—and this holds them in an intense mental and physical condition where habit deny spontaneous choice: "all lifelong the same questions, the same answers"[228]. Stein's habit, despite not being epiphanic, serves as a singular source of pleasure, such as for Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, who continues to do what they desire during the war. The moral virtues of 'ordinary' habit is brought to this clearest description by Woolf, who in "On Repentance" argues that the true test of character is not public life but "to be orderly at home, in our common actions."[229]

Philosophers Robert Pippin and Stanley Cavell push the emphasis on the moral value of the ordinary further, albeit from different philosophical perspectives. During his examination of Hegel, Pippin suggests an appreciation for the importance of ordinary social practices in shaping moral life. Pippin argues that individuals can only understand themselves and their moral agency within the context of their society's customs, norms, and practices. In this sense, the moral value of the ordinary is derived from its role in grounding our understanding of ourselves as moral agents and the possibilities for ethical action: "The concept of the social practices that are the context of normative self-consciousness is as much a concept of an ethical life as it is a concept of a form of cognition."[230] Cavell's work is more directly concerned with the moral value of the ordinary than Pippin's. For Cavell, the ordinary is a source of moral insight because it reveals the ways in which our language and shared practices shape our ethical commitments and understanding[231]: "The avoidance of the ordinary is not so much a philosophical method as a reflex of the fear of the everyday in the soul; that is, the fear of the exposure of the everyday in oneself."[232] So according to Stanley Cavell, the ordinary has a moral value that cannot be overlooked. He believed that returning to the ordinary, and affirming it as extraordinary, is the key to achieving perfection. Cavell's emphasis on the moral value of the ordinary can be seen in his reading of various literary and cinematic works, where he often highlights the ethical dimensions of ordinary human interactions and experiences. For instance, in his work on Shakespeare, Cavell sees the playwright as concerned with the ethical dilemmas that arise from our everyday relationships, communication, and understanding of one another. Similarly, in his analysis of Hollywood comedies of remarriage, Cavell argues that these films explore the moral significance of trust, commitment, and communication in the context of ordinary life. "The ordinary, when looked

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[227] James, 'The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition'.

[228] Beckett, Beckett, and Beckett, *Endgame*.

[229] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 65.

[230] Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*, 4.

[231] Cavell defended the methods of ordinary language philosophy, claiming that the judgment of native speakers provides evidence for determining what is said in language, and therefore evidence need not be based on empirical semantics. In essence, scepticism demands the relinquishing of judgment of the ordinary, which is an impediment to personal growth.

[232] Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 3.

at in a certain way, is always extraordinary; and that to achieve the extraordinary, when looked at in a certain way, is always the ordinary."[233]

Stevens, James, Woolf, Pippin, and Cavell serve to elucidate Ghāmidī's emphasis on the moral value of ordinary experiences by offering complementary perspectives that explore the various dimensions of daily life and their impact on our moral life. Just as these thinkers explore the moral significance of habits, daily actions, social practices, and language, Ghāmidī also recognizes the moral value that lies within the ordinary.

4.2.3 The Ordinary as Style

The last major way Ghāmidī emphasises the ordinary is that he recognises it as a style. Put simply, this style seeks to represent the extraordinary nature of prophethood into an ordinary one. The singular site of this style is the Qur'ān, which transforms the literal apocalyptic event of prophethood down into prophetic guidance extracted from an apocalyptic event. The transformation effectively changes prophethood from an empirical 'thing' into a rational one. Consequently, the Qur'ān can be read as the representation of both moral fulfilment and moral failure of different characters during a deliberative and socially-conditioned apocalypse. The Qur'ān shows how they exhibit moral virtues or flaws, and the consequences of their actions. Significantly, the stereoscopic perspective of the Qur'ān reader is able to hold the experiences of its two principal characters, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites, telling two stories at the same time. The Israelites' experience unfolds forward, while the Ishmaelites' experience unfolds backwards. Through the different experiences of these characters, the Qur'ān seeks the reader to gain insight into the consequences of their own actions and the importance of their moral virtue. Crucially, the experiences of the two principal characters converge at a moment of absolute reckoning for both.

The convergence of different perspectives facilitates moral lessons not only by providing a more complex and nuanced view of the apocalypse and the characters in it but by helping the reader develop a more 'complete' understanding of the central moral issue at stake: moral reckoning. Sūrah Tawbah offers audacious visions of an inevitable future reckoning that dramatically haunts the present of the reader (9:1-5):

1. A declaration of acquittal is made from God and His Messenger for the Idolaters with whom you had made agreements.
2. So, [O Idolaters of Arabia!] walk about now in the land for four more months and know that you cannot defeat God and that God shall certainly humiliate those who deny [His prophet].
3. [Then when the time of Ḥajj arrives,] in order to communicate to all the people [of this land], a general declaration should also be made from God and His Messenger on the day of the great Ḥajj that God is free from obligations to these Idolaters and so is His Messenger. Now, if you people repent, it is better for you, and if you turn away, bear in

[233] Cavell, *The World Viewed*, 39.

mind that you cannot escape from God. [O Prophet!] Give tidings of a painful torment to these disbelievers.

4. Those Idolaters however are an exception from this declaration of acquittal with whom you have a treaty and who did not leave any stone unturned in honouring it and did not support anyone against you. So, honour their treaties to the end of their terms because God likes those who abstain from breaking promises.
5. After this [declaration on the day of the great Ḥajj] when the sacred months have passed, kill these Idolaters wherever you find them, and for this purpose capture them and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush.

It provides the reader with a multifaceted view of a singular event, apocalypse, that everything in the world—seemingly disparate, fragmented, divided, irreconcilable—is moving towards and will eventually come together to experience in a unified way. Moreover, as soon as the image of reckoning is foretold, it is reversed. The placement of the reckoning *medias res*—in the midst of things—consists of the crystallization of the apocalypse of the Israelites and the Ishmaelites, followed by the dissolution of this crystalline structure in the case of the Ishmaelites. So, the Qur'ān's narrative of prophethood comes to an intentionally unresolved end, leaving the reader to interpret their own ending, imagining what happens next. This moment of knowing for the readers creates a sense of moral choice that may or may not lead to personal revelation and crystallization.

Ghāmidī's use of the Qur'ān's ordinary style can be absorbed into the larger tafsīr tradition. His emphasis on the moral experiences of the two principal characters, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites, aligns with modern tafsīr's focus on delivering the Qur'ān's message as moral guidance (hidāyah) to a wider audience. The 19th and 20th centuries saw a diverse range of exegetical works that tended to focus on conveying the Qur'ān's moral message so that contemporary readers could engage with it and apply it in their daily life. Johanna Pink highlights this in her discussion of Muḥammad 'Abduh's (d. 1905) *Tafsīr al-Fātiḥah* ['Exegesis of Al-Fātiḥah'] (1901) and *Tafsīr al-Manār* ['Exegesis of The Lighthouse'] (1910): "Abduh classifies the interpretation of the Qur'ān as an extremely important, but also extremely difficult endeavour since it implies transmitting the message of God, who is transcendent and beyond the realm of human understanding, to a human audience. Nevertheless, the Qur'ān commands humans to try to understand it. This understanding should be based on a vision of the Qur'ān as divine guidance to happiness in this world and the hereafter."[234] This differs from classical tafsīr, which typically refers to exegetical works produced by scholars from the early Islamic period until the 19th century. These works, such as Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's (d. 923) *Jāmiʿ al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* ['Collection of Statements on the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'ān'] (883) primarily intended for other scholars or aspiring scholars, often featured a verse-by-verse approach, extensive citation of previous scholarship, and discussions of various opinions without necessarily settling on a single interpretation.[235]

[234] Pink, ''ʿAbduh, Muḥammad — Brill'.

[235] Pink.

The Qur'ān's literary act of taking the extraordinary prophethood and making it ordinary can be described as reverse ostranenie or familiarization[236]. This is a technique in literary modernism that makes strange objects and happenings familiar, as opposed to ostranenie (lit: "making strange") or defamiliarization, which makes everyday objects and events unfamiliar, forcing the reader to perceive them in a new light. This formal description is reinforced by noting that the Qur'ān's use of stereoscopic perspective bears strong similarities to Proust's technique in *In Search of Lost Time*. Literary modernists worried that by representing an overlooked, ordinary event, the novel gives it unusual attention, thereby transforming it into something extraordinary. In a letter to his friend Barbara Church, Stevens recognised this as his significant challenge: "The trouble is that poetry is so largely a matter of transformation. To describe a cup of tea without changing it and without concerning oneself with some extreme aspect of it is not at all the easy thing that it seems to be."[237] For Proust, the temporality of the everyday was especially incompatible with the narrative form. In order to resist the novel's ostranenie, Proust brings the ordinary and everyday experiences to the forefront by amplifying and distending his novel's narrative to fit the temporality of the everyday. As Olson notes, "Conversely, a classic framework of time for the Victorian novel—six months to two years—is dramatically lengthened by modernists such as Proust or Woolf or, a bit later, Anthony Powell. The time allotted to solve a problem, finish a project, or see courtship through to marriage becomes time in which no central experience can necessarily mark what the novel is "about." Like the novel of just one day, time tracked over the course of a lifetime (or longer) deflates the importance of event and outcome."[238] Proust, therefore, approaches an ordinary event very gradually from both directions, diluting the unusual attention that the novel's representation can bring to it. He moves forward and backward across the protagonist Marcel's past, present, and future, with his experiences, memories, and reflections to evade the prospect of the extraordinary.

The Qur'ān's use of reverse ostranenie emphasizes its representational capacity as a text. The Qur'ān reorganizes the direct account of prophethood into a narrative representation rich with perspectives, in order to a convey moral lessons. Contemporary performance studies[239] and

[236] Stephen John Carter's 1997 dissertation "Implied Subjects: The Cultural Subject's Narrative Mediation of the Other": Carter briefly introduces the term "reverse ostranenie" and defines it as a method used to satirize the reader's desire to embrace an imagined Other. However, he does not provide an exhaustive elaboration of the term. Bettina Frankham's 2013 dissertation "A Poetic Approach to Documentary: Discomfort of Form, Rhetorical Strategies and Aesthetic Experience": Frankham briefly mentions "reverse defamiliarization" in the context of visual techniques used in documentaries. She describes it as the process of an image first presenting as texture and colour, and then progressively decoded into something more recognizable.

[237] Stevens and Stevens, *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, 643.

[238] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 18.

[239] Performance studies is an interdisciplinary field that explores and analyses various forms of performance, such as theatre, dance, ritual, and everyday life actions, to understand their cultural, social, and political significance, while considering aspects of aesthetics, communication, and representation.

play theory[240] can provide a valid way to understand this capacity. The Qur'ān turns real-world[241], original, subjects of the Prophet, the Israelites and the Ishmaelites, into actors for a new subject: the contemporary reader. The characters' words and actions are not just passive representations of their apocalyptic reality, but performances, just like in a play, that create a new unapocalyptic reality within the text that shapes the reader's moral perspective as the narrative unfolds. This 'performative turn' delivers the reverse ostranenie of the Prophet's apocalypse. But unlike the play, in which words and actions are enacted by physical, visual, and auditory representations by actors on a stage directly observed by the audience, the actors in the Qur'ān use language within the confines of a text to deliver literary representations of actors for the readership of the new subject. This representational transformation, in which the original subjects are transformed into new actors for a new subject, can be said to be owed to the Qur'ān's narrative performativity, a performativity that is embedded in the language itself and that engages with the reader through the text. In other words, the Qur'ān narrative representation of prophethood can be analysed as performance, and interrogated in terms of its performativity.

The thesis's recognition of performativity builds upon recent scholarship on religious texts. For example, using performance studies, particularly the incongruity theory of humour, Christine Hayes argues for an alternative understanding of the Talmud's conception of divine law.[242] Disagreeing with the scholarly consensus that the Talmud's excessive argumentation and detailed distinctions aim to bring more certainty and uncover truths, she argues that the Talmud intentionally brings less certainty.[243] Unlike Hellenistic Jewish writers, Talmudic rabbis rejected Greek epistemology, as represented by Plato and Aristotle, that focused on the pursuit of universal forms or essences, abstracting from the particular details of substances to achieve true knowledge.[244] In contrast, Hayes argues, the rabbis deployed destabilizing strategies of play—humour, dialectical excess, and distractive detail—to highlight the incongruity between conflicting ideas, and embrace truth as continuous, historically embedded, and generative process of contingent interpretation.[245] Hayes demonstrates this with the example of the sectarian difference over the calendar, where the Qumran community[246] believed that it should align with the movements of heavenly bodies while the dominant rabbinic conception felt that it did not need to reflect a natural or objective reality. In *Pesikta Rabbati Hoshea*[247], the rabbis depicted God and the ministering angels waiting for

[240] Play theory is the study of play as a fundamental human activity, exploring its various forms, purposes, and functions, as well as its psychological, social, and cultural impacts. It examines the role of play in human development, learning, creativity, and well-being.

[241] Subjects are turned into actions in a literary text is proposed by the "speech act theory." This theory, which was initially introduced by the British philosopher J.L. Austin and further developed by John Searle, examines how language functions not only to convey meaning but also to perform actions.

[242] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[243] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[244] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[245] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[246] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[247] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

the human court to declare the new year, even though the Qumran community would insist that the calendar should be determined by astronomical reality. The rabbis found humour in this incongruous portrait, showing their comfort with the idea of divine law deviating from natural or rational truth. The Talmud, therefore, can be seen as a performance, akin to a comical magic show where every Akimta (crooked path) is a wink and the anonymous stam (textual voice) is a jester magician.[248]

Thus, the performativity of both the Qur'ān and the Talmud lies in their ability to actively involve the reader in the process of interpreting and understanding divine guidance and moral lessons. While the Talmud achieves this through dialectical arguments and humour, the Qur'ān employs a complex narrative structure that highlights the importance of moral virtues and consequences. In both cases, the texts become performative, engaging the reader in an ongoing process of interpretation, reflection, and personal growth. These unique approaches to performativity demonstrate the diverse ways religious texts can convey divine guidance and moral lessons to their audiences.

It is crucial to note that the source of the Qur'ān's representational capacity is distinct from that of Islamic traditions. The Qur'ān's representation of prophethood is literary, stemming from a text that effectively conveys meaning through the use of various literary techniques. Islamic traditions, on the other hand, represent prophethood discursively, where ideas, arguments, and beliefs are made and shared by multiple people over time. Unsurprisingly, Ghāmidī's reliance on the text leads him to focus on a narrower range of scholarly genres, namely tarjumah and tafsīr, while Islamic traditions encompass a broader spectrum, spanning various genres, disciplines, and methodologies.

The Qur'ān's narrative performativity allows us to arguably see its representational capacity more as a representational consciousness that seeks to convey specific meaning deliberately and carefully. In other words, the production of a distinct representation of prophethood reflects the role of an authorial intention[249] in shaping the meaning and interpretation of a literary text. The Qur'ān can, therefore, be argued to have an intentionality, where the intended meaning or purpose of the author is conveyed by the author's words.[250] This intentionalism, when applied to the Qur'ān, takes on an even more full-bodied form, since the intentions of its divine author are logically equivalent to the meanings of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān pushes this intentionalism to its most "successfully realized."[251] This "extreme intentionalism"[252] is supported by the theological claim that God can perfectly perform the

[248] *Divine Contingency: Law, Humor, Performance, and Play*.

[249] While intentionalism is important to representational capacity, it is worth noting that it is just one of many approaches to literary interpretation. Other critical perspectives, such as reader-response theory, deconstruction, or New Historicism, may emphasize different aspects of a text's representational capacity or question the extent to which an author's intention can ever be definitively known or recovered.

[250] Livingston, 'Intentionalism in Aesthetics.'

[251] Livingston, 831.

[252] Livingston, 831–33. Extreme intentionalism (EI) is a philosophical position that argues that the fictional content of a text is equivalent to exactly what the author intended the reader to imagine. See also Stock,

act of conveying intended meaning through language. As a result, the Qur'ān is seen as a coherent and purposeful text, with all its constituent elements working together to form a united whole. This view of the Qur'ān's intentionalism is further reinforced by the theological claim that the Prophet Muḥammad, under divinely-sent instruction from the Angel Gabriel, compiled the Qur'ānic scripture as we know it today.[253] Supporting this theological claim with a ḥadīth by Abū Hurayrah[254] Ghāmidī explains it as follows: "It is this second and final recital of the Qur'ān which is also termed as al- 'ardah al-akhīrah (the final presentation). It is evident from various narratives that each year Gabriel would read out the Qur'ān revealed in that year to the Prophet (sws) during the month of Ramadān. In the last year, in the al-'ardah al- akhīrah, he read out the Qur'ān to him twice."[255] The intentionalist approach to the Qur'ān highlights the importance of understanding the text in the context of its divine author's purpose and meaning, thereby enriching our appreciation of its representational capacity.

To be sure, the view of the Qur'ān's representational intentionality has been questioned by traditional Islamic scholarship. While discussing the intentionality of a text in the context of the Qur'ān, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1210), for example, raised concerns about the certainty of the meanings conveyed by words in the Qur'ān because the understanding of the Qur'ān depends on disciplines like syntax, morphology, and lexicography, which are considered speculative (dhannī) rather than definitive.[256] He argued that the intentionality of a text is speculative since it is dependent on the transmission of words with their meanings, declensions, and inflections, which may not have been preserved in their original form:

Only Imagine., in which this position is significantly defended by Kathleen Stock, who argues that EI should be taken seriously as an adequate account of fictional truth. Stock offers a theory of EI that asserts that the content of a fictional representation is determined solely by the author's intentions. Stock's account is thorough and well-argued, and her application of EI to various philosophical questions related to fiction is quite convincing. Stock's approach to the nature of fiction is to define fictional utterances based on the reflexive intentions involved in their creation. According to Stock, an author's utterance x has a given fictional content that p if and only if the author utters x intending that: (i) x should cause the reader to imagine that p; (ii) the reader should recognize this intention; and, (iii) that recognition should function as part of the reader's reason to imagine that p. This allows her to distinguish between typical fictional works (like novels) that prompt imaginings and other representations (like maps or pictures) that might also prompt imaginings but would not be considered fictions. Although Stock does not explicitly extend her EI theory to other media, her account can be productively applied to various types of representation, as long as they involve reflexive intentions that elicit imaginings with specific propositional contents. While critics of EI may question the adequacy of Stock's solutions to problems in fiction, the plausibility of her applications of EI to these related areas strengthens the overall theory, demonstrating its coherence, explanatory power, and far-reaching implications. As a result, Stock's book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the content and interpretation of stories.

[253] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 32–33.

[254] Bukhārī 4998: "The Prophet (sws) was read out the Qur'ān each year. However, in the year he died, it was read out to him twice."

[255] Gẖāmidī, *Islam*, 32.

[256] ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, 1st Ed.,* I:34.

> "The intentionality of a text is speculative because it is dependent on the transmission of words with their meanings, declensions and inflections. Moreover, the transmitters were ahād and it is acknowledged about such transmitters that what they have transmitted cannot be taken to be totally preserved in its original form. Moreover, determining this intentionality of the text is dependent on the fact that the same word may stand for more than one entity, a word may be used figuratively, a word may have changed its meanings, a word may have been used concisely, a word may be used without limiting its meaning or used in contradiction to some logical premise because if there is a such a contradiction, then it is essential that a word be understood to be used figuratively. Undoubtedly, all these premises are accepted because of their speculative nature and what is based on speculation is all the more speculative."[257]

He further explained that determining the intentionality of the text is reliant on various factors like whether a word has multiple meanings, is used figuratively, has changed its meanings over time, is used concisely, or is used without limiting its meaning, among others.[258] Since these premises are accepted due to their speculative nature, the intentionality of the text may also be speculative.[259] Contemporary scholarship also remains divided. Euro-American Qur'ānic Studies, which neither share the classical Islamic view that the Qur'ān is a text by a single author, nor supports the intentionality of text. The most scientific textual analysis of the Qur'ān, where the text was subjected to rigorous stylometric, stylistic, and statistical computer tests, reveals a high degree of concurrent smoothness, which supports the hypothesis of one author.[260] This scholarship does not, however, embrace the intentionality of the author.

Intentionality is a key aspect of literary modernists' aesthetics, as demonstrated in Vladimir Nabokov's essay *Good Readers and Good Writers* (1948)[261] In the essay, he explores the idealized relationship between a reader and an author, emphasizing the "real writer's"[262] ability to reimagine the world and bring it to life through their words. Nabokov presents the writer as someone who creates values and maps the world, transforming the chaotic material of reality into a meaningful work of art: "The material of this world may be real enough... but it does not exist at all as an accepted entirety... the author says 'go!' allowing the world to flicker and to fuse."[263] The writer goes beyond visible and superficial aspects, recombining reality at a deeper level. In this process of transformation, the writer identifies new possibilities and potential, such as previously undiscovered resources, untamed creatures, and unexplored landscapes. As the writer ascends a metaphorical slope, Nabokov envisions the

[257] ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, I:34.

[258] ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, I:34.

[259] ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī, I:34.

[260] Sadeghi, 'The Chronology of the Qurān', 288.

[261] Nabokov and Updike, *Lectures on Literature*, 2.

[262] Nabokov and Updike, 2.

[263] Nabokov and Updike, 2.

meeting between the writer and the reader at the summit: "At the top, on a windy ridge, whom do you think he meets? The panting and happy reader, and there they spontaneously embrace and are linked forever if the book lasts forever."[264] This imagery emphasizes the lasting impact a well-crafted text can have on the reader. When applied to the Qur'ān, God is portrayed as the ultimate "real writer,"[265] expressing perfect meaning within the text. As a divine literary work, the Qur'ān transcends the chaos of the world. Nabokov's depiction of the writer-reader relationship can also be applied to the Qur'ān, representing a timeless connection between the divine author and the reader. This enduring bond highlights the Qur'ān's representational capacity as a literary text.

II. Methodology and Sources

This thesis primarily analysed Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī's body of work, which consists of Urdu-language published texts and video-recorded lectures and discussions. This body of work has been published between two organizations founded and led by Ghāmidī himself: Al-Mawrid in Lahore and Ghāmidī Centre for Islamic Learning in Dallas (both of which were noted above).

The following published texts that were analysed:

1. *Al-Bayān*,[266] his five-volume commentary of the Qur'ān.
2. *Al-Qur'ān-ul-Qarīm: Urdu Tarjumah*[267], his translation of the Qur'ān.
3. *Mīzān*[268], his comprehensive account of Islam.
4. *Al-Islām*[269], his summarised account of Islam.
5. *Burhān*[270], his anthology of essays on Islam.
6. *Maqāmāt*[271], his collection of autobiographical essays.
7. *Khayāl-o-Khāma*[272], his collection of poetry.
8. *Isḥrāq*[273], the monthly journal founded and originally edited, and now overseen by him.

The following video-recorded lectures and discussions were analysed:

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[264] Nabokov and Updike, 2.

[265] Nabokov and Updike, 2.

[266] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*.

[267] Ghāmidī, *Urdu Tarjumah Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*.

[268] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*.

[269] Ghāmidī, *Al-Islām*.

[270] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*.

[271] Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*.

[272] Ghāmidī, *Khayāl-o-Khāma*.

[273] 'Ishraq'.

1. *Al-Bayān Lectures*[274], his ongoing lectures (durūs) of the Qur'ān based on Al-Bayān, which started in March 2018.
2. *Mīzān Lectures*, his original[275] and ongoing[276] (durūs) of Islam based on Mīzān, with the original record between 10 January 2002 and 12 November 2012, and the ongoing one started on 20 February 2020.
3. *Response to 23 Questions on the Religious Opinion of Javēd Ahmed Ghāmidī*[277], his ongoing series of discussions, which started on 05 April 2020 and has so far covered 14 questions in 109 recorded discussions.
4. Standalone recorded lectures or lecture series, on important topics, recorded between 1988 and 2022.[278]

The thesis also analysed Ghāmidī's English-language monthly journal, *Renaissance*.[279] This journal, like *Isḥrāq*[280], was founded and originally edited, and is now overseen by him.

The analysis was undertaken in original Urdu, and all translations into English language produced for this thesis were undertaken originally. In order to broadly corroborate the fidelity of these translations and also the intended meanings of certain words or phrases, however, the thesis cross-checked its translations with the English translations of Ghāmidī's body of work that he personally edited and authorised. These translations are as follows:

1. *Al-Bayān: An Annotated Qur'ān Translation*[281], the English translation *Al-Bayān*.
2. *The Qur'ān: Translated*[282], the English translation of *Al-Qur'ān-ul-Qarīm: Urdu Tarjumah*.
3. *Islām: A Comprehensive Introduction*[283], the English translation of *Mīzān*
4. *Islām: A Concise Introduction*[284], the English translation of *Al-Islām*.

In addition to Ghāmidī's body of work, the thesis also analyses and originally translates Urdu-language texts from Islamic scholars who were either contemporaries or predecessors of Ghāmidī. These texts are chosen to compare and contextualize Ghāmidī's work, consisting

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[274] *Al-Bayān Lectures*.

[275] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2002.

[276] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2020.

[277] *23 Questions on Religious Opinion of Javed Ahmed Ghāmidī*.

[278] Such as, *Critical Analysis of Sufism and Its Origins*; *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Ḥadīth*; *Khutbaat-e-Dallas [Dallas Lectures]*; *Western Sydney University (Parramatta Campus) Session with Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī*.

[279] 'Renaissance'.

[280] 'Ishraq'.

[281] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān: An Annotated Qur'ān Translation*.

[282] Ghāmidī, *The Qur'an Translated*.

[283] Gh̲āmidī, *Islam*.

[284] Gh̲āmidī, *Islam: A Concise Introduction*.

of writings by Islamic scholars who either belonged to Ghāmidī's school of thought or were relevant to the historical development of the topics examined. The most significant works outside of Ghāmidī's, analysed in this thesis, are by Mawdūdī and Islāhī. Throughout the thesis, the works of these two figures serve as essential sources of both discontinuity and continuity with Ghāmidī's thought.

As has already been indicated in previous discussion, the thesis also examines secondary literature, focusing on developing conceptual frameworks for analysis regarding such concepts as the ordinary. A notable text used in this context is Liesl Olson's *Modernism and the Ordinary* (2009),[285] which not only supports the thesis's analytical efforts but also acts as a discerning guide for the close reading of literary texts, including those by James Joyce, Wallace Stevens, Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Marcel Proust, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats, and Samuel Beckett. In addition to Olson, the thesis utilizes the works of philosophers Robert Pippin and Stanley Cavell, as well as the Jewish studies scholar Christine Hayes.

III. Structure and Chapter Outlines

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, the thesis consists of four core chapters. The introduction outlined the key argument of the thesis, offering an overview of Ghāmidī's context and thought and situating it relevant scholarship, identifying key primary sources and conceptual distinctions, and a chapter-by-chapter plan. The core chapters chart the prominence of the ordinary within Islam in the light of different representations of prophethood. Each chapter addresses a particular representation of prophethood, offers a close examination of relevant scholarly genres, and implements its unique set of conceptual distinctions to draw specific conclusions.

The structure of the chapters in this thesis follows a standard format. Each chapter begins with an introduction that provides an overview of the primary arguments to be discussed, supported by a review of relevant literature. Subsequently, the chapters examine a traditional Islamic discourse and its representation of prophethood. The following section concentrates on Ghāmidī's discourse, and his re-evaluation of the Islamic discourse. Building upon Ghāmidī's critique, the chapters employ concepts to advance arguments that challenge the reliance of traditional Islamic discourse on the extraordinary. Finally, each chapter concludes with a summary of the arguments presented, demonstrating the significance of the ordinary within Islam.

The following are outlines of the four core chapters as well as the conclusion:

- *Chapter 1 - Transcendence and the Creation of Warner-Prophets*: This first core chapter problematises the traditional claim in Islamic discourses supporting the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood. This chapter closely examines Ghāmidī's reassessment of this

[285] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*.

discourse. According to Ghāmidī, the authentic claim of this discourse, led by Sufis and ‘ulamā, is that prophethood remains perceptually accessible and open to use. Building upon Ghāmidī’s reappraisal, this chapter argues that the traditional Islamic discourse, in fact, maintains that individuals can spiritually transcend to become ‘warner-prophets’ through human labour rather than divine gift. The chapter, thus, illustrates that this discourse offers representations of prophethood that are primarily concerned with overcoming the prophethood of Muḥammad.

- *Chapter 2 - Shock and the Perpetual Reckoner-Community*: The second core chapter examines Ghāmidī’s critique of Islamism, which aims to create a morally virtuous and epistemically sincere community. This is exemplified by the normative theory of Mawdūdī, who argued that an “Islamic State” can transform a “non-Islamic” community into an “Islamic” one, achieving moral transformation. Ghāmidī challenges Mawdūdī’s account by asserting that politics supports but is not crucial for moral life. This chapter builds on Ghāmidī’s ideas to argue that Islamism, represented by Mawdūdī, envisions an apocalyptic event that permanently transforms a community into a perpetual reckoner-community.
- *Chapter 3 - Apocalypse and the Terminal Reckoner-Community*: This chapter examines Sunnī eschatology, specifically focusing on the anticipated appearance of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus. It retraces Ghāmidī’s refutation of these beliefs within the Sunnī tradition. Ghāmidī argues that neither figure will appear, contending that these beliefs have been mistakenly accepted as literal events. He argues, instead, that the Mahdī and the return of Jesus should not be considered articles of faith (‘aqīdah). By asserting that these events do not exist, Ghāmidī eliminates the need to believe in them. Based on Ghāmidī’s reading, this chapter argues that Sunnī eschatology seeks a return to a prophetic apocalypse right before the eschaton, ‘shocking’ Muslims into one last ‘reckoner-community’.
- *Chapter 4 - The Ordinary and the Covenantal Monotheism of Moral Life*: The fourth and final core chapter focuses on Ghāmidī’s account of moral life (taẕkiyah-e-nafs) and how it eschews the role of the extraordinary in shaping it. Through its analysis of this account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, the chapter argues for the ordinariness of moral life in Islam, tracing it to everyday obligations (farā’iẓ) of worship and physical practices, as well as permissions and prohibitions (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt) in moral conduct and dietary practices. It will be argued that taẕkiyah-e-nafs represents Ghāmidī’s covenantal monotheism, which involves not only the belief in one God but also the everyday fulfilment of obligations (farā’iẓ) and regulations (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt) to demonstrate commitment to the covenant between God and humans. The chapter concludes that moral life consists not of moral perfection or even moral development but rather a subtly distinct process: an unbreakable test (imtiḥān) of moral character to assess an individual’s fidelity to the covenant. This test of character is grounded in everyday reality rather than an extraordinary event or an apocalyptic milieu.
- *Conclusion Chapter*: The concluding chapter of the thesis presents its key contributions, while summarizing how Islamic traditions resist the ordinariness of Islam and how the ordinary can be considered central to Islam through Ghāmidī’s perspective. The chapter undertakes complex analysis of the Islamic traditions examined, introduces a new

analytical framework that classifies and explains Islamic traditions into three categories, based on their representations of prophethood: the warner-prophet discourse, the reckoner-community discourse, and the post-prophet discourse. The first two emphasize "the extraordinary," while the post-prophet discourse highlights "the ordinary" and aims to make prophethood relevant in everyday life, critiquing the other two discourses. The chapter closes with the "discourses of characterization" between these discourses, where the warner-prophet and reckoner-community discourses misrepresent Ghāmidī's post-prophetic discourse through narrow categorizations. Ghāmidī, on the other hand, seeks critical reasoning and argumentation with the other discourses.

CHAPTER 1
TRANSCENDENCE AND THE CREATION OF WARNER-PROPHETS

Abstract

This first core chapter problematises the traditional claim in Islamic discourses supporting the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood. This chapter closely examines Ghāmidī's reassessment of this discourse. According to Ghāmidī, the authentic claim of this discourse, led by Sufis and 'ulamā, is that prophethood remains perceptually accessible and open to use. Building upon Ghāmidī's reappraisal, this chapter argues that the traditional Islamic discourse, in fact, maintains that individuals can spiritually transcend to become 'warner-prophets' through human labour rather than divine gift. The chapter, thus, illustrates that this discourse offers representations of prophethood that are primarily concerned with overcoming the prophethood of Muḥammad.

1. Introduction

The finality of Muḥammad's prophethood is a foundational claim in the Islamic discourse about prophethood, particularly within Sunnī traditions. This claim is based on a specific verse of Sūrah Ahzab (33) that describes Prophet Muḥammad as the 'Seal of the prophets' (khātam al-nabīyīn): "Muḥammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Prophet of God and the seal of the prophets. God has knowledge of all things" (33:40). Muḥammad's place as the final prophet also appears in numerous ḥadīths, such as, "My likeness among the prophets before me is that of a man who has built a house, completed it, and beautified it, yet left empty a place for a brick. Then the people come to the house, are amazed by it, and say, 'If only you were to place this brick, your house would be complete!' I am this brick." (Bukhārī: 3535) Classical exegesis has predominantly offered the standard reading of the phrase 'Seal of the Prophets'. al-Ṭabarī believed that Prophet Muḥammad "was the one who sealed prophethood for he sealed up this matter. Thus, no one of you should open it up after him [Muḥammad] until the [eschatological] onset of the 'hour' (qiyām al-sa'at)."[286] Similarly, in his commentary *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azim* ['Interpretation of the Great Qur'ān'] (1358), the exegete ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) offered the same interpretation, stating that "this verse is a clear proof of the fact that no prophet will come after Muḥammad, and when it is said that no prophet will come after him, it is a foregone conclusion that no messenger will succeed him either."[287]

Despite this, there are notable instances of departure—some more striking and some more subtle—from the principle of Muḥammad's finality as a prophet. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), the South Asian Sufi and self-proclaimed 'Seal of the Saints' (khātam al-awliyāʾ), contended that although prophethood ended with Muḥammad, the perfections of that office could still be attained: "It should be known that the office of prophethood has indeed ended with the Seal of the Prophets, peace be upon him and his family, but the perfections of that

[286] al-Tabari, *Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, 22:12.

[287] Kathir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, 3:493–94.

office, by way of following, can still be fully attained by the followers."[288] The Sunnī Islamic scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) cited Al-Mughīra (d. 671), a companion of Muḥammad, whose statement about the second coming of a non-legislative Jesus gave hope to Muslims that another prophet would arrive, one last time, after Muḥammad: "Content yourself with saying 'seal of the prophets', for we have been told that Jesus, blessings be upon him, will come again, and if he comes, he would be both before Muḥammad and after him (since he has already appeared earlier)!"[289]

Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad (d. 1908), who never unambiguously proclaimed himself a prophet during his lifetime, drew heavily from Sirhindī to claim a ẓillī (shadowy) or burūzī (manifestational) prophetic status.[290] The accidental founder of the Aḥmadiyyah movement in South Asia, he had argued that he had attained his prophetic status without breaking the seal of prophethood, through complete submission[291] to Prophet Muḥammad (fanāʾ fī al-rasūl). He maintained that his prophetic status was non-legislative, dependent wholly on Muḥammad, reflecting only his virtues while still honouring his Seal. Ghulām Aḥmad explained, "It is my manifest spiritual imitation (burūz) [of the Prophet Muḥammad] that has made me a prophet and a messenger, and it is on this basis that God has repeatedly called me a prophet of God and a messenger of God, but in manifestational (burūzī) form."[292] He underscored that his prophetic status did not conflict with Muḥammad's finality by emphasizing its non-legislative nature and by refuting the notion of Jesus, a legislative prophet, returning.

Such instances of departures led the reformist and activist theologian, Ibn Taymīyyah, to emphasize that those who do not believe in and follow Muḥammad are, in fact, unbelievers: "[Sufis] must necessarily include the belief that Muḥammad is the Seal of the prophets, that there is no prophet after him, and that God sent him to the entirety of the two races—the human and the jinn. Anyone who does not believe in what Muḥammad came to bring is not a believer, let alone one of the pious friends of God!"[293]

Academic evaluations highlight the diverse engagement of Islamic discourse with the concept of Muḥammad's finality. While analysing the use of "Seal of the Prophets" in Sūrah Ahzab, German orientalist Hartmut Bobzin argues that the recurring emergence of 'prophetic' movements within Islam reveals varied interpretations of the term 'seal' (khātam). Bobzin asserts, "The mere fact that 'prophetic' movements within Islam have arisen again and again shows that the word 'seal' (khātam) has also been understood differently ... in the sense of

[288] Sirhindi, *Maktübat-i Imam-i Rabbanï*, 1: Letter 260.

[289] Bobzin, 'The "Seal Of The Prophets"', 566.

[290] Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, 8.

[291] Khan, 53.

[292] Khan, 54.

[293] Sarrio, 'Spiritual Anti-Elitism: Ibn Taymiyya's Doctrine of Sainthood (Walāya)', 278. See also: Taymiyya, 'L'extinction (Fanāʾ)'.

confirmation, i.e., as a form of continuity with earlier prophets."[294] These assessments especially acknowledge the ongoing significance of spiritual continuity with prophethood in Islamic discourse, and how this blurs traditional Sunnī distinctions between prophethood and sainthood. Chodkiewicz, for example, notes that the Andalusian mystic Ibn ʿArabī differentiated between legislative prophethood (nubuwwat al-tashrīʿ) and general prophethood (nubuwwa ʿāmma), stating, "The Andalusian shāykh [...] did not hesitate to identify the latter [general prophethood] with the highest degree of walāya"[295] Fitzroy Morrissey's more recent study on the influential Ibn ʿArabīan Sufi Abd al-Karīm ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jīlī (d. 1424) similarly reveals that al-Jīlī identified several renowned Sufi figures as 'prophets of divine friendship' (anbiyā' al-walāyah), a term borrowed from Ibn ʿArabī. Al-Jīlī explained that a certain type of prophethoods persists after Muḥammad's death, with these 'prophets' embodying the Muḥammadan Reality without introducing new revelations or laws. Morrissey writes, "He [al-Jīlī] makes it clear that a certain type of prophecy does continue after Muḥammad's death, albeit that these 'prophets' are embodiments of the Muḥammadan Reality, and do not bring a new revelation or law."[296] Morrissey and Chodkiewicz both recognize that these ideas challenge the orthodox Sunnī view of post-Muḥammadan history, with Morrissey explaining, "Al-Jīlī's view [...] undoubtedly constitutes a challenge to the orthodox Sunnī conception of post-Muḥammadan history, for it suggests that sacred history is an ongoing reality."[297]

Yohanan Friedmann has demonstrated the continuity of prophethood as a timeworn idea in Islam. Friedmann's research focuses on the modern "prophetic" movement of the Aḥmadiyyah and the intellectual roots of Ghulām Aḥmad's self-perception as the recipient of divine revelation. According to Friedmann, Ghulām Aḥmad's beliefs were "not marginal but mainstream"[298] and heavily influenced by the works of Ibn al-'Arabi and Sirhindī.[299] Friedmann states that Ghulām Aḥmad view of non-legislative prophets continuing within the Islamic tradition is "a fascinating revival of medieval mystical thought, expressed in the social and political context of the modern period."[300] The driving historical claim behind Friedmann's argument is that the doctrinal insistence on the finality of Muḥammad's

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[294] Hartmut Bobzin, 'The "Seal Of The Prophets": Towards An Understanding Of Muḥammad'S Prophethood', in *The Qur'ānin Context*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (BRILL, 2009), 565, https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004176881.i-864.149.

[295] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, ed. Liadain Sherrard, Golden Palm Series, 1993, 53.

[296] Morrissey, *Abd Al-Karīm Al-Jīlī's Sufi Metaphysical Treatment of the Scriptures in Al-Insān Al-Kāmil. PhD Thesis*, 83–84. See also: Morrissey, Ibn al-ʿArabī, and Jīlī, *Sufism and the Perfect Human*.

[297] Morrissey, *Abd Al-Karīm Al-Jīlī's Sufi Metaphysical Treatment of the Scriptures in Al-Insān Al-Kāmil. PhD Thesis*, 84.

[298] Morrissey, *Abd Al-Karīm Al-Jīlī's Sufi Metaphysical Treatment of the Scriptures in Al-Insān Al-Kāmil. PhD Thesis*, 84.

[299] Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, another Sufi scholar, disagreed with Ibn ʿArabī only on the nature of the possible. Sirhindī believed that the possible entities are non-existents that have produced determination in divine knowledge and have become established at the level of sense and perception. However, both scholars agree on the fundamental concept of the Unity of Being.

[300] Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*, 146.

prophethood was in fact a late development in Islam, partially inspired by the appearance of numerous would-be prophets. The basis of his argument, however, relies heavily on Ahmadi prophetology itself. Friedmann, for example, accepts Ahmadi interpretation of the word khatam, which assumes that it did not mean "the last prophet"[301] but rather "the best prophet and an authority with a seal of approval."[302] Adil Khan's more recent analysis of Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad's prophethood builds upon Friedmann's work. Although Khan agrees with Friedmann's assertion that Ghulām Aḥmad's prophethood has medieval roots, he invites further reflection by highlighting the often complex and contradictory set of beliefs and ideas Ghulām Aḥmad uniquely developed to explain and justify his claims to prophethood. This complexity and contradiction are visible in as Khan's representation of how Ghulām Aḥmad's based his prophetic status on the spiritual imitation of Prophet Muḥammad. Khan asserts that Ghulām Aḥmad "attributed prophethood solely to his pure and flawless spiritual imitation (burūz) of Muḥammad,"[303] yet acknowledged that "he was not a prophet"[304] since he brought neither "new scripture to disseminate nor new law to augment or replace the Sharī'ah."[305]

In light of its enduring focus on Sufism and more recent attention to the Aḥmadiyyah movement, it is evident that existing scholarship has been preoccupied with dramatic and obvious cases of resistance to the traditional position on Muḥammad's finality. It can be even argued that this focus has almost reached saturation, where the accumulation of research is struggling to yield new or valuable insights. This chapter, therefore, investigates the question of the finality of Prophethood in new ways. It not only revisits the analysis of Sufism for new insights, but also turns away from the conventional focus on the Aḥmadiyyah, moving instead in a less well-worn direction of the less-studied Dēōband movement—a significant Sunnī tradition. It does so by examining Ghāmidī's assessment that both Sufis and the understudied Dēōbandī scholars' view of prophethood as perceptually accessible and available for use. Building on Ghāmidī's re-evaluation, this chapter argues that traditional Islamic discourse, in fact, maintains that individuals can become 'warner-prophets' through a process of human labour characterized by transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. This examination ultimately illuminates how Islamic traditions generate representations of prophethood that are primarily concerned with overcoming the prophethood of Muḥammad.

2. Ghāmidī's Account of the Seal

In *Al-Bayān*, Ghāmidī interprets the 'Seal of the prophets' verse in line with classical exegesis: "Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the Seal of the prophets. [Hence, he alone had to fulfil this responsibility], and God has knowledge of all things."[306] His commentary on the phrase 'Seal of the Prophets' centres

[301] Friedmann, 57.

[302] Friedmann, 57.

[303] Khan, *From Sufism to Ahmadiyya*, 53.

[304] Khan, 53.

[305] Khan, 53.

[306] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:145.

what the language of the Qur'ān does and does not do in order to establish Muḥammad as the last of the prophets. It does this, he notes, in two ways.

First, Ghāmidī clarifies the Qur'ān's use of the word "khatam" to indicate a seal that closes something: "It may be noted that the word is خَاتَمَ and not خَاتِمَ. The word خَاتَمَ (khātam) in Arabic means 'a seal.' When this word is used as it is here, it always signifies closing and sealing something."[307] Understanding the distinction between the two Arabic words khātam and khātim is crucial for grasping the meaning and significance of the phrase "khātam al-nabiyyīn." Khātam refers to a seal that closes or seals something, often with a sense of finality or completion. This term can have a figurative meaning, as in "sealing" or "ending" a matter, or a literal meaning, as in a physical seal used to authenticate documents. Conversely, khātim is derived from the same root word, but means "one who seals" or "the sealer."[308] This refers to the person or entity responsible for sealing or closing something, rather than the act or process itself. In the context of the phrase "khātam al-nabiyyīn", the use of the word khātam suggests to Ghāmidī that prophethood is sealed and closed with the arrival of Prophet Muḥammad: "There is now no possibility of the advent of any further prophet or messenger."[309] Ghāmidī elaborates on this further in *Mīzān*: "For centuries, prophets continued to come in every nation, but this process has now terminated forever. It began with Adam (sws) until the time came when, in one branch of the descendants of Abraham (sws), the Ishmaelites, the Prophet Muḥammad (sws) arrived, and the Qur'ān declared that he was the final prophet and after him there would be no prophet or messenger."[310]

Second, Ghāmidī points out that the Qur'ān uses the expression "khātam al-nabiyyīn" (Seal of the prophets) instead of "khātam al-rusul" (Seal of the messengers): "The Qur'ān has not used the expression خَاتَمَ الرُّسُل (khātam al-rusul). The reason is that every rasūl is a nabī, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Thus, when the expression khātam al-nabiyyīn is used, it implies khātam al-rusul even more so."[311] This implies the closure of both prophets and messengers through a reverse synecdoche. The Qur'ān makes a statement about the entire category, nabī, to imply that it also holds true for the specific sub-category, rasūl. Therefore, for Ghāmidī, the use of "khātam al-nabiyyīn" definitively closes the possibility of future prophets or messengers.

In both *Al-Bayān* and *Mīzān,* Ghāmidī underscores his interpretation with ḥadīth. For example, in one ḥadīth, Muḥammad declares that he marked the end of the continuous line of prophets who guided the Israelites: "When one prophet would pass away, another would succeed him. But there will be no prophet after me." (Bukhārī: 3455) In another, he likens himself and previous prophets to a beautiful building with one missing brick, clarifying, "I am that brick, and I am the seal of the prophets." (Bukhārī: 3535)

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[307] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:145.

[308] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:145.

[309] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:145.

[310] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 153.

[311] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:145.

Ghāmidī emphasises that both prophets (rasūl) and messengers (nabī) have ceased to exist, clearly suggesting that it is impossible for any type of prophet, proposed by any tradition, to emerge in the future. This includes the non-legislative prophets of Sufism. In his 1993 two-part essay titled *Islam aur Taṣawwuf* ['Islam and Sufism'], later included in his anthology *Burhān*[312], Ghāmidī discusses four central ideas in Sufism: the oneness of God (tawhid), prophethood (nabuwat), revealed law (Sharī'ah), and the Day of Judgment (qiyāmah). It is a rapid but extensive review, examining 40 proof texts (iqtebasāt) from canonical Sufi thinkers such as Abu Hamid Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Abu Ḥafṣ ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), al-Jīlī, Sirhindī (d. 1624) and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1072). Ghāmidī's overall assessment is that according to Sufis prophetic revelation is still possible:

> "In the religion of the Sufis (ahl-e-taṣawwuf), all these things can still be achieved. In their perspective, prophetic revelation (waḥy) is still possible, the angels still descend [to deliver revelation], the world of the Unseen (ʿālim-e-ghayb) can still be witnessed, and their masters (akābir) still receive guidance from the same place where Gabriel (Jibrīl-e-Amīn) receives it from, and once, the prophets also received it from."[313]

Ghāmidī illustrates the ongoing possibility of prophethood through reference to Ibn ʿArabī. He cites the following passage from *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya:*

> "And therefore, the prophethood that has ended with the existence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is only the law-giving prophethood (nubūwat al-tashrīḥī). The station of prophethood still exists. So, no law will abrogate the law of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and will not add to his law another law. And this is the meaning of Muḥammad's statement, peace be upon him: "The message and prophethood have ended, so there is no messenger or prophet after me." There will be no prophet after him that will oppose this law and instead, any prophet after him will follow his law."[314]

Ibn ʿArabī distinguishes between two types of prophethood: nubūwat al-tashrīḥī (law-giving prophethood) and nubūwat al-ʿamā (common prophethood).[315] Ghāmidī emphasizes that in Ibn ʿArabī's thinking, nubūwat al-ʿamā can still be acquired (ḥāṣil): "Ibn ʿArabī states, with absolute clarity, that the finality of prophethood means that only the office of receiving revealed law (mansab-e-tashrīḥī) will no longer be acquired by any person. The station (maqām) of prophethood and its excellences (kamālāt) exist now as they once did, and can

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[312] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181–210.

[313] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 193.

[314] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 198.

[315] This classification is traceable to Imam al-Ghazālī. See for example, Ghazzālī and Richard Joseph McCarthy, *Al-Ghazālī's Path to Sufism and His Deliverance from Error: An Annotated Translation of al-Munqidh Min al-Dal¯al* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2000), 77–79.

still be acquired."[316] In other words, Sufism's law-giving prophethood (nubūwat al-tashrīḥī) corresponds to a prophethood created through God's selection, while its common prophethood (nubūwat al-ʿamā) corresponds to a prophethood created by human labour.[317] Subsequent public commentary from Ghāmidī's organization further explains that Ibn ʿArabī's distinction between the two types of prophethoods can be framed as the difference between ikhtisās (God's selection of a prophet) and iktisāb (the Sufi's labour to become a prophet).[318]

In light of Ghāmidī's reappraisal of Sufism and the thesis's conceptual framework, it will be argued that Sufism's representation of prophethood can be understood as that of the warner-prophet: an individual prophet who delivers God's warning. As will be demonstrated, this representation of prophethood is progressive, unfolding in two distinct sequences. The first sequence involves the self-transcendent creation of the warner-prophet. Here, the individual undergoes transcendence, shock, and apocalypse, which parallel stages of prophetic apocalypse, before assuming the mantle of the warner-prophet. This warner-prophet, however, is limited to the initial stage of prophethood, Indhār, delivering private, small-scale 'warnings' to their immediate spiritual community, including disciples. The warner-prophet of Sufism thus serves as an illustration of (iktisāb) in which the Sufi undertakes labour to attain common prophethood (nubūwat al-ʿamā).

3. The Self-Transcendent Creation of the Warner-Prophet

3.1 Transcendence

Ghāmidī highlights that in order to harness human labour in the creation of prophets, Sufism has crafted mechanism of spiritual cultivation:

> "In accordance with this concept, there is a whole set of practices, exercises, and spiritual observances that are outside the scope of God's law, the Qur'ān, and Sunnah, and are in fact in direct opposition to their objectives. These Sufis have tried to popularize these practices under the name of 'ṭarīqah' (spiritual path). They openly claim that the knowledge of this path can only be obtained by establishing a connection with their spiritual guides, and that it is no longer easy for people to gain this knowledge through any other means."[319]

The Sufi path (ṭarīqah) towards for the self-transcendent creation of a warner-prophet involves human labour (iktisāb) infallibly guided by a master (shāykh) who accepts the disciple (murīd) into the fold. The disciple's journey to encounter God is marked with the tension between practices and challenges that drive the transcendent rhythm of waqt to aḥwāl to maqāmāt. The disciple arrives at "present moments" (awqāt), during which they

[316] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 198–99.

[317] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181–210.

[318] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181–210.

[319] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 209.

experience "fleeting states" (aḥwāl) and eventually acquire (makāsib) "stable spiritual stations" (maqāmāt).[320] Advancing from waqt to aḥwāl and finally to maqāmāt, the disciple builds upon each stage, crossing different levels of the mystical ascent that culminate in the union (wusūl) with God. Ghāmidī describes the Sufi's ultimate goal of union (wusūl) in the words of Abū Ismāʿīl al-Harawī's (d. 1089) *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* ['Stations of the Wayfarers'] (1082):

> "Union is the state that eliminates the distinction between the Creator and the creature in terms of their reality, terminates the sign, and departs from water and clay in such a way that the transient becomes permanently annihilated and the eternal becomes established, and becomes free from all forms of hesitation between annihilation and establishment, attains salvation from the perception of duality, and the sense of causality vanishes, to the extent that even the knowledge of these things ceases to exist."[321]

Ghāmidī argues that the mechanism for this union (wusūl), the path (ṭarīqah), was developed by Sufis to compensate for what they saw as the diminishing spiritual power after Muḥammad. He specially refers to Indian Dēōbandī Islamic scholar Rashīd Aḥmad Gangōhī (d. 1905), who stated that: "The spiritual power of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was such that even the greatest unbeliever would attain the level of 'Ihsan' (doing good) just by saying 'There is no god but Allah.'...However, in the successors of the followers, this power became very scarce, and to compensate for it, the greats created spiritual exercises and physical devotions."[322]

In order to reach "higher and most special levels of annihilation and subsistence and absolute stability"[323], this path relies on mystical literature and spiritual pedagogy. These notably, he observes, include the Shāykh, considered a direct and infallible source of divine guidance for Sufi practitioners. Their infallibility stems from them being seen as manifestations of the Prophet. For example, al-Suhrawardī declared in his *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif* ['Benefits of Intimate Knowledge'] (1203) that the Shāykh is comparable to the angel Gabriel in terms of trustworthiness: "The Sheikh is the trustee of inspiration for the disciples, just as Gabriel is the trustee of revelation."[324] Ghāmidī also emphasizes the importance of scholarly genres within Sufi literature, which provide guidance, instructions, and discussions on various aspects of Sufi practice and spirituality. Ghāmidī, among others, mentions Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī's (d. 996) *Qūt al-Qulūb* ['Nourishment of the Hearts'], an early treatise on Sufi ethics and spirituality; al-Harawī's *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*, a spiritual guide detailing the practices, states, and challenges encountered by spiritual seekers; and Al-Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Iḥyāʾ*

[320] Khalil, 'The Encyclopaedia of Islam'.

[321] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[322] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 208.

[323] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 206.

[324] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 195.

ʿUlūm al-Dīn [‘The Revival of the Religious Sciences’], a comprehensive work that integrates Sufi teachings into mainstream Islamic thought.[325]

It can, therefore, be argued that the disciple labours across the path (ṭarīqah), guided by master and material. This path can be understood as a series of transcendence, shock, and apocalypse that parallel the prophetic apocalypse.

While the entire path (ṭarīqah) is transcendent, representing the mystical ascent to God through successive levels, the “present moment” (waqt) can be understood as the elemental transcendent moment. As Atif Khalil explains, the waqt is when the “present stands between the past and the future.”[326] In this moment, the Sufi becomes ibn al-waqt—the son of the waqt—solely concerned with, as described by ʿAlī b. ʿUthmān Al-Jullābī Al-Hujwīrī (d. 1077), the moment “upon which the ḥāl descends.”[327] This notion of waqt as the present moment sharply recalls T.S. Eliot’s “still point of the turning world”[328], where the individual experiences the halt of the turning world:

> “At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
> Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
> There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.”[329]

Waqt, therefore, is the “still point” where individual transcends into the feeling experience of the ḥāl. This is akin to Ezra Pound’s “magic moment”[330], which sees the individual “bust thru from quotidien into divine or permanent world.”[331] In *Kashf al-Mahjúb* [‘The Unveiling of the Hidden’] (1072), Al-Hujwīrī explains that this transcendence is one of ḥāl, which adorns the waqt, “as the spirit adorns the body.” The spiritual overcomes the physical, much like Andrew Marvell’s singing bird that casts away “the body’s vest”[332].

3.2 Shock

The progression from the fleeting state (ḥāl), and the stable station (maqām) that the ibn al-waqt—the disciple in the present moment—is spiritually propelled into might be described as

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[325] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 209.

[326] Khalil, ‘The Encyclopaedia of Islam’.

[327] Khalil.

[328] Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, 175.

[329] Eliot, 175.

[330] Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, 210.

[331] Pound, 210.

[332] Gardner, *The New Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1950*, 336.

events of shock—Augenblicke plötzlicher Beleuchtung ("moments of sudden lighting")[333]—which provoke the temporary reaction of the ḥāl and the permanent reaction of the maqām. Khalil highlights the factors the Sufis believe determine the spiritual state to the more stable spiritual station. He points out that according to Ibn ʿArabī, the impermanence of the ḥāl (state) is a result of the divine shaʾn (task) acting upon the disciple, as alluded to in the Qur'ān (55:29): "Every day He is upon some shaʾn." Here, the yawm (day) signifies the indivisible, atomized unit of time in which God acts or, more precisely, through which He reveals His own attributes." Additionally, Khalil explains that al-Suhrawardī elucidated the disciple's transition from a ḥāl to a maqām (spiritual station) as dependent on how deeply ingrained the associated virtue of the ḥāl is within the disciple's personality.[334]

Much like Walter Benjamin's art, which has the unique capacity to shatter our guard, and awaken the conscience, the Sufi's path (ṭarīqah) discloses divine Reality. The glimpse into the divine—flashes of light—propels the disciple into the state (ḥāl), and while the unveiling of the divine—light of unveiling—is the maqām lands the disciple onto a stable station (maqām). The sources of these disclosures (tajallī) are distinct, yet infallible and indistinguishable: the Shāykh, the Prophet, and God's grace (baraqah). These shocks and their sources are evident in Al-Ghazālī's *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* ['The Deliverance from Error']: "At the beginning of the spiritual path, the traveller is granted visions and unveilings, to the extent that they witness angels and the souls of the prophets in their waking state, hear their voices, and benefit from them."[335] The Sufi's path (ṭarīqah) is constant with shock—light upon light—serving as a catalyst for the disciple's spiritual advancement. Much like Benjamin's epic theatre, this shock progressively abolishes the "abyss"[336] between the disciple and the divine.

Ghāmidī rejects the possibility of shock, whether visions or unveilings. He states: "According to the Qur'ān, prophethood has finished upon Muḥammad-e-ʿArabī (Muḥammad of Arab). This means that neither prophetic revelation (waḥy), personal revelation (ilhām), nor witness of the Unseen (mushāhidah-e-ghayb) is possible for anyone anymore, nor is the acquisition of infallibility and divine protection.'" [337] He instead makes two arguments.

Firstly, he asserts that Muḥammad's prophethood stands as the ultimate, unalterable, and final source of divine guidance:

> "The Qur'ān has given us the religion, and it has also been clearly stated that through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), it has reached its completion, and there is no room for any addition or subtraction in it. Moreover, the Qur'ān has stated that the completion of this religion is the ultimate blessing, and therefore, all

[333] Weigel, 'The Flash of Knowledge and the Temporality of Images', 362.

[334] Khalil, 'The Encyclopaedia of Islam'.

[335] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 193.

[336] Benjamin and Bostock, *Understanding Brecht (New Edition)*, 22.

[337] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 192.

> the guidance required for the common people and the elite, in the form of Islam, is available."[338]

There is, therefore, no further need for divine disclosures. Ghāmidī reinforces this position with the Qur'ānic verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:3) that declares the perfection of Muḥammad's guidance: "Today, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

Ghāmidī's second argument, which can also be viewed as a corollary of his first, focuses on divine speech. He contends that the Sufi understanding of divine disclosure relies on the possibility of ongoing divine speech, which he emphasizes is no longer possible. The Qur'ān and Sunnah represent the final instances of divine communication. Ghāmidī cites Imām-ul-Hind Shāh Walīullāh's (1762) *Alṭāf Al-Quds Fī Ma'rifat Laṭā'if Al-Nafs* ['The Sacred Knowledge of the Higher Functions of the Mind'] to demonstrate that Sufis downplay the Qur'ān and Sunnah, viewing Sharī'ah as a safeguard from worldly or existential suffering rather than a path to higher spirituality. "And the purpose of this (Sharī'ah) is to save people from oppressing one another in this world and from the punishment of the grave and the Day of Resurrection. Reaching the annihilation and subsistence of every subtlety (wuṣūl bifanā o baqā-e-har laṭīfah) and achieving the level of absolute subsistence and complete stability (ḥaṣūl martabah baqā-e-muṭlaq o tamkīn tām) is not in view."[339] Shāh Walīullāh instead believed, Ghāmidī shows, that the way to this transcendence requires an alternative (mutawāzi) source of divine speech that are not accessible to people: "Whatever speech has been received from the essence of humanity, the Prophet (peace be upon him), its real value is this. The objectives and benefits of the commandments and prohibitions he has given have not been understood by the person who carries them to other levels."[340] While most souls are imperfect, some souls are able to have direct communication:

> "This is the way of the universal souls, which the source of blessings has brought down to earth for the overall benefit, completing the imperfect people, and at this place, there is no message or speech between them. However, intelligent natures somehow recognize this grace, and the result for them is that they deduce those secrets through the words and statements of that intermediary (i.e., the Prophet (peace be upon him)) as a reference and indication."[341]

Ghāmidī challenges the alternative nature of this divine speech by asking, "But where can these subtleties of annihilation and subsistence and complete stability (laṭā'if fanā o baqā aur tamkīn) be obtained?"[342] Examining Shāh Walīullāh, he reveals, the Sufis believe "it was not acquired from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, but directly from the presence of the Prophet (peace

[338] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 206.

[339] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 207.

[340] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 207.

[341] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 208.

[342] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 207.

be upon him) in such a way as, for example, the melon gains its growth and completion by receiving blessings from the sun. However, neither the melon knows that its completion is due to the sun's favour, nor does the sun have any idea that a melon is going through the stages of its completion with its help on the distant earth."[343] This first person to gather this speech for others, Shāh Walīullāh believed, was Sayyid al-Ṭāʾifah Junayd Baghdādī (d. 910). Ghāmidī rejects Shāh Walīullāh's account of divine speech, supporting his claim with the following ḥadīth: "The best speech is the Book of Allah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad, and the worst affairs are those that are newly invented, and every newly invented matter is misguidance." (Muslim: 2005)

3.3 Apocalypse

As the disciple successfully scales the progressive states (aḥwāl) and stages (maqāmāt) of his spiritual journey, the reaches the culmine of self-transcendence,[344] finally uniting with God. This union (wusūl) occurs in across the two contrasting stages, fanāʾ (annihilation), followed by baqāʾ (subsistence). At the stage of stage[345] of fanāʾ, human selfhood is annihilated in the sheer presence of God. The Sufis believe this is referred to in the Qur'ān as follows: "Everything upon the earth is undergoing annihilation, but there subsists the face of your Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Generous Giving" (55:26–27). This annihilation is acquired across three stages: fanāʾ fī ashshāykh (annihilation in the master), fanāʾ fīar-Rasūl (annihilation in the Prophet), and fanāʾ fī-Allāh (annihilation in God).

Following the stage of fanāʾ is the higher stage of baqāʾ (subsistence), where the human selfhood returns and exists differently from before the stage of annihilation. The journey to God does not end in the annihilation of the selfhood, but rather, it culminates in a stage of subsistence where the individual is able to retain self-awareness while being fully aware of divine presence at the same time. This transcendent being is the union (wusūl) that al-Harawī refers to in *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*: "the transient becomes permanently annihilated and the eternal becomes established, and becomes free from all forms of hesitation between annihilation and establishment, attains salvation from the perception of duality, and the sense of causality vanishes, to the extent that even the knowledge of these things ceases to exist."[346]

As the Ḥanbalī Sufi master Imād al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Wāsiṭī (d. 1311) explains in *Lawāmiʿ al-istirshād fī al-farq bayna al-tawḥīd wa-al-ittiḥād* ['Flashes of Guidance to Differentiate Between Divine Unity and Monism'], annihilation (fanāʾ) and subsistence (baqāʾ) are preludes to the final stage of the disciple's spiritual journey (ṭarīqah): stability (tamkīn).[347]

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[343] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 207.

[344] Self-transcendence, in some form or another, is therefore a recurring motif in the classical literature of Sufism, and is usually described through the language of *fanā'* and *baqā'*, annihilation and subsistence.

[345] Some Sufis categorize *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ* as "states" (*aḥwāl*) of the human being, while others call them "stations" (*maqāmāt*), "waystations" (*manāzil*), "fields" (*maydān*), and so on, all of which are hierarchically ordered to indicate progressive stages of the spiritual journey.

[346] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*.

[347] Post, *The Journeys of a Taymiyyan Sufi*, 197.

This is where the disciple attains inner stability by freeing themselves from all forms of duality and hesitation while firmly grounding themselves in the Divine Reality. After achieving the stage of stability (tamkīn), the disciple may continue to transcend in order to attain union (wusūl) with God; however, their journey is no longer driven by a sense of spiritual lack or deficiency. Instead, living an earthly life in full harmony with God's will and retaining individual awareness.

This stability (tamkīn) can be seen as the fullest meaning of the Sufi's self-transcendence, not as something that goes beyond the earthly realm and into the spiritual realm, but rather as something that is permanently both. This permanence integrates the earthly and spiritual into a single existence. This integration can be likened to Walter Pater's notion of the moment when "the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy,"[348] or T.S. Eliot's "Neither flesh nor fleshless."[349] Similarly, the resulting permanence evokes the latter aspect Ezra Pound's "magic moment,"[350] when the individual "busts thru from quotidien into … permanent world."[351]

Ghāmidī questions the notion of permanence, drawing from the opening verses of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1273)'s *Maṣnavī-e-Ma'navī* ['Rhyming Couplets of Profound Spiritual Meaning'] (1258-1273) to highlight its instability:

> "Listen to the reed as it tells a tale, and complains of separations. From the reed-bed, they have cut me away and brought me here; men and women lament in my company. I want to tear my chest, piece by piece, from separation, to tell the story of the pain of longing. Everyone who is far from their origin seeks the time of their union."[352]

Ghāmidī emphasises that the Sufi's self-transcendence is marked by the pain of gnostic separation and longing, as exemplified in these verses. He explains that the Sufi attempts to manage this instability with the symbolic device of love, in which the pursuit of gnosis is framed within the language of love: "Hence, the relationship between a person and the divine essence in this religion is that of a lover (ʿāshiq) and the beloved (maʿshūq). The person, considering their original reality, which is the divine essence, as their beloved, yearns in separation, cries out, and then, under the guidance of a spiritual master, first attains the knowledge of this reality and then reaches the station of union and becomes united with their beloved."[353] Ghāmidī observes that the "wedding ceremony"[354] of the Urs̱ and the entire genre of Sufi poetry are a way of implementing this device: "We have seen the reflection of

[348] Pater and Buckler, *Walter Pater, Three Major Texts*, 186.

[349] Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, 175.

[350] Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, 210.

[351] Pound, 210.

[352] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 205.

[353] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[354] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 205.

our beloved's face in the wine glass. O ignorant one, you are unaware of the pleasure of constant drinking."[355] He disagrees with the device of love, since does not represent the real relationship of humans and God:

> "The relationship that exists between a person and their Creator is the relationship between the one who worships and the one being worshiped (ʻabd aur maʼbūd), and the purpose of all human effort and struggle in this world is to fulfil the right of worship to their Lord in such a way that they obtain His satisfaction in both this world and the hereafter. In the religion of the Sufis, on the contrary, since a human being is a manifestation of the divine essence, and because of this manifestation, they have descended from the realm of divinity to this physical world, what is essentially sought from them is the realization of this truth (maʿrfat) and the struggle to return to it."[356]

The Sufi's self-transcendence can be considered apocalyptic, since it signifies the end of one's previous self and the beginning of a new self after the stages of fanāʾ and baqāʾ. This consideration is directly and clearly corroborated when Ghāmidī describes the Sufis who pass these two stages as those who literally experience death and resurrection (mawt aur qiyāmat)[357]:

> "For the bearers of these stations, death and resurrection are indeed the return and union."
>
> (Mawt aur qiyāmat in maqāmāt ke hāmilīn ke liye yehī rujūʿat aur wuṣāl hai.)

The "death" (mawt) of fanāʾ, where the old self is annihilated, and the "resurrection" (qiyāmat) of baqāʾ, where the new self is born, underscore an apocalypse that occurs at the end the Sufi's path (ṭarīqah) towards self-transcendence (tamkīn). Since it occurs not in the case of the world or a community, but an individual, it can be termed a radically individual apocalypse.

This resembles what Nicolai Sinai calls the radical eschatological individualism[358] in Islam that emphasizes the importance the early Meccan Qur'ān gives to individual responsibility, accountability, and merit in determining one's fate in the afterlife, such as eschatological proclamation: "[The Judgement will come to pass] on the day on which no soul will be able to help another" (83:5). The radically individual apocalypse also focuses on individual actions and merits, and the divine compensation that comes with it. But it also differs in a number of illuminating ways. The Sufi's apocalypse is radically individual because it involves far-reaching transformation of the individual's inner self that is personally unique to

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[355] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 205.

[356] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[357] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 205.

[358] Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'ān: A Historical-Critical Introduction*, The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 164.

their spiritual path. The individualistic eschatology of the Qur'ān is radical because it breaks away from the more collective or communal notions found in other religious traditions, such as "late antique Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism as well as post-Qur'ānic Islam."[359] It is also radical because it bases the individual's ultimate destiny in the afterlife solely on their own actions and merits, without any influence from intercession. In the case of the Sufi, intercession does occur with the infallible mediation of the spiritual master, the Shāykh. Another key difference is that the Qur'ānic eschatology is concerned with the end times and the afterlife, often within the context of "eschatological agnosticism or denial."[360] The Sufi's apocalypse refers to a transformation during one's life, often within the context of apocalyptic affirmation, where the seeker (murīd) makes the will (irādah)[361] to embark on a spiritual journey (ṭarīqah) to attain experiential knowledge (ma'rifah) of and union (wusūl) with God:

"Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more, I shall die as man, to soar
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
I must pass on: all except God decays.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist! for Non-existence
You."[362]

3.4 The Mantle of the Warner-Prophet

The Sufi's path (ṭarīqah) to stability (tamkīn) allows them to embrace both spiritual and earthly realms. Living in harmony with God's will while retaining their individual self, they are able to navigate both worlds. As Ibn 'Arabī observes, "Thus, in the kingdom of God, they become partners in His glory, seeing the unfolding of destiny on the Preserved Tablet every moment, knowing the thoughts of the heart, holding and sustaining this world morning and evening, and becoming the instrument of the divine in the realm of command."[363] The argument can be made that it is at this crucial point that the warner-prophet is created. This creation, marked by transcendent moments, shocks, and apocalypse, is the result of human labour (iktisāb) of the Sufi path (ṭarīqah). To be sure, the Sufis argue that this is the state that the Prophet Muḥammad himself achieved.

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[359] Sinai, 164.

[360] Sinai, 164.

[361] In Sufism, "murīd" (seeker) and "irādah" (intention) share the same Arabic root word, emphasizing the willful pursuit of spiritual growth. The ultimate goal is "wusūl" (union with God), which is attained through experiential knowledge ("ma'rifah") of the Divine. These concepts—murīd, irādah, ma'rifah, and wusūl—are interrelated and form the core of Sufi thought and practice.

[362] My own translation of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī's 'To Him is Our Return', in *Maṣnavī III: 3901-3906.*

[363] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 201.

Ghāmidī's examination of Sufism sustains this argument. He refers to al-Jīlī's assertion that Sufis believe a perfect human, like Prophet Muḥammad, appears in every era: "The perfect human is the pivot around which all the celestial spheres of existence revolve, from the beginning to the end... His original name is Muḥammad, his kunyah (honorific) is Abū al-Qāsim, his description is 'Abdullāh, and his title is Shams al-Dīn. Then, according to his other forms, he has other names, and in every era, he has a name that befits his attire at that time. I saw him in the form of my Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Ismā'īl al-Jabartī, and I knew that he was the Prophet (peace be upon him), and I also knew that he was my Shaykh." Ghāmidī also cites Sirhindī's assertion that the perfections (kamālāt) of Muḥammad's prophetic office "can still be fully attained by his followers."[364]

Ghāmidī highlights that Sufis believe they are well-positioned to assume the Prophet's mantle, possessing immense knowledge and authority over the world. This is evidenced by al-Qushayrī, who states: "He sees the entirety of existence illuminated by his own light, so that nothing in existence remains hidden from him. He sees the whole universe from the heavens to the earth with direct vision, but with his heart."[365] Ibn 'Arabī supports this notion, stating that their knowledge is so vast that "if any of them were to see the footprint of a person on the ground, they would immediately know whether that person is destined for Hell or Heaven."[366]

The Sufis, therefore, consider themselves instruments of the divine, fulfilling God's purposes. Shāh Walīullāh, in *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn* ['Emanations of Mecca and Medina'], describes a dream in which he was granted the position of the 'Leader of the Age': "In a dream, I saw myself being granted the position of the Leader of the Age, which means that whenever Allah intends something in His system of goodness, He will make me the instrument to accomplish His purpose."[367] It can even be argued, and Ghāmidī supports this, that Sufis believe they possess something even the Prophets were deprived of, as expressed in Shāh Walīullāh's statement, "O assembly of Prophets, you were given the title of a Prophet, and we were given what you were deprived of."[368] Indeed, alongside Shāh Walīullāh, Ibn 'Arabī illustrated this larger purpose, elaborating upon the Sufis' role in maintaining the world's stability and preventing the earth from shaking. In his "Men of the Unseen," Ibn 'Arabī wrote:

> "One of them, through whom Allah protects the East and his dominion is in it, the other three are responsible for the protection of the West, South, and North. The directions are determined from the Ka'bah. These are the people who are sometimes referred to as 'mountains' or 'pegs' due to the divine command: 'Have We not made the earth as a bed and the mountains as pegs?' This is because it is

[364] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 199.

[365] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 199.

[366] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 200.

[367] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 203.

[368] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 203.

> these mountains that prevent the earth from shaking. Their situation is the same. They hold this world like the mountains of the earth."[369]

In other words, the Sufis serve as the "pegs" that prevent a world "turning and turning in the widening gyre"[370] with a "centre [that] cannot hold,"[371] providing stability and maintaining balance.

This arguably expands the field of apocalypse in Sufi ontology. Firstly, the Sufi emerges as salvific figure amidst apocalypse, offering hope by bringing order and harmony to a chaotic world on the verge of collapse. Moreover, the Sufi's path (ṭarīqah) leads them through the annihilative apocalypse of fanā and subsistential apocalypse of baqā, into the post-apocalyptic self-transcendence of tamkīn, only to return them as a warner-prophet to a world seeking stability. Consequently, the Sufi's prophetic journey can be ontologically understood as a cyclical apocalypse. The notion of a continuous cycle of apocalypse gains further resonance when considering that the Sufi's eventual union (wusūl) with God, as well as their role in initiating and guiding others through their own radically individual apocalypse.

When viewed within the quidity of earthly existence, however, the Sufi who has achieved stability (tamkīn) belongs to a specialized spiritual elite. Ghāmidī refers to this group as khawāṣ aur akhṣ al-khawāṣ, meaning "the special ones and the most special of the special ones."[372] They closely approximate to the warner-prophet, offering private, small-scale guidance and attending to the needs of a local spiritual community. They use their extraordinary powers to guide and support the spiritual growth and development of their disciples or followers. Like their master before them, they infallibly guide a network of new disciples on their spiritual path (ṭarīqah), while also producing infallible teachings and doctrines based on their mystical experiences. Through their ability to navigate both worlds, they speak to, guide, and benefit others through spiritual practice, discourse, and fellowship. Indeed, God desires this. As al-Wāsiṭī points out, these individuals not only serve as proofs for God, but also cure "mankind's spiritual diseases, take charge over them and govern them, and lead them unto the path of the revealed law (Sharī'ah), away from falsehood. They are, in short, the successors of God's prophets (khulafāʾ al-rusul)."[373]

4. Sufism Representation of Prophethood

As initially mentioned, it can be argued that many forms of Sufism propound a distinct representation of prophethood, corresponding to various stages of prophetic apocalypse within a two-sequence progression. In this progression, the disciple undergoes a transcendent

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[369] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 202.

[370] 'The Second Coming by William Butler Yeats | Poetry Foundation'.

[371] 'The Second Coming by William Butler Yeats | Poetry Foundation'.

[372] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 192–93.

[373] Post, *The Journeys of a Taymiyyan Sufi*, 197–98.

creation into a warner-prophet, and then assumes the mantle of this prophetic role. The representation of prophethood can be formally structured as follows. (See also Figure 1.)

1. *First Sequence: Disciple's Self-Transcendent Creation into Warner-Prophet*

   During the first sequence of the disciple's self-transcendent creation into the warner-prophet, while the master acts as the warner-prophet. This representation corresponds with prophetic apocalypse in the following way:

   1.1 Stage 1: Indhār (Transcendence: Private Guidance on God's Truth from Master): Under the master's infallible guidance, the disciple experiences the transcendent moments of waqt ("present moment"), in which the spiritual overcomes the physical.

   1.2 Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth): The disciple experiences events of shock, provoking "fleeting states" (aḥwāl) and "stable spiritual stations" (maqāmāt) that progressively disclose divine Reality.

   1.3 Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Compensation): The disciple experiences a radically individual apocalypse, with the death of his old self in fanāʾ (annihilation) and the birth of his new self baqāʾ (subsistence). The resulting self-transcendence, tamkīn (stability), is considered the Divine reward for the disciple's labour (iktisāb).

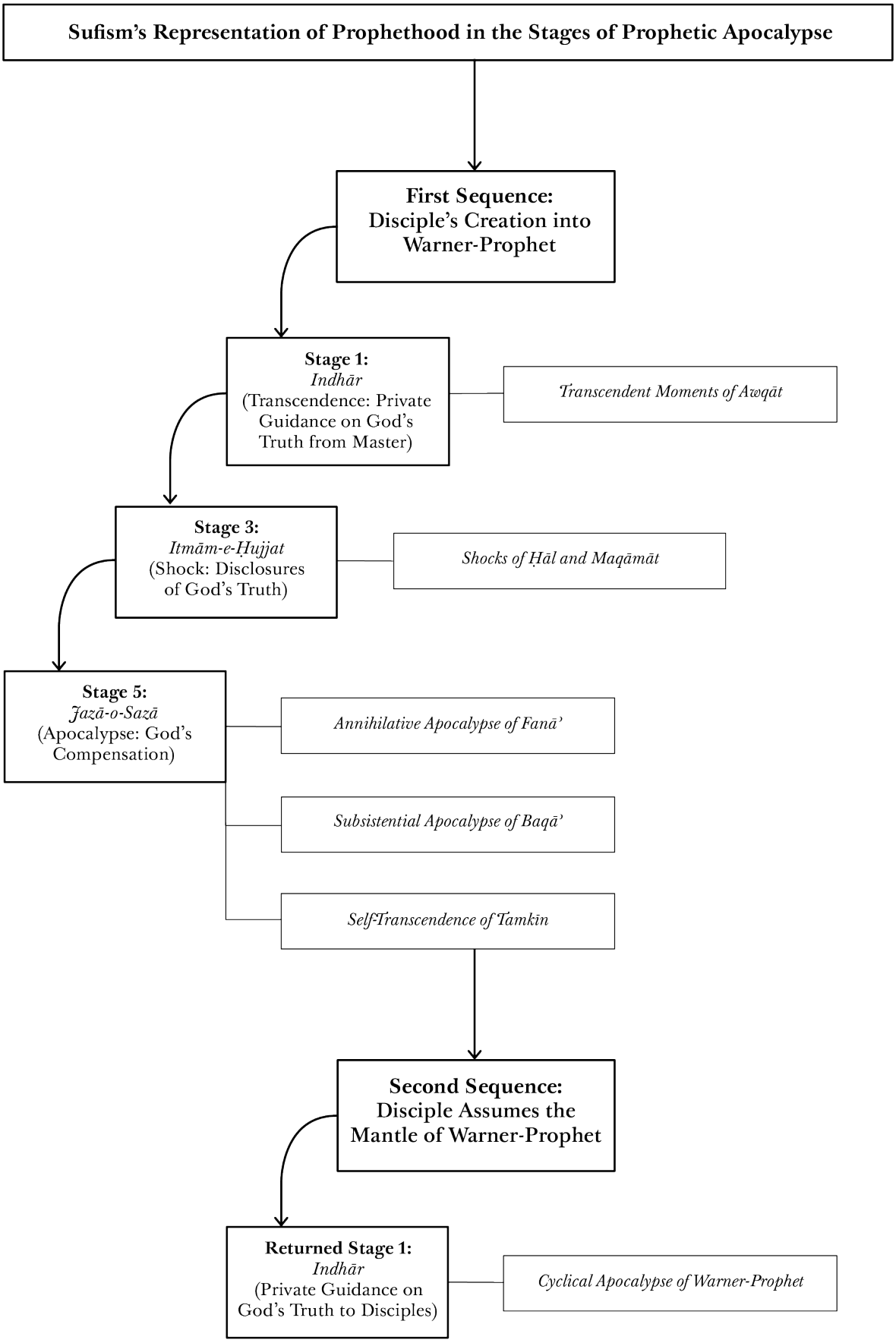
2. *Second Sequence: Disciple Assumes the Mantle of Warner-Prophet*

   During the second sequence, when the disciple assumes the mantle of the warner-prophet, this representation corresponds with prophetic apocalypse in the following way:

   2.1 Returned Stage 1 - Indhār (Transcendence: Private Guidance of God's Truth): As a result of the divine reward of tamkīn (stability), the disciple assumes the mantle of the warner-prophet. This is a cyclically apocalyptic role. The warner-prophet provides private guidance to an immediate spiritual community, including disciples, as a prophet would in the stage of Indhār. Moreover, the warner-prophet becomes a salvific figure to an apocalyptic world on the verge of collapse.

To summarize, the representation of prophethood in Sufism arguably corresponds to stages 1, 3, and 5 in the first sequence of the prophetic apocalypse, and stage 1 in the second sequence of the prophetic apocalypse.

The comparability of Sufism's representation of prophethood with Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse might suggest that Sufism is attempting to emulate Muḥammad's prophethood, either inadvertently or deliberately. This may hold true for Islamism and Sunnī traditions, as will be argued in subsequent chapters. However, it appears to be the opposite in the case of Sufism. Instead of Sufism seeking comparison with Muḥammad's prophethood, it might be more accurate to say that for the Sufis, Muḥammad's prophethood is the object of comparison with Sufism.


Sufism's Representation of Prophethood in the Stages of Prophetic Apocalypse
First Sequence:
Disciple's Creation into
Warner-Prophet
Stage 1:
Indhār
(Transcendence: Private
Guidance on God's
Truth from Master)
Transcendent Moments of Awqāt
Stage 3:
Itmām-e-Ḥujjat
(Shock: Disclosures
of God's Truth)
Shocks of Ḥāl and Maqāmāt
Stage 5:
Jazā-o-Sazā
(Apocalypse: God's
Compensation)
Annihilative Apocalypse of Fanā'
Subsistential Apocalypse of Baqā'
Self-Transcendence of Tamkīn
Second Sequence:
Disciple Assumes the
Mantle of Warner-Prophet
Returned Stage 1:
Indhār
(Private Guidance on
God's Truth to Disciples)
Cyclical Apocalypse of Warner-Prophet

But the fact the Sufism does reference Muḥammad and his prophethood suggests at least an inferential reconstruction of the former and the latter, but one that is apologist in nature rather than derivative. From the analysis thus far, it appears that Sufism believes it possess a superior, all-encompassing, and more authentic regime of apocalypse, from its annihilative apocalypse of fanā and the subsistential apocalypse of baqā to its final union (wusūl) with God. In contrast, Muḥammad's prophethood offers an inferior, parochial, and more refracted apocalypse, occupied with the reward and punishment of people. In other words, Sufism's representation of prophethood is the extraordinary par excellence to Muḥammad's prophethood.

This Sufi perspective is clearly articulated by Shāh Walīullāh if his views on divine speech are revisited:

> "And the purpose of this (Sharī'ah) is to save people from oppressing one another in this world and from the punishment of the grave and the Day of Resurrection. Reaching the annihilation and subsistence of every subtlety (wuṣūl bifanā o baqā-e-har laṭīfah) and achieving the level of absolute subsistence and complete stability (ḥaṣūl martabah baqā-e-muṭlaq o tamkīn tām) is not in view. Whatever speech has been received from the essence of humanity, the Prophet (peace be upon him), its real value is this. The objectives and benefits of the commandments and prohibitions he has given have not been understood by the person who carries them to other levels."[374]

These elevated levels imply that the Sufi's apocalypse is superior. Indeed, as previously mentioned, both Shāh Walīullāh and Ibn 'Arabī believed that Sufis exceed Prophets. Shāh Walīullāh's bold proclamation to the "assembly of Prophets"[375] stating that they "were given the title of a Prophet"[376] but were "deprived"[377] of what was granted to the Sufi reveals this. Similarly, Ibn 'Arabī distinguishes the Sufi as an apocalyptic saviour, preventing the world from shaking by holding it "like the mountains of the earth."[378]

It can be argued that for Sufism, the source of its superior apocalypse is wāḥdat-ul wujūd ("unity of being"). This Sufi concept suggests that everything is a manifestation of the same divine reality: "There is no existence except the One Existence" ("lā mawjūda illā al-Wujūd al-Wāḥid"). Ibn 'Arabī proposed the essence of the concept[379], grounding his metaphysics in Qur'ānic verses such as "Everything is perishing save His face" (28:88) and ḥadīths like "God was, and nothing was with Him" (Bukhārī: 3191). In *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, he articulated the

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[374] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 207.

[375] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 203.

[376] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 203.

[377] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 203.

[378] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 202.

[379] Although Ibn 'Arabī did not explicitly use the term in his writings, it is closely associated with him, possibly due to Ibn Taymīyyah's polemics.

notion that all existence and reality ultimately emanate from and depend on God as follows: "The matter of the Creator is the created, and the matter of the created is the Creator; all of that is from one essence, nay, it is the one essence, and it is the many essences."[380]

Wāḥdat-ul wujūd is where the Sufi's apocalypse unfolds. Transcendent moments, shocking disclosures, individual apocalypse, and apocalyptic saviourhood can all be perceived as results of the monistic reality of wāḥdat-ul wujūd. Moreover, this reality raises the stakes of apocalypse. The Sufi apocalypse leads to a state of unity with the divine essence by transcending the subject-object relationship, whereas the prophetic apocalypse maintains this relationship, with individuals being judged by God based on their actions and adherence to divine guidance.

The final union (wusūl) with God, which dissolves any illusory distinction between the created and the Creator, can be seen as more profound to the spiritual transformation brought forth by Muḥammad, in which one is judged by God rather than united with Him. The Sufi, as a result of this union, acquires a cosmologically central position, as al-Jīlī writes of the Perfect Human: "The perfect human is the pivot around which all the celestial spheres of existence revolve, from the beginning to the end. He has been the same since the beginning of existence until eternity."[381] This also suggests that the Sufi path (ṭarīqah) to God surpasses the stages (marāḥil) of prophethood. Wāḥdat-ul wujūd can thus be seen as an ontological plane unparalleled in its capacity for apocalypse. It encompasses all authentic and ultimate aspects related to the individual and worldly apocalypse. By recognizing wāḥdat-ul wujūd as a singular, all-encompassing plane in Sufism, one could argue that the Sufi and prophetic apocalypses are cosmogenically the same. Wāḥdat-ul wujūd is their common metaphysical foundation, but within this shared cosmic origin, the Sufi apocalypse holds supremacy over the prophetic apocalypse.

Ghāmidī undermines the entire case for the superiority of Sufism's spiritual transformation by faulting the Sufis, like Ibn Taymīyyah did in the case of Ibn 'Arabī, for wrongly transforming 'oneness of God' (tawḥīd) into oneness with God (wāḥdat-ul wujūd).[382] This understanding of tawḥīd, Ghāmidī asserts, is not the same as the monotheism that the Qur'ān invites people to. The Sufis in fact acknowledge this, as Ghāmidī presents the Sufi perspective by quoting al-Harawī's (d. 1089) *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*:

> "Tawḥīd has three aspects: The first aspect is the tawḥīd of the common people, which is correct based on the evidence. The second aspect is the tawḥīd of the elite, which is established based on the truths. The third aspect is the tawḥīd that is eternal and is the tawḥīd of the most special of the elite."[383]

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[380] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 187.

[381] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 187.

[382] *Wāḥdat-ul wujūd* has become closely associated with the name of Ibn 'Arabī, even though he did not actually use it in his writings. It arguably became associated with him in the polemics of Ibn Taymīyyah.

[383] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 184.

Ghāmidī argues that the Sufis, therefore, believe in a higher level of tawḥīd, where they consider only God as existent, and all other entities and manifestations of the world "are merely conjectures"[384] "derived from the existence of the Truth"[385]. Ghazālī illustrates this for Ghāmidī: "The ultimate level of tawḥīd is when a person only perceives the existence of God. This is the witnessing of the truthful ones, and the Sufis call it annihilation in tawḥīd."[386]

"[T]his is not the same as the monotheism that the Qur'ān invites the children of Adam to,"[387] Ghāmidī says, clarifying further that the major error the Sufis make while transforming tawḥīd ('oneness of God') into wāḥdat-ul wujūd ('oneness with God') is that mistake an attribute (ṣift) of God's oneness for attribute of creed ('aqīdah) or faith (īmān) that they believe they need to acquire. In fact, he warns, this is a morally catastrophic mistake, "shirk" (associating partners with God): "According to the Holy Qur'ān, if any attribute or right is accepted for someone based on this existence and action, then in reality, it is making them 'Allah'."[388] From the perspective of the Qur'ān, "tawḥīd means believing in Allah alone, who is attributed with all the perfect attributes and is free from all flaws and imperfections that reason accepts, and whose clarification has been done by the Lord of the worlds through His prophets."[389] There is, he concludes "no higher degree of monotheism that a person can strive to achieve in this world. The Holy Qur'ān has explained it from beginning to end."[390] Ghāmidī supports his point by drawing on verses from Sūrah Al-Hashr (95:22-42)[391], followed by the following verse from Sūrah Al-Ikhlas (112:1-4): "Say: 'He is Allah, the One, Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute. He neither begets nor is born, and there is none like unto Him'".[392] "This monotheism is the foundation of the religion of Allah," Ghāmidī concludes, while emphasizing there are no higher levels of reality: "It is the beginning, the end, and the inner and outer reality of this religion. The prophets of Allah have called for it. Abraham, Moses, John, Jesus, and the Arabian Prophet—may Allah's mercy be upon them—all proclaim this. All the divinely inspired books were revealed to uphold this."[393]

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[384] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 183.

[385] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 183.

[386] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 185.

[387] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 190.

[388] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181.

[389] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181.

[390] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 182.

[391] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 182. "He is Allah, besides whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allah, besides whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Giver of peace, the Bestower of faith, the Guardian, the Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah above what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

[392] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 182.

[393] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 182.

The only relationship "between a person and their Creator"[394] that this monotheism allows, Ghāmidī elucidates, "is the relationship between a worshiper and the one being worshiped."[395] This is the only extent of labour expected or possible for us, he concludes: "The purpose of all human effort and struggle in this world is to fulfil the right of worship to their Lord in such a way that they obtain His satisfaction in both this world and the Hereafter."[396] Here, Ghāmidī is sharing the more traditional Islamic view, which acknowledges that we are distinct from God, as we worship Him.

If Ghāmidī's definition of the relationship between a person and their Creator is mobilised together with his assertion that Muḥammad's prophethood stands as the ultimate, unalterable and final source of divine guidance, and that the Qur'ān and his Sunnah represent the final instances of divine communication, it can be argued that Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse is not only superior to the apocalypse of the Sufi, but that the Sufi apocalypse is not possible. No such disclosures were ever possible and are remain impossible. Ghāmidī emphasizes this during his exegesis in *Al-Bayān* of the Qur'ānic verses, which reveal God's the appropriate and chosen ways for communication:

> "They insist: "Why does not God directly talk to us." Tell them: It is not the status of any human being that he talks to God face to face except if it is through divine revelation or from behind a veil or that He send an angel so that he through His permission and what He desires send revelation. He is certainly lofty in status, very wise." (42:51)

God only speaks to us through divine revelation, from behind a veil, or by sending an angel who delivers the revelation with God's permission and according to His desires. In his annotations to these verses, Ghāmidī argues that it is not the status of any human being to speak with God face to face, except through divine revelation or from behind a veil. The Qur'ānic means of communication with God, as described by Ghāmidī, indicate that no human being, except prophets, can claim the stature to engage in direct communication with the divine.[397] The end of prophethood with Muḥammad, however, does not mean the cessation of all divine disclosure. In *Burhān*, Ghāmidī cites the following ḥadīth to qualify that minor, indirect disclosures may still happen[398]: "All that is left from Prophethood is the glad tidings." They said: "What are the glad tidings?" He said: "The true good dream." (Bukhārī: 6990)

If some form of indirect divine disclosure still persists but does not reach the same level as Muḥammad's prophetic revelation, then it can be argued that although spiritual experiences continue, they are of a lesser degree and do not possess the same level of divine

[394] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[395] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[396] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 204.

[397] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 4:442–45.

[398] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 192–93.

communication or revelation as experienced by Prophet Muḥammad. This line of argument would not deny the possibility of spiritual growth and transformation for individuals following the end of prophethood but would instead highlight the unique nature of prophetic revelation and its superiority to other forms of spiritual insight. The spiritual experiences of Sufis, for instance, could be acknowledged as genuine experiences but not on the same level as prophetic revelation, especially in the context of the Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīths that assert the finality of prophethood. Crucially, these spiritual experiences are not capable of generating any apocalypse, let alone match or exceed Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse.

The chapter would, therefore, argue that Muḥammad's finality of prophethood can be read as the abolition of prophethood, and with it, the abolition of apocalypse. It counters the Sufi's experiences of transcendence, shock, and apocalypse by insisting on less drastic mode of divine disclosure, and the banality of daily worship stand as a corroboration of everyday realism of moral life in Islam. This realism abolishes the radically individual apocalypse of the Sufis.

5. Ghāmidī's Critique of the Sufi Origins of Muḥammad's Prophethood

The shared cosmic origins and the prevalence of the Sufi path (ṭarīqah) over law-giving prophethood are strongly felt in the Sufi portrayal of how Muḥammad became a prophet. According to this portrayal, Muḥammad acquired prophethood through spiritual labour. The Prophet retreated to Mount Ḥira for meditation and contemplation. In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Ibn 'Arabī describes these retreats as follows: "[Y]ou will know that the Messenger of God used to go alone to the cave of Ḥira' to devote himself to God therein and flee from seeing people since he used to find in himself tightness and constriction in seeing them. Had he gazed upon the face of God within them, he would not have fled from them, nor would he have sought to be alone with himself."[399] It was during one of these retreats that he became the Prophet. "He remained like this till God came to him suddenly. Then he returned to the creatures and stayed with them...."[400] Muḥammad experienced the transformative event of receiving the first revelation from God (96: 1-5):

1) Recite in the name of your Lord who created,
2) created man from a clot!
3) Recite, for your Lord is the most generous,
4) who taught by the pen,
5) taught man what he did not know.

Ibn 'Arabī reads these verses as a significant point of spiritual inflexion for Muḥammad. In the fourth section of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, 'Faṣl al-Manāzil,' Ibn 'Arabī traces the spiritual 'ascension' (urūj) of Muḥammad, who is a seeker (murīd) that makes the journey towards

[399] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 158.

[400] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*, 158.

ultimate divine knowledge and unity with the Divine.[401] Ibn ʻArabī argues that each station (manzil) of this ascension (urūj) corresponds to each Sūrah of the Qur'ān, unfolding in reverse order from its last Sūrah, al-Nās, to its first Sūrah, al-Fātiha.[402] Sūrah Al-Fātiha, known as the "Mother of the Book" (Umm al-Kitāb), therefore, signifies the attainment of the highest manzil. It represents the point where Muḥammad achieves unity with the divine and, with it, the unveiling of the Qur'ān's sacred secrets.[403]

When counting backwards from the end of the Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-'Alaq represents the 19th station (manzil) in the spiritual ascension (urūj) of Muḥammad, known as the "Abode of Recitation."[404] Recognizing the opening verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq as the first revelation received by Muḥammad, Ibn ʻArabī explains that these are the divine speech when Muḥammad achieved and then descended for the first time to a state of complete unity (al-jam') with the Divine, but then descended into the realm of multiplicity (tafṡīl) to fulfil his prophetic mission.[405] Characteristic of the self-transcendence of the seeker, Muḥammad had experienced annihilation (fanā') and subsistence (baqā'). However, he had not yet achieved stability (tamkīn). This left him vulnerable to believing that he had attained his transcendence himself. It is at this point that God intervenes, telling him that it was He who bestowed knowledge upon him, from His pen, so that he could transform from a mere clot (ʻalaq) into someone who could become a prophet. Muḥammad is then able to achieve tamkīn, and as a result, prophethood.[406]

Classical exegesis largely concurs with the view that the initial verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq were the first revelations from God, with Muḥammad's spiritual retreat to Ḥira being the occasional cause of this. During his exegesis of these verses, Ibn Kathīr cites a ḥadīth, found

[401] Chodkiewicz, 'The Futūhāt Makkiyya and Its Commentators: Some Unresolved Enigmas', 227.

[402] Chodkiewicz, 'The Futūhāt Makkiyya and Its Commentators: Some Unresolved Enigmas', 227.

[403] Chodkiewicz, 'The Futūhāt Makkiyya and Its Commentators: Some Unresolved Enigmas', 227.

[404] Chodkiewicz, 'The Futūhāt Makkiyya and Its Commentators: Some Unresolved Enigmas', 228.

[405] See also: al-ʻ Arabī and Anwar, *Isyarat Ilahi: Tafsir Juz Amma Ibn Arabi*.

[406] See also: al-ʻ Arabī and Anwar, *Isyarat Ilahi: Tafsir Juz Amma Ibn Arabi*.

in both ṣaḥīḥs of Al-Bukhārī[407] and Muslim.[408] The ḥadīth narrates ‘A’ishah, the wife of the Prophet, confirming his seclusion at the cave of Ḥira: “The first thing that began happening

[407] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 1, Ḥadīth 3: 1. Revelation, Chapter 3: Narrated ‘Aisha (the mother of the faithful believers): The commencement of the Divine Inspiration to Allah’s Messenger (sws) was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Ḥira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him the journey food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food likewise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Ḥira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (sws) replied, “I do not know how to read.” The Prophet (sws) added, “The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read, and I replied, ‘I do not know how to read.’ Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, ‘I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?’ Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, ‘Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.” (96.1, 96.2, 96.3) Then Allah’s Messenger (sws) returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. Then he went to Khadija bint Khuwailid and said, “Cover me! Cover me!” They covered him till his fear was over and after that he told her everything that had happened and said, “I fear that something may happen to me.” Khadija replied, “Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.” Khadija then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqa bin Naufal bin Asad bin ‘Abdul ‘Uzza, who, during the pre-Islamic Period became a Christian and used to write the writing with Hebrew letters. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadija said to Waraqa, “Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!” Waraqa asked, “O my nephew! What have you seen?” Allah’s Messenger (sws) described whatever he had seen. Waraqa said, “This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out.” Allah’s Messenger (sws) asked, “Will they drive me out?” Waraqa replied in the affirmative and said, “Anyone (man) who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly.” But after a few days Waraqa died and the Divine Inspiration was also paused for a while.”

[408] Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 1, Ḥadīth 301: 1. The Book of Faith, Chapter 73: The beginning of the revelation to the messenger of Allah (saws): “A’isha, the wife of the Messenger of Allah (sws), reported: The first (form) with which was started the revelation to the Messenger of Allah was the true vision in sleep. And he did not see any vision, but it came like the bright gleam of dawn. Thenceforth solitude became dear to him, and he used to seclude himself in the cave of Ḥira’, where he would engage in tahannuṯ (and that is a worship for a number of nights) before returning to his family and getting provisions again for this purpose. He would then return to Khadija and take provisions for a like period, till Truth came upon him while he was in the cave of Ḥira’. There came to him the angel and said: Recite, to which he replied: I am not lettered. He took hold of me [the Apostle said] and pressed me, till I was hard pressed; thereafter he let me off and said: Recite. I said: I am not lettered. He then again took hold of me and pressed me for the second time till I was hard pressed and then let me off and said: Recite, to which I replied: I am not lettered. He took hold of me and pressed me for the third time, till I was hard pressed and then let me go and said: Recite in the name of your Lord Who created, created man from a clot of blood. Recite. And your most bountiful Lord is He Who taught the use of pen, taught man what he knew not (al-Qur’ān, xcvi. 1-4). Then the Prophet returned therewith, his heart was trembling, and he went to Khadija and said: Wrap me up, wrap me up! So, they wrapped him till the fear had left him. He then said to Khadija: O Khadija! what has happened to me? and he informed her of the happening, saying: I fear for myself. She replied: It can’t be. Be happy. I swear by Allah that He shall never humiliate you. By Allah, you join ties of relationship, you speak the truth, you bear people’s burden, you help the destitute, you entertain guests, and you help against the vicissitudes which affect people. Khadija then took him to Waraqa b. Naufal b. Asad b. ‘Abd al-’Uzza, and he was the son of Khadija’s uncle, i. e., the brother of her father. And he was

with the Messenger of Allah from the revelation was dreams that he would see in his sleep that would come true... Then seclusion became beloved to him. So, he used to go to the cave of Ḥira and devote himself to worship there... This continued until the revelation suddenly came to him while he was in the cave of Ḥira. The angel came to him while he was in the cave and said, 'Read!' The Messenger of Allah said, 'I am not one who reads.'" Ibn Kathīr further quotes the ḥadīth, describing how the angel Jibrīl seized the Prophet and pressed him until he could no longer bear it. Then, he released him and repeated the command to read. This happened three times, and then the angel recited the first verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq (96: 1-5): "Read in the Name of your Lord who has created... He has taught man that which he knew not." Ibn Kathīr's describes these revealed verses as "the first mercy that Allah bestowed upon His servants and the first bounty that Allah favoured them with."[409]

Prominent exegetes, both before and after Ibn Kathīr, such as al-Ṭabarī, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), and al-Suyūṭī, also agree that that Sūrah Al-'Alaq's first verses were the Prophet's inaugural revelation. In *Al-Itqān Fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* ['The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'ān'], al-Suyūṭī presents several opinions regarding the first revelation, with the majority concurring that the first verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq were indeed the first to be revealed. Significantly, all of them base their exegeses upon 'A'ishah's ḥadīth.[410] Al-Suyūṭī also presents other viewpoints regarding the first revelation, including the idea that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, the verse Bismillāh, or some part of the Mufassal Sūrahs may have been revealed first. For instance, he cites Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), who argued that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah was the first complete Sūrah to be revealed.[411] Al-Suyūṭī ultimately agreed with the majority of scholars, such as al-Qurṭubī and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Zurqānī (d. 1710), that the first verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq were the first to be revealed.[412]

The methodological approach characteristic of the exegetes who acknowledge Sūrah Al-ʿAlaq as the Qur'ān's first revelation and emphasize Muḥammad's spiritual labours in Mount Ḥira, is that they study the Qur'ān diachronically. They rely upon on a chronological development model of the Qur'ān that draws on the occasions of Revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl), specific events in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad from Ḥadīth to contextualize Qur'ānic verses. The majority of classical exegetes, including Ibn Kathīr, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Suyūṭī, use the Ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths of al-Bukhārī and Muslim to conclude that Sūrah Al-ʿAlaq's

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the man who had embraced Christianity in the Days of Ignorance (i. e. before Islam) and he used to write books in Arabic and, therefore, wrote Injīl in Arabic as God willed that he should write. He was very old and had become blind Khadija said to him: O uncle! listen to the son of your brother. Waraqa b. Naufal said: O my nephew! what did you see? The Messenger of Allah (sws), then, informed him what he had seen, and Waraqa said to him: It is namus that God sent down to Musa. Would that I were then (during your prophetic career) a young man. Would that I might be alive when your people would expel you! The Messenger of Allah (sws) said: Will they drive me out? Waraqa said: Yes. Never came a man with a like of what you have brought but met hostilities. If I see your day, I shall help you wholeheartedly."

[409] Kathir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, n.d., 1:120.

[410] Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'ulūm al-Qur' Ān*.

[411] Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'ulūm al-Qur' Ān*.

[412] Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān Fī 'ulūm al-Qur' Ān*.

opening verses were the first revelations. The minority of scholars who consider the possibility that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah may have been revealed first, like al-Zamakhsharī, take a more synchronic approach to the Qur'ānic text, focusing on the imminent features of the Qur'ānic text without considering a chronological development based on Ḥadīth.

Ghāmidī disagrees with the view that Muḥammad's spiritual labours in Mount Ḥira are an occasion for the inauguration of prophethood, whether it is the Sufi account that "Had he gazed upon the face of God" or the exegetical account that "angel Jibrīl came to him while he was in the cave and said, 'Read!'" Ghāmidī states that no one can work towards prophethood. They are chosen by God (mu'abat-e- rabbānī).[413] Whoever is chosen by God is transformed abruptly, without the call to any epistemic or moral labour. He bases this claim on Sūrah Qasas (28:86),[414] which states: "You weren't expecting that this Book be revealed to you, this was just the Blessing of your Lord that He has appointed you for this responsibility. So, read to them fearlessly and don't be a helper to these deniers." Another parallel verse he quotes[415] the following verse of Sūrah Younus (10:16): "Say, "Had Allah willed, I would not have recited it to you, nor would He have made it known to you. I had lived my whole life among you before this revelation. Do you not understand?" Far from it being a process characterised by moral development, therefore, the Qur'ān states that prophethood is abrupt.[416] To explain that that prophethood was a blessing and not earned, Ghāmidī cites his teacher, Amin Ahsan Islāhī's exegesis of Sūrah Qasas (28:86): "With this ayah, the point becomes clear that prophethood is from the blessings and grace of God. Prophethood is not a case where a person possesses a special talent, like when a poet or a writer or a great scientist is born, and develops this talent."[417] Ghāmidī's view that no training is required to become a prophet extends beyond knowledge (ʻilm) or talent (ṣalāḥīyat). It also includes moral character (sīrah).[418] Just as Muḥammad did not undergo any intellectual training to receive and share God's word, he also did not require any moral training. The Qur'ān, he emphasises[419], states that Muḥammad was khayr al-nās, "the best among the people" (3:150). He then concludes: "Muḥammad's character never passed through the stages of development like in the case of ordinary human beings. There was not stage at which Muḥammad declared 'I have become pious.' So, the idea of Muḥammad practiced a special type of prayer (ʻibādah) in Mount Ḥira creates the false impression that he was trying to attain some sort of accession and piety."[420]

Following Islāhī, Ghāmidī also questions the ḥadīth classical exegetes like Ibn Kathīr, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Suyūṭī relied on to claim that Muḥammad's spiritual seclusion in Mount Ḥira was the occasion of revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl) for the first verses of the Qur'ān.

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[413] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[414] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[415] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[416] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[417] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*. See also: Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, 1988, VIII:54–55.

[418] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[419] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[420] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

He raises questions both in terms of sanad (chain of narration) and matn (text). Despite being found in both Ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, Ghāmidī argues that the ḥadīth is mursal, not marfū‘, meaning it is only attributable to the Companions of the Prophet and not the Prophet himself.[421] Moreover, it is only attributable to a single Companion, ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr (d. 712), who narrates it from his aunt A’ishah (d. 678). This raises doubt over the ḥadīth’s reliability since it is based on a single ḥadīth with a questionable chain of narration. Ghāmidī also casts doubt over about the reliability of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742), who reports this ḥadīth from ibn al-Zubayr. There has been contradictory evidence about al-Zuhri reliability as an exponent of ḥadīth. As Ghāmidī, and Tamannā ‘Imādī (d. 1972) before him point out, that al-Zuhri used to perform idrāj. This implies that while describing a ḥadīth, al-Zuhri would also enter his own commentary or exegesis without demarcation or indication. This made the ḥadīth reported by him unreliable, because the reader was unable to distinguish the ḥadīth text from his personal text.

Ghāmidī says that he is not willing to determine “the most important event”[422] of the prophet Muḥammad’s life—at once his first meeting with Gabriel, his call to prophethood, and his first revelation—based on a single ḥadīth of questionable chain. Indeed, given that the ḥadīth is mursal, it can be argued that Muḥammad never verifiably shared the experience of his first revelation with anyone. Despite this, the ḥadīth has been reported by many ḥadīth scholars (muḥaddithīn), including by Imām Bukhārī (d. 870) in the very first chapter of his Ṣaḥīḥ (846) ‘How did revelation begin?’ (Badul Waḥy)[423], and also by Imām Muslim (d. 875) in the very first chapter of his Ṣaḥīḥ (875) ‘The Book of Faith’ (Kitāb al-Īmān).[424] Ghāmidī is indeed not alone in his unwillingness. In his seminal *Sirat-un Nabī* [‘Life of the Holy Prophet’] (1918)[425] Shiblī Nomānī also raised some questions about the ḥadīth, while Tamannā ‘Imādī also raised similar questions.

In terms of matn, Ghāmidī highlights that the text of the ḥadīth tradition in question is inconsistent with the Qur’ān in a number of key ways. For example, the ḥadīth states that during his time in Mount Ḥira, Muḥammad performed tahannuṯ: “The commencement of divine revelation to God’s Messenger was in the form of good dreams which came like daylight. Then the fondness for seclusion was endeared to him. He would stay in seclusion in the cave of Ḥira’. There, for many days, he would perform tahannuṯ, which means “worship.” Ghāmidī concurs with scholarly assessments that the word tahannuṯ likely a variant of tahannuf, and therefore, a derivative of the word ḥanīf. The word ḥanīf appears twelve times in the Qur’ān, primarily to describe Abraham.[426] However, the Qur’ān does not refer to Muḥammad as ḥanīf. In order to understand what the word ḥanīf means in the Qur’ān and how it is used in ḥadīth traditions to describe Muḥammad, Qur’ānic semantics has been able to offer two separate meanings of that word: one being ‘monotheist’ and the other being

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421 *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

422 *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

423 Bukhārī: 3

424 Muslim: 73

425

426 Bell, ‘WHO WERE THE HANIFS?’

'hermit'. Islamic lexicographers have also identified both translational approximations, but instead of establishing two quite separate meanings of ḥanīf, they believe that 'hermit' and 'monotheist' refer to two facets of the same conception. They are specifically able to do so with the concordantial examination of the Qur'ānic corpus with additional bodies of primary sources, especially Ḥadīth. In order to bridge the gap between 'hermit' and 'monotheist', they specifically use ḥadīths, especially Ṣaḥīḥs of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, that describe what Muḥammad did before he was called to be a prophet. Within Islamic discourse, therefore, ḥanīf has come to mean that as part of his devotion to God, Muḥammad undertook special spiritual labour to achieve hermitic experiences in Mount Ḥira.

Ghāmidī rejects this two-faceted interpretation. He argues that word ḥanīf refers to a special kind of monotheist: someone who is not only devouted (yaksaū) in life and belief in God but is the strongest at it.[427] Ghāmidī supports this argument by citing references to Abraham in the Qur'ān, where God calls him "the most devoted Muslim" (Muslim-e-Ḥanīf). Abraham paradigmatically exemplified ḥanīf, and Muḥammad practised Abraham's religion (dīn) of ḥanafīyat.[428] Ghāmidī objects that the use or inclusion of 'hermit' is not only inconsistent with the literary context of the Qur'ān, but it also proposes the view that Muḥammad underwent or had to undergo a special form of spiritual labour in Ḥira to become a prophet. "He did not go there to achieve ascension (sa'ūd)."[429] "But the impression you get from the ḥadīth," Ghāmidī explains elsewhere, "is that, just like the Sufis, Muḥammad was performing chillay (the spiritual practice of penance and solitude). It reads very similarly to the account of Buddha, who went into the forest of Gaya to meditate, and there, he attained enlightenment (nirvān). The ta'abud or 'ibādah that he was performing was not special, but in fact an unaltered convention practice of dīn-e-ḥanīf, ṣalāh."[430] In other words, to use the descriptor of hermit would not only be a decontextualized importation of a meaning, but would also push the idea that Muḥammad became a prophet not by God's selection (ikhtisās) but by human labour (iktisāb).

Within the context of comparative Semitics, Ghāmidī's reading disagrees with the interpretation of ḥanīf as 'hermit', as suggested by the 19th and early 20th century scholars Wellhausen[431], Grimme[432], and Horowitz.[433] They looked at the poetic proof text by the Ḥuzalī poet, Abū Tūwāb (d. 649) to throw light on the Qur'ānic meaning of the word ḥanīf. In his poem, Abū Tūwāb evokes the former abode of his love interest, Umm al-Raḥīn: "In the manner of a ḥanīf during the two months of Jumādá and the two months of Ṣafar."[434] Read in its literary context, the manner of a ḥanīf is envisaged as one of solitary idyll, where Umm al-

[427] *What Is Din-e-Hanif?*

[428] *What Is Din-e-Hanif?*

[429] *What Is Din-e-Hanif?*

[430] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

[431] Wellhausen, *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*.

[432] Grimme, *Mohammed (1895)*.

[433] Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*.

[434] An edition of the entire poem by Joseph Heil became accessible to European scholars in 1926, after Horowitz had already published his work.

Raḥīn erected a tent by a river of fresh water, and preferred the desert to settled territory even during the summer on account of the milk of the camels who graze on desert trees. Importing this reading of ḥanīf, Wellhausen and Horowitz concluded that the most likely meaning of the word the Qur'ān is 'hermit', 'ascetic' or 'recluse'.

Ghāmidī's reading of the word ḥanīf agrees more with that of Francois de Blois's examination of the word ḥanīf. De Blois relied on Syriac etymology to plausibly reformulate ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī's (d. 956) medieval hypothesis that the word ḥanīf meant either Gentile or heathen.[435] Since the Qur'ānic text employs the word as an antonym of mushrik—somebody who illegitimately associates or partners other beings with God—the most likely Qur'ānic meaning of ḥanīf would be Gentile but in a neutral sense. In other words, ḥanīf was used in the Qur'ān to narrow down to a specific kind of Gentile: the 'monotheist' Gentile.[436] De Blois concluded that given its close association with the figure of Abraham, ḥanīf denoted religious righteousness, as paradigmatically exemplified by Abraham. In other words, ḥanīf refers to someone wholly devoted to God.[437]

Another significant problem with the matn of the ḥadīth that Ghāmidī highlights is that it is also different from what he argues is the Qur'ān's actual account of Muḥammad's first meeting with Gabriel and the resulting call to prophethood. The initial verses of Sūrah Najm (53:1-4) read:

1) The stars, when they fall, bear witness
2) that your companion is neither lost nor has he gone astray.
3) He does not speak out of his own fancy.
4) This [Qur'ān] is but a revelation sent down to him.

The first emphasizes the divine origin and protection of the Qur'ān's revelation. The falling stars serve as a witness to the sanctity of the Qur'ān's revelation, ensuring that no devil can intervene in the process. Ghāmidī explains, "There is not the slightest possibility of any devil intervening in divine revelation; people should not try to reject it by regarding it to be a discourse inspired by the jinn or soothsayers."[438] The second and third verses defend the character of the Prophet Muḥammad, described him as a companion who is neither lost nor has gone astray. Ghāmidī quotes Iṣlāḥī, who writes, "The fact of the matter is that his whole life and his words bear witness to the fact that he has never been besmeared by any error that is the result of forgetfulness, base desires, intentional or unintentional planning."[439] Ghāmidī emphasises that what Muḥammad speaks, the Qur'ān, is not a product of his imagination or

[435] de Blois, 'Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and Ḥanīf (Ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam'.

[436] de Blois, 18.

[437] ibn Hisham, *'Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah'*, 2:68–69.

[438] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 5:63.

[439] Ghāmidī, 5:64. See also: Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, 1988, VIII:53.

desires—distinguishing it from the claims made by soothsayers and astrologers—but of divine origin.

The subsequent verses of Sūrah Najm (53:5-11) portray the first meeting of Gabriel with Muḥammad and with it, his call to prophethood and the first revelation.

5) "He has been taught by one mighty in power,
6) towering in character and endued with wisdom.
7) Thus, he appeared such that he was on the higher horizon.
8) Then he drew near and bent down
9) until he was within two bows' length or even closer.
10) God then revealed to His servant that which He revealed.
11) Whatever he saw was not his heart's delusion."

Crucially, these verses show that Muḥammad was not in a state of uncertainty and doubt as described in the ḥadīth under discussion. Instead, these show him calmly recognise that it was Gabriel whom he was meeting, and that remained certain of the divine revelation and his ability to receive it. Ghāmidī believes it is the angel Gabriel who brings Muḥammad the revelation, is portrayed as mighty in power, impeccable in character, and possessing a profound intellect. Ghāmidī quotes Iṣlāḥī, who states, "The Almighty has protected" Gabriel "from all such weaknesses so that he is able to discharge the responsibility entrusted to him with full honesty and sincerity."[440]

This meeting is unequivocal, Ghāmidī argues, "The implication is that he appeared in a stark and unambiguous way the way the full moon or the midday sun appears and the Prophet (sws) saw him with his open eyes."[441] The angel Gabriel is shown to descend to Muḥammad's line of sight (al-ufuq al-a'lá), as a teacher great attention and profound affection, ensuring that he fully understands the guidance being given, not forceful and disruptive as it is portrayed in the ḥadīth. Moreover, the encounter is one of the extraordinary proximity and nearness. Ghāmidī explains that the purpose of the phrase "two bows' length or even closer"[442] is "to merely allude to the proximity; the purpose is not to mention the exact distance; it could have been more or less."[443]

Ghāmidī's interpretation that this Qur'ānic passage depicts the first revelation, clear and divinely protected, with angel Gabriel's close descent and the Prophet composed character,

[440] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 5:64. See also: Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, 1988, VIII:53.

[441] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 5:65.

[442] Ghāmidī states: "This simile is in accordance with the taste of the Arabs and occurs to describe extreme proximity and nearness. The word اَوْ here is referring to the fact that the purpose is to merely allude to the proximity; the purpose is not to mention the exact distance; it could have been more or less." Ghāmidī, 5:65.

[443] Ghāmidī, 5:65.

engages with, and possibly resolves a continuous, pivotal historical-critical debate surrounding the interpretation of Muḥammad's prophetic visions, including those in Sūrah Najm. The debate specifically revolves around whether Muḥammad encountered God or Gabriel in Sūrah Najm. In agreement with Richard Bell and Angelika Neuwirth, Sinai proposes that the Prophet saw God Himself, as evidenced by the possessive suffix in verse 10, which he believes may refer to God. He also considers the possibility of an angelic vision in Sūrah At-Takwir (81:15-25)[444], evolving into a vision of God in Sūrah Najm, stating, "All of this, I believe, suggests … that we have good reason to postulate a development from the angelic vision account in Sūrah 81 to the vision of God himself described in Sūrah 53."[445] In contrast, Saqib Hussain contends that the Sūrah provides "an illustration of the Prophet's encounter with an angelic being."[446] More closely aligned with Patricia Crone's perspective, Hussain argues for an angelic vision based on parallels between the passages in Sūrahs 53 and 81.[447] Both passages offer depictions of a "standard apocalyptic vision"[448], which characteristically culminate "in seeing the greatest signs of his Lord, rather than seeing God Himself."[449] Importantly, he supports his position by drawing on Farāhī and Islāhī's understanding of oaths in the Qur'ān, who are Ghāmidī's predecessors. Hussain notes that their exegesis serves as a paradigmatic case study "of shards of genuine historical memory waiting to be recovered from the Islamic sources."[450] However, Hussain remains unaware of the advancements Ghāmidī has made building upon Farāhī and Islāhī's work. This example presents a compelling case for broadening the scope of the historical-critical examination to include Ghāmidī's interpretative insights into the ongoing debate regarding Muḥammad's prophetic visions.

It directly follows that Ghāmidī does not consider Sūrah Al-'Alaq to be the first revelation. This is not only because of his exclusion of the ḥadīth narrative about Muḥammad's spiritual labours in Mount Ḥira as a chronological basis to contextualise the Sūrah. Pairing it with Sūrah Tin (95), Ghāmidī argues that Sūrah Al-'Alaq belongs to a later stage of Muḥammad's prophethood: "It is evident from the subject-matter of the sūrahs that they were revealed in Mecca, just before the Prophet's migration to Medina, in the phase of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat of the Prophet Muḥammad's (sws) preaching mission."[451] Disagreeing with the view that these Sūrahs "address the Prophet", he argues that "a little deliberation shows that the actual addressees are the leaders of the Quraysh whose defiant and rebellious attitude was now

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[444] "No! I swear by the [planets] that retreat, 16 moving and setting, 17 by the night when it closes, by the morning when it breathes. It is indeed the speech of a noble messenger, possessed of power (dhī quwwah), secure with the Occupant of the Throne, obeyed and to be trusted.Your companion (ṣāḥibukum) is not possessed. He did indeed see Him (raʾāhu) on the clear horizon (al-ufuqi 'l-mubīn). He is not niggardly about the invisible. This is not the word of a devil that should be stoned."

[445] Sinai and سينائي, 'An Interpretation of Sūrat Al-Najm (Q. 53) / 9 ,'تفسير لسورة النجم.

[446] Hussain, 'Prophet's Visions in Sūrat al-Najm', 126.

[447] Hussain, 'Prophet's Visions in Sūrat al-Najm', 127–28.

[448] Hussain, 127.

[449] Hussain, 127.

[450] Hussain, 137.

[451] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 5:489.

reaching its extreme."[452] Sūrah Al-'Alaq, including its initial five verses, is therefore harsh and stern in its tone, severely rebuking the Quraysh for their denial of Muḥammad: "The theme of Sūrah al-'Alaq is to sound a note of severe warning and threat to an eminent leader of the Quraysh that if even after being taught and reminded through a Book like the Qur'ān he persists in his arrogance, he should get ready to face its consequences: very soon the guards of the Almighty shall drag him and cast him to the deep pit of Hell, and none of his comrades and associates will be able to help him."[453]

This corresponds with the historical-critical assessment of Sūrah Al-'Alaq. Neuwirth argues that despite the Islamic tradition, as well as some Western studies setting "the verse group 1–5 in the context of the prophet's experience of calling,"[454] with the angel Gabriel instructing him to recite or read from a scripture, the "exclusively prophet-biographical interpretation"[455] is problematic for two reasons. First, the phrase "iqra' bi-smi rabbika"[456] seems to be a liturgical formula, which challenges the exclusively prophet-biographical interpretation. Second, this interpretation would "call for a violent detachment"[457] of verses 1-5 from verses 6-13, which is difficult to justify given the formal connections between the different parts of the Sūrah. Nicolai Sinai makes a similar conclusion. While discussing the dating and context of Sūrah Al-'Alaq, he suggests that the imminent features of the Qur'ānic text suggest that it belongs to the early Meccan period, but not the earliest.[458] Like Neuwirth, he also highlights that an early dating of the Sūrah would require considering verses 6-19 as a later extension, but there is no textual evidence supporting this.[459] Moreover, he believes that command in the Sūrah more general in nature and seems to apply not only to the Prophet but also to regular believers. Sinai instead contends that exegetes have speculated details about the Prophet's life and then used those details to interpret the Qur'ān itself. Building upon Schoeler and Rubin's assessment, he concludes "The narrative, which reports on Muḥammad's initiation by the archangel Gabriel on Mount Ḥirāʾ, processes biblical topoi...and can hardly be considered a historical source due to its hagiographic character."[460]

This idea, as shown above, is shared by Ghāmidī. Believing it to be a case where a Qur'ānic passage has been extricated from its literary context and embedded it in a pseudo-historical context in the life of the Prophet, Ghāmidī attributes this later prophetological construction to Sufis: "This is merely a story (afsānah) that has no connection to reality. It revolves around the personality of Muḥammad, the Prophet of God. Although it should have been the most important event in his life, he never narrated it. The entire Ḥadīth corpus lacks any direct

[452] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 5:489.

[453] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 5:489.

[454] Neuwirth and Wilder, *The Qur'an*, 2022.

[455] Neuwirth and Wilder.

[456] Neuwirth and Wilder.

[457] Neuwirth and Wilder, *The Qur'an*, 2022, 201.

[458] Sinai, '> Kommentar Sure 96 Vers 1 | Corpus Coranicum'.

[459] Sinai.

[460] Sinai.

narration of this incident, and Muḥammad never even mentioned the name of Ghār-e-Ḥirā. His wife, Khadija, who is another significant figure in this event, never recounted it either. This story was created much later by the Sufis and has gained such popularity that it has become difficult to discern whether it is true or not."[461] On a separate occasion, Ghāmidī explains the attribution to Sufism further, saying that people such as the poet Muḥammad Iqbal (d. 1938)[462] has made "the comparison that prophethood can be understood from the experiences of Sufis, despite the fact that the nature of the Sufi experiences is completely different."[463]

By explaining that some individuals, like Iqbal, have drawn parallels between prophethood and the mystical experiences of Sufis, Ghāmidī highlights how these comparisons might have contributed to the development of stories that portray Muḥammad as a Sufi. The creation of such stories, according to Ghāmidī, could be a result of people trying to understand prophethood through the lens of Sufism, despite the fundamental differences between the two. This association between prophethood and Sufi experiences might have led Sufis to create stories that depict Muḥammad as essentially a Sufi, thus reinforcing the idea that Sufism has played a role in shaping these narratives.

Ghāmidī argues that Sūrah Najm portrays Muḥammad's first prophetic encounter. However, Ghāmidī emphasises that during this initial encounter, the Qur'ān was not revealed. Instead, it was during a subsequent encounter that the first prophetic revelation was received. Moreover, contrary to the traditional belief that Sūrah Al-'Alaq is the first revelation, he asserts that the first prophetic revelation was Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah:

1) In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.
2) Gratitude is for God only, the Lord of the universe,
3) the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful,
4) Who is the Master of the Day of Judgement.
5) [Lord] You alone we worship and only Your help we seek.
6) Bestow on us the guidance of the straight path—the path of those you have blessed, who have neither earned your wrath nor have gone astray.

Ghāmidī bases this claim on the naẓm of the Qur'ān. In *Al-Bayān*, he introduces Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah as follows:

> "With regard to its subject matter, this sūrah is a supplication to seek guidance from the Almighty for the straight path—a prayer which was the wish of every upright person during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. After the Jews and the

[461] *The First Revelation to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh)*.

[462] For Iqbal's references to Ghar-e-Ḥira, see for example: Iqbal and Nicholson, *The Secrets of the Self: (Asrár-i-Khudí) a Philosophical Poem. Translated from the Original Persian with Introduction and Notes*.

[463] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 43 - Pehli Wahi Ka Waqia - Ghar e Hira*.

> Christians had distorted the face of religion through their innovations and deviations, it was in fact the desire of every heart to receive fresh guidance. God articulated this desire through the tongue of His prophet in these eternal and matchless words. This prayer for fresh guidance, after the Torah and the Injīl, is also the central theme of this sūrah. Consequently, its relationship with the Medinese sūrahs of the first group is that of brevity and detail, as has been mentioned in the introduction to the group. However, with regard to its subject matter, it is very appropriately also the preface to the Qur'ān. It, therefore, becomes very evident that this is the first sūrah that was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca."[464]

Like al-Zamakhsharī, Ghāmidī takes a more synchronic approach to focus on imminent features of the Qur'ānic text. He utilized covariance, the observation that ostensibly independent features of the Qur'ānic text tend to co-vary, such as its subject matter, its relationship with other sūrahs, its role as a preface, and its chronological revelation order, to emphasizes the Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah as first of the Qur'ān. He, for example, sees the Sūrah serves as a supplication for guidance, reflecting the desires of the faithful for fresh divine direction after the distortions introduced into religion by the Jews and Christians: "It was in fact the desire of every heart to receive fresh guidance."[465] Additionally, Ghāmidī notes that the Sūrah's relationship with the Medinese sūrahs is one of "brevity and detail,"[466] further emphasizing the significance of the Qur'ānic text as a whole without considering its chronological development. Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah is also regarded as an appropriate preface to the Qur'ān, laying the foundation for understanding the rest of the sacred text. Ghāmidī highlights that "this is the first sūrah that was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad in Mecca,"[467] underlining its chronological importance as the first Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

According to Ghāmidī, Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah also underscores monotheism, or Tawḥīd, through a variety of imminent features. The Sūrah commences with attributing the qualities of Allah: "Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm" ("In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful"). This declaration sets the foundation for the belief in the one true God, encompassing all these attributes.[468] The verse "Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbil 'ālamīn" ("All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds") recognizes Allah as the Lord and Sustainer of the entire universe, ascribing all excellence and praise exclusively to Him.[469] Moreover, the Sūrah highlights the pre-Islamic Arabians' acknowledgment of Allah as the Almighty Creator of the Universe and all living beings, despite their polytheistic practices, emphasizing Allah's singular and unparalleled status: "The people of Arabia practiced polytheism, yet they never equated any of their deities with the Almighty"[470]. Furthermore, the verse "Iyyāka na'budu

[464] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 1:17.

[465] Ghāmidī, 1:17.

[466] Ghāmidī, 1:17.

[467] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 1:17.

[468] Ghāmidī, 1:18.

[469] Ghāmidī, 1:18–19.

[470] Ghāmidī, 1:19.

wa iyyāka nasta'īn" ("You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help") confirms the sole worship and dependence on Allah, rejecting polytheism and reiterating the belief in the oneness of God. Ghāmidī explains, "Consequently, the verse does not merely say that we human beings worship the Almighty; it emphasizes that we worship only the Almighty and seek His help only."[471] Ghāmidī elevates the monotheism of Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah to serve as a guide for believers to adhere to this principle. He directs attention to the Sūrah's prayer for divine guidance to follow the right path: "Ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm" ("Guide us on the straight path"), to emphasise that it encourages believers to seek guidance from God alone and to remain steadfast in their faith. In other words, this path is characterized by devotion, obedience, and submission to the one true God, Allah. It avoids the paths of those who have incurred God's wrath and those who have gone astray through their innovations and deviations from the true faith.

It can be concluded that the overall effect of Ghāmidī's examination both the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, which seeks to clarify that Muḥammad's prophethood was a result of divine selection (ikhtisās) rather than human labour (iktisāb), is the rejection of hermitage in favour of monotheism. This is evident in several key aspects of his interpretation: he prefers tawḥīd ('oneness of God') over wāḥdat-ul wujūd ('oneness with God'); he regards Sūrah Al-'Alaq's prophetological construction as apocryphal; he interprets the Qur'ānic semantics of ḥanīf as monotheist rather than hermit; and he emphasizes Tawḥīd as a singular path and form of worship in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah. This interpretation sets Ghāmidī apart not only from classical exegetes, who viewed the initial verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq as the first revelations from God and Muḥammad's spiritual retreat to Ḥira as the occasional cause of this, but also from Ibn 'Arabī, who aligns with the classical contextualization of Sūrah Al-'Alaq through his concept of Muḥammad's spiritual 'ascension' (urūj). Ghāmidī's view of Sūrah Al-Fātiha as the first revelation to Muḥammad and the representation of definitive monotheism (tawḥīd as well as al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm) contrasts sharply with Ibn 'Arabī's view of Sūrah Al-Fātiha as the final revelation to Muḥammad and the attainment of the highest station (manzil) of his spiritual ascension (urūj). The stark and diametric difference between Ghāmidī and Ibn 'Arabī underscores the deep divide in Islamic discourse about the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood, particularly within Sunnī traditions: is it a closed matter, achieved through divine selection, or an ongoing possibility, earned through human effort?

Ghāmidī's examination of Islamic discourse's engagement with Muḥammad as the Seal of prophethood also helps establish a Sufi representation of prophethood. Despite its cosmogenic claims over Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse, it appears likely that this is a discursive representation that has significantly influenced not only the ideas, arguments, and beliefs of Islamic traditions but also their scholarly genres of tafsīr (exegesis) and majmu' al-ḥadīth (ḥadīth compilations). In contrast, Ghāmidī's own representation of prophethood on the other hand emerges as distinctly literary, depending on the synchronous examination of the Qur'ān's imminent textual features while limiting the diachronic approach to the Qur'ān that offers chronological prophetological constructions.

[471] Ghāmidī, 1:22.

6. Conclusion: The Less Well-Trodden Sufi Path of the South Asia ‘Ulamā

As highlighted above, Ghāmidī is sharply aware of the significant influence that Sufism’s representation of prophethood has had on scholarly genres, no more so than within his own regional context of South Asia. He, unsurprisingly, extends his examination of Sufism’s prophethood to assess the ‘adequacy’ (ṣeḥat aur ādam-e-ṣeḥat) of the ‘ulamā’s discourse in South Asia. While the number of South Asia traditions that he assessed over time is significant—including the Barelvi, the Ahl-e-Hadīth, and Tablīghī Jamā’at movements—he identifies the Dēōband movement as the one that actually mainstreamed Sufism’s ‘common prophethood’ into South Asia. Ghāmidī’s examination of the Dēōband movement is scattered, appearing in his scholarship as well as his lessons and lectures in response to historical or interpretive problems that he seeks to clarify. Nevertheless, it is vast, moving through the intellectual heartland of the Dēōband movement—Maulānā Ḥussain Aḥmed Madanī (d. 1957), Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (d. 1933), Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānvī (d. 1943), Maulānā Meḥmūd-ul-Ḥassan Dēōbandī (d. 1920), and Muḥammad Qāsim Nānautavī (d. 1879). What stands out about the Dēōband movement, he argues, is its unusual engagement with and incorporation (ishtigāl) of Sufism: “It does not exist in parts (ajzā) but wholesale (tamām-tar).”[472] Ghāmidī traces the real origins (aṣl ī asās) of this unique religious thought (dīnī fikr) to Shāh Walīullāh and his genealogical succession (khānwāda) in South Asia. Ghāmidī considers Shāh Walīullāh as one of the Sufi masters (akābir-e-taṣawwuf) of South Asia. Comparing him to Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī, Ghāmidī specifically argues that the jāmi’iyat (‘unifying quality’) of Shāh Walīullāh’s thought that led to the Dēōband movement’s incorporation of Sunnī fiqh and Sufism.

During a regular dars (lesson), Ghāmidī defined jāmi’iyat as the exceptional talent of synthesizing philosophy, Sufism, and religion while maintaining their distinct identities:

> “Sufism has produced many remarkable figures among us, such as Imām Ghazālī and Shaykh-e-Akbar Ibn ‘Arabī. By placing the full spectrum of Sufi philosophies, religions, and beliefs at the core, they sought to present a comprehensive system of thought. When someone of exceptional stature creates such a system, they elevate terminology and interpretations to an entirely new level, making it appear as though all dormant streams of human thought have converged at one point. In other words, a vast ocean of thoughts is being assembled. This forms a connection between philosophy (falsafah), Sufism (taṣawwuf), and religion (maḏhab), allowing them to unite while still retaining their individual identities. Consequently, the resulting system of thought exhibits a powerful unifying quality (jāmi’iyat), an extraordinary cohesion.”[473]

Ghāmidī then compares Shāh Walīullāh’s jāmi’iyat to Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī’s:

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[472] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[473] *Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlvi Ka Ilmi Maqam Aur Mazhabi Fikr Par Asraat*.

> "In the initial period, Imām Ghazālī and Shaykh-e-Akbar Ibn ʿArabī stand out as the most prominent figures. In the latter period, the preeminent individual in this field—in scholarship, thought, and articulating ideas—is Imām-ul Hind, Shāh Walīullāh. I elaborated on this to help you understand the essence of Shāh Walīullāh's personality. His works, such as Ḥujjat, Tafhīmāt, Izālah al Khifā, and pure Sufi interpretation texts like Satā'āt and Lamahāt, form a complete tradition to which he has added fresh rhythms and tones, filling any gaps that may have existed. On one hand, he sought to present his religious tradition in the Salafi manner that Ibn Taymīyyah aimed to revive, and on the other hand, he endeavoured to ensure its success by making it compatible with this line of thought. As such, his work can be viewed as a philosophical and mystical masterpiece from an elite Sufi perspective, and from a religious viewpoint, it remains true to the religious tradition and its interpretations. He can even be seen as a Mujaddid in this regard."[474]

Ghāmidī concludes that Shāh Walīullāh's jāmi'iyat is influential:

> "It is impossible for a figure like this to not have an impact! Therefore, in the Indian subcontinent today, the Dēōbandī, Barelvi, and Ahl-e-Hadīth perspectives all embrace Shāh Sāhib and grant him this esteemed status. The way religion is presented in his Ḥujjat serves as an ideal example for people to follow."[475]

In an earlier lecture, Ghāmidī argued that the Dēōband movement self-consciously traces its origins (nisbat) from Shāh Walīullāh, fully receiving their tradition's fundamental principles (bunyādī uṣūl) from his religious thought: "What is found in his thought is found, with derivation and clarification (sharḥ-o-wazāhat), in their traditions too."[476] While they are, Ghāmidī adds, unable to maintain either his unique interpretive foresight (mujtahidāna basīrat) or his style of explanation (uslūb-e-bayān), they are foundationally indistinguishable from him.[477]

Dēōband movement advanced Shāh Walīullāh's incorporation of Sunnī fiqh and Sufism, representing law and mysticism respectively, but in fact, extended it beyond what he could individually do. This foundational indistinguishability between Shāh Walīullāh and the Dēōbandīs sees the idea of 'common prophethood' expand onto both the exoteric (ẓāhirī) and esoteric (bātinī) aspects of faith. In terms of the ẓāhir, the infallibility of the Prophet finds a new foothold in the Ḥanafī maḏhab (school of jurisprudence), with the Dēōbandīs' unique interpretation of taqlīd (conformity to legal precedent) of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 767) that distinguishes him from the other fuqahā (jurists)—Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), Muḥammad ibn Idrīs Al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820), and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855)—as infallible: the 'light' to the

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[474] *Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlvi Ka Ilmi Maqam Aur Mazhabi Fikr Par Asraat*.

[475] *Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlvi Ka Ilmi Maqam Aur Mazhabi Fikr Par Asraat*.

[476] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[477] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 208.

‘dark’. Ghāmidī recounts this statement from a contemporary Dēōbandī scholar in Lahore to demonstrate this: “It needs to be made evident that God, in fact, revealed religion in light of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah’s understanding (fehm). The reality of the remaining jurists (a’imā) is the same as of the darkness (ẓulmat) that was created to distinguish the light (nūr).”[478] In terms of the bātin, the features and stages of prophethood encapsulated in Ibn ‘Arabī’s ‘common prophethood’ are all maintained as an essential addition to a newly transformed Ḥanafī maḏhab, leading Ghāmidī to argue that Shāh Walīullāh’s and the Dēōbandīs’ integrated use of law and mysticism is indeed an incorporation of the fiqh (maḏhab) and Sufism (taṣawwuf) rather than a federation.

It can be argued that a crucial aspect of Shāh Walīullāh’s concept of jāmi’iyat is the development of dēōbandīyyat, which refers to the unique Dēōbandī approach to piety. This approach combines adherence to the Sufi path (ṭarīqah) with the observance of religious and social practices within the framework of Ḥanafī fiqh. In this context, Sufism’s ‘upward’ influence on the way scholarly genres construct the moral-historical epic about Muḥammad is mirrored in the ‘downstream’ influence of the Sufi representation of prophethood in the genres about the South Asian ‘ulamā. As Justin Jones demonstrates in his analysis of Ashīq Ilahī Mīrutī’s (d. 1941) *Tazkira’t al-Rashīd* (1908-1910), a life-history of Gangōhī, the Dēōbandī scholar and Sufi shāykh, the Dēōbandīs have increasingly utilized the Sufi hagiographic genre to transform life-history writing of their ‘ulamā.[479] This life-history writing, tazkira, is not merely viewed as biographical or autobiographical records but serves as essential lessons in the distinct brand of shāykh-centred piety that characterizes Dēōbandī thought.[480] As a result, the genre of life-history writing of the ‘ulamā has become a crucial means of communicating not only crucial matters of Sharī’ah (religious law), religious and social conduct, and relations with the state, but also the Sufi path (tarīqah), and the master-disciple relationship (pīrī-murīdī).[481]

Ghāmidī elaborates that the far deeper form of integration is visible in the full presence of inventories of faith and faith-seeking original to Sufism among the Dēōbandīs, which both use and defend Sufism’s theology (‘ilm-e-kalām) as well as its philosophy (falsafah). The striking reconciliation between law and mysticism resulting from this incorporation is indeed disclosed in a minor encounter narrated by the Dēōbandī scholar (‘ālim) Maulānā Manẓūr Aḥmad Naumānī (d. 1997). Naumānī, concerned about whether Sufism had just an intimate place within Sunnī maḏhab, sought Maulānā ʿAbd al-Qādir Rāyepūrī’s (d. 1862) counsel.[482] Rāyepūrī’s response was a speech: “Just as our fuqahā did ijtihād (independent reasoning) about religion’s ẓāhir, the ahl-e-taṣawwuf did the same for religion’s bātin.”[483] Rāyepūrī concluded by raising a question: “If we do not have an objection to the ijtihād of our fuqahā, then why would we have an objection to the ijtihād of the ahl-e-taṣawwuf? Just as the

[478] Ghāmidī, 208.

[479] Jones, ‘Remembrances of Rashid: Life-Histories as Lessons in the Dēōband Movement.’

[480] Jones, 5.

[481] Jones, 1.

[482] Noumani, ‘Muqadama’, 11–26.

[483] Noumani, 11–26.

independent reasoning around law had been historically tested, proven, and accepted, the independent reasoning around mysticism had also been historically tested, proven, and accepted."[484] According to Rāyepūrī, under the guidance of Shāh Walīullāh, the Dēōbandīs had been able to uniquely and finally unify the ẓāhir and the bātin of their religion with their incorporative turn. Naumānī writes that he was satisfied with Rāyepūrī's response and accepted it.[485]

Ashraf Ali Thānvī's defence of Ibn 'Arabī and the fuller reconciliation of Sufism's 'ilm-e-kalām resulting from it is also another significant example, one that Ghāmidī himself cites—in addition to Shāh Walīullāh's review of Ibn 'Arabī[486]—in his publications and public responses. Regarding Ibn 'Arabī, Thānvī wrote *al-Tanbīh at-Tarabī fī Tanzīh Ibn 'Arabī* ['Delightful Counsel on the Transcendence of Ibn 'Arabī'] (1927), in which he refused to question Ibn 'Arabī's 'independent reasoning' concerning the esoteric. Entirely convinced of Ibn 'Arabī's legitimacy and sainthood, he defended Ibn 'Arabī's mystical insights by arguing that these were beyond his intellectual comprehension. These insights were esoteric, insights which he could neither affirm nor refute, and that no one else should seek to either without justified need or equal capacity.[487]

The world of the Dēōbandīs that had shocked Naumānī, Ghāmidī argued, was the world of the 'common prophethood'. Ilhām still happens, waḥy still occurs, angels still descend and speak with people (meḥsūs kalām).[488] And if a person can create this capacity in them, to make and elevate themselves during contact with malā-e-ālā (that is, the revelatory figures such as angels and prophets in the higher dimensions closer to God), then this person can still receive revelation from where the prophets originally received it and communicate it to others.[489] It can be, therefore, argued that by particularly utilizing the Sufi view of tawhīd (oneness of God) as waḥdat-ul-wujūd (oneness with God), the Dēōbandīs have mobilized the Sufi representation of prophethood.

Ghāmidī's intellectual complaint against the Dēōbandīs here is the same as it was against Ibn 'Arabī: the use of waḥdat-ul-wujūd to imagine stages (maqāmāt) and human labor (istirārī amal) through which one can acquire prophethood. For Ghāmidī, these stages (maqāmāt) actively compete as an alternative (mutābadil) to the structure revealed in the Qur'ān's unique representation of Muḥammad's prophethood.[490] Thānvī, like Shāh Walīullāh before him, clearly proceeds to normalize and incorporate this 'alternative structure' into the religious practice. In *Sharī'at-o-Ṭarīqat* ['Islamic Law and Spiritual Path'][491], he

[484] Noumani, 11–26.

[485] Noumani, 11–26.

[486] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[487] Thanawi, *Al-Tanbih at-Tarabi Fi Tanzih Ibn 'Arabī*.

[488] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[489] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[490] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 181–210.

[491] Thanawi, *Shariat-o-Tariqat*.

comprehensively lays out—almost as a harm-reduction manual—the distinct stages (maqāmāt) of existence available for mystic acquisition. Although available to every good believer (har mūmin) under the banner of wilāyat-e-ammā (mass sainthood), these stages (maqāmāt) are in fact intended for those who are or are on the path to becoming awliyā (saints). [492] Driven by a harmful journey of islāḥ-e-bātin (esoteric reform), a person can reach the lowest stage of 'general sainthood' or at the 'highest' stages (maqāmāt) of wilāyat-e-khāṣ (sainthood of the privileged).[493] Believers, depending on their agility, can reach less risky stages (maqāmāt) such as wajd (ecstasy) or more risky ones such as kashf-e-ilāhī (unveiling of the Divine). If all stages (maqāmāt) are passed with the least possible harm and failure, one can consummate their oneness with God (waḥdat-ul-wujūd). [494]

With these stages (maqāmāt) of ascent in play, Ghāmidī argues that the Dēōbandīs clearly define the nature of human experience in relation to God by advancing Sufism's classical project of taʿluq bil-lāh (relationship with God) which sees the Dēōbandīs dividing their expanding membership of believers between the khawāṣ and awām.[495] Contrasted with the public of awām, the khawāṣ are privileged mystical figures who act as recipients and custodians of revelatory events and experiences, and the ensuing foundational knowledge (bunyādī 'ilm) and arguments (istidlāl).[496] The only persons whom they deliberately communicate these events and experiences to are their own aṣāghir (novice mystics). Indeed, Maulānā Āmīr Usmānī (d. 1975) satirically recounted and criticized unsettling encounters with this larger project of taʿluq bil-lāh in his leading Dēōbandī journal Mahāna Tajallī (1952-1975) under the recurring column *Masjid Se Maikhāne Tak*.[497] The Dēōbandīs, as Usmānī and later Ghāmidī noted, resolved this relationship into the category ʿāshiq and maʿshūq—of the lover (the human) and the beloved (God) remains—known and experienced only by the khawāṣ and its existence and practice only referred to in the public as the 'law of mystical labor' (awrād-o-mashāghil kī sharī'at).[498] Thānvī's almost law-like articulation of the Dēōbandī's mysticism in Islah-e-Rusūm advanced this division into a highly systematic one: "As it is a commandment to save other Muslims from harm, if the elect (khawāṣ) engages in some unnecessary action that corrupts the belief of the masses (awām), then this action will become reprehensible and prohibited for the elect as well. The elect should abandon such an action."[499] This caution, proposed as one of several tenets, sought to maintain the distinction between khawāṣ and awām by highlighting and mitigating the harm the extraordinary events and experiences of mystics could wield upon the everyday lives of ordinary people.

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[492] Thanawi, 36.

[493] Thanawi, 49–51.

[494] Thanawi, 51.

[495] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[496] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[497] Besides appearing in the *Mahāna Tajali*, these columns were eventually published in a dedicated collection due to their popularity. See, for example: Usmani, *Masjid Se Maikhane Tak: Maqṣadi Tanz o Mizah*.

[498] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[499] Thanawi, *Shariat-o-Tariqat*, 111.

This incorporation of the bāṭin and ẓāhir had long created theological struggles within and without the Dēōbandīs that were, according to the Dēōbandīs themselves, famously 'resolved' by Thānvī's work on its inherited ʿilm-e-kalām. An early demonstration of this struggle is the claims and refutations made in nineteenth-century South Asia over the validity of the Dēōbandīs' inherited doctrine of Imkān-e-Kizb: God, given his omnipotence, had the ability to lie.[500] Indeed, the Dārul 'Ulūm Dēōband's founder, Gangōhī, claimed that God can exercise this ability, and can, therefore, lie about the finality of the prophethood of Muḥammad to conceal from the public, as opposed to the privileged mystical figures, the fact of Imkān-e-Nāẓir ['The Possibility of Lying'].[501] Allāmah Fażl-e-Ḥaq Khayrābādī (d. 1861) refuted this argument by emphasizing God's original infallibility: lying would be a flaw, and it is impossible for God to have a flaw. Khayrābādī pushed back against this position by not only issuing fatwas (rulings)[502] but also tapping into the ongoing literary discourse on the subject that by then was popularizing Sufism's ʿilm-e-kalām through poetry. He specifically commissioned the poet Mīrzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib (d. 1869) to write a *maṯnavī* (a Sufi-style poem) on the question of the 'caveat'[503] by Shāh Ismāʿīl Shāhīd (d. 1831) on Muḥammad's final prophethood (imtinā-e-khatam-un nabīyyīn).[504] Ghālib, himself profoundly influenced by Sufism, was originally unable to deliver the *maṯnavī* that Khayrābādī had authorized. By the force of his pen's allegiance to Sufism, Ghālib ended up submitting a draft that supported Shāhīd's position[505]:

"In one universe do not look
for two final Prophets.
Say: A hundred thousand universes
and a final Prophet for each of them."[506]

Khayrābādī, however, prevailed upon Ghālib to add final couplets to deliver the originally commissioned argument:

"The object of creation of
every universe is one and the same
If there were two hundred universes,
there would be one and only one final Prophet."[507]

[500] Gangohi, *Fatawa-Yi Rashidiyya*, 113.
[501] Gangohi, 113.
[502] Khairabadi, *Tahqeeq Ul Fatwa Fe Abtal It Taghwa*, 247–50.
[503] Gangohi, *Fatawa-Yi Rashidiyya*.
[504] Khairabadi, *Imtina-Un-Nazeer*.
[505] Hali, *Yadgar-e-Ghalib*, 79–82.
[506] Rahbar, 'GHĀLIB AND A DEBATABLE POINT OF THEOLOGY', 16.
[507] Rahbar, 17.

Arguing that God cannot create another final prophet, Ghāmidī fully agrees with both Khayrābādī's objections and Usmānī's observations, and in fact utilizes both examples to invoke a tradition of disagreement (ikhtilāfīyāt) against the appropriation of prophethood by the Dēōbandīs. [508]

But, Ghāmidī argues, this tradition of disagreement is not something that substantively exists between Sufism and the Dēōband movement on the one side, and the Barelvi and Aḥmadiyyah movements. He argues, instead, that the formation of the Barelvi and the Aḥmadiyyah movements relied centrally on the exact use of the 'common prophethood'. Both have either followed or mirrored the Dēōband movement in taking steps to further socialise what the Sufis had kept closely quartered within the interpersonal relationships between mystical masters (akābir) and their novices (asāghir).[509] While the Dēōband movement sought to maintain this relationship with the social containment of the khawāṣ, its own ongoing formation had already made the khawāṣ far more accessible to religion communicated to the public (awām). By the sheer size and design of their movement—large in numbers and sharp in its dedication to proselytization—the Dēōband movement had transposed the khawāṣ at a much larger scale. Moreover, with their unique incorporation of law and mysticism and one which only stabilised over time, most notably with Thānvī, the Dēōbandīs have created a permeable structure between the acts of revelation and law-giving that are now freely and actively exchanging knowledge and influence between the exoteric (ẓāhir) and esoteric (bātin). Both have been essentials of religion and finally in coherent motion with each other, as parts of a larger whole. Both the Barelvi and the Aḥmadiyyah movement only escalated, in their own ways, Ghāmidī argues, this relationship by 'going public' with what was otherwise the privilege of a few.[510]

For Ghāmidī, therefore, the tensions between the Dēōband movements on the one hand and the Barelvi movements on the other, and the tensions between the Barelvi and Dēōband movements on the one hand and the Aḥmadiyyah on the other, are about disclosure (tauzīh) rather than substance (aṣl).[511] In this light, instances of religious disagreement can no longer be understood to reflect the strength of the difference between opposing or dissimilar traditions or movements. Religious disagreement is instead erupting between religious identities and their boundaries that are far less different and far more similar than publicly accepted. This raises the notion of narcissism of small differences at work, where interactive identities are seeking to insist on clear boundaries by pointing to and amplifying minor differences, which for Ghāmidī are only limited to disclosure (tauzīh).[512] The real struggle then, albeit a minor one, is not over the acceptability of a common prophethood but the over the mode of its retention. The Barelvi and the Aḥmadiyyah movements evacuated it of its

[508] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[509] Ghāmidī, *Burhān*, 192.

[510] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2002.

[511] *Detailed Analysis of Barelvi, Deobandi & Ahl al Hadith*.

[512] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2002.

socially sober dialectic of the khawāṣ and refilled it, as the Dēōband movement often claims, with the wild hermeneutics of public experience.

It can be concluded that Ghāmidī's reappraisal of Islamic discourse on prophethood highlights how the Sufis and 'ulamā have maintained access to prophethood by appropriating its formal attributes. Sufis more obviously, and the 'ulamā in less well-trodden ways, describe prophethood as the result of epistemic and moral labour. The case of how Muḥammad himself become a prophet has influenced scholarly genres of the Islamic discourse on the finality of prophethood, especially tafsīr and ḥadīth. The generic records of this case were, in turn, used to offer both lessons and guidance to relevant practitioners among Sufis and 'ulamā alike. This chapter accordingly concludes that despite using and reusing the boilerplate view of Muḥammad as the 'Seal' on prophethood, Islamic discourse has essentially claimed that 'warner-prophets' can appear after Muḥammad. The Sufis, and by their virtue the Dēōbandī 'ulamā, seek a moral outcome that approximates the warner-prophet. In conclusion, the case can be made that Islamic discourse on prophethood has been centrally preoccupied with overcoming prophethood itself, especially as a gift that ended with Muḥammad's prophethood. This preoccupation has been driven by what Sufis and 'ulamā alike have needed in order to cultivate self-transcendent experiences, marked by transcendent moments, shock and apocalypse.

CHAPTER 2
SHOCK AND THE PERPETUAL RECKONER-COMMUNITY

The second core chapter examines Ghāmidī's critique of Islamism, which aims to create a morally virtuous and epistemically sincere community. This is exemplified by the normative theory of Mawdūdī, who argued that an "Islamic State" can transform a "non-Islamic" community into an "Islamic" one, achieving moral transformation. Ghāmidī challenges Mawdūdī's account by asserting that politics supports but is not crucial to moral life. This chapter builds on Ghāmidī's ideas to argue that Islamism, represented by Mawdūdī, envisions an apocalyptic event that permanently transforms a community into a perpetual reckoner-community.

1. Introduction

In one of its most persuasive forms, Islamism centrally argues that main responsibility of Muslims is to establish the religion of Islam (iqāmat al-dīn). Islamism centrally argues that the essential requirement and fulfilment of religion is the establishment of the Islamic system (iqāmat al-dīn). This is a critical argument in that it equates the Dīn, the religion of Islam, with the 'system of Islam'.[513] The underlying principle motivating this claim is that the basic obstacle to the realisation of religious life is the 'non-Islamic system', which is both oppressive and unjust. This is, for example, exemplified in the commentaries and other exegetical pieces of Mawdūdī, who argued that the Qur'ān depicts the original Muslim community of Muḥammad as the minhāj, the model for emulation for all subsequent generations of Muslims. Mawdūdī makes his case most significantly in his commentary on the Qur'ān*, Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* ['Towards Understanding the Qur'ān'] (1972)[514], and his specialised works of political theory, 'The Islamic Law and Constitution' (1955)[515] and *Khilāfat-o-Mulūkiyat* ['Caliphate and Kingship'] (1966)[516].

Mawdūdī's case might be broken into three formal propositions. The first is that an Islamic system is necessary for the creation of a moral community:

> "Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue of which mankind can realise its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wantonness, and indiscipline. It creates God-fearing men, devoted to their ideal, possessed of piety, abstinence, and discipline and uncompromising in the face of truth. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested goodwill, scrupulous fairness, and truthfulness toward all creation in

[513] See, for example: Hartung, *A System of Life*.

[514] Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm Al-Qur'ān*.

[515] Mawdūdī, *Islamic Law and Constitution*.

[516] Mawdūdī, *Khilafat-o Mulukiyat*.

> all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected."[517]

The second is that this Islamic system can be secured through the establishment of the Islamic State:

> "The conceptualization of the state by the nineteenth-century scholars of politics is now utterly outdated. ... Gone are the days when if the state presented its economic, educational, industrial, or social scheme people made fun of it by calling it grandmotherly legislation. The situation has completely changed. Now the state's arena has almost become as all-encompassing as that of religion. Now it also decides what you are to wear or what not to wear; whom you are to marry and at what age; what you are to teach your kids and what mode of life you are to choose; ... what language and script you are to adopt. So, the state has not left even the most peripheral issues of life independent of its ultimate right to intervene."[518]

The third is that this Islamic State is authorized and required by God to overtake all other non-Islamic systems across the world:

> "Nor is Islam content only to make a man good: in the words of a Ḥadīth, it makes him 'the key to good and the barrier against evil'. In other words, it has been entrusted with the mission to spread good in the world and prevent evil. Such is the beauty and magnetism of Islamic morality that if some organised group possesses it and actively works toward the mission Islam has set it, then no power in the world can stand against it."[519]

To summarise, these three formal propositions lead Mawdūdī to claim that it is the political obligation of Muslims to create an Islamic system (*niẓām*) and that this system is in turn created by nothing less than an Islamic State (Islāmī Riyāsat). He further claims that the Islamic State should remove all other 'non-Islamic systems'. As will be explored later in the chapter, Mawdūdī's essentially argues that divine sovereignty can be accessed through the Islamic State to morally transform a community, and that this community can then proceed to morally transform other communities.[520]

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[517] Mawdūdī, *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers*, 99.

[518] Mawdūdī, *Musalman Aur Maujudah Seyasi Kasmakash (Muslims and the Present Political Predicament)*, II:5.

[519] Mawdūdī, *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change. New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers*, 99.

[520] See, for example: Zaman, 'The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought'.; and Zaman, 'Divine Sovereignty—Some Reflections'.; and Iqtidar and Scharbrodt, 'Divine Sovereignty, Morality and the State'.

Uncannily, scholarly debates about whether politics can morally transform a community have often corroborated this Islamist rendering of political obligation. Patricia Crone, for example, famously echoed and historicized Ernest Gellner's assessment of Islam as a "state from the very start"[521], to argue that politics was God's offering to Muḥammad's followers: "What was it that Allah had to offer? What he had to offer was a program of Arab state formation and conquest: the creation of an *umma*, the initiation of jihad. Muḥammad was a prophet with a political mission, not, as is often asserted, a prophet who merely happened to become involved with politics. His monotheism amounted to a political program."[522]

Ghāmidī's account of politics in Islam stands in opposition to Mawdūdī's and offers an account of politics that undermines scholarly positions such as the ones by Crone and Gellner. Across various works, Ghāmidī argues that instead of intending to politically deliver moral transformation at the level of the community, Islam is chiefly concerned with the moral life of the individual:

> "The message of Islam is primarily addressed to an individual. It wants to reign over the hearts and minds of people. The directives it has given to the society are also addressed to individuals who are fulfilling their responsibilities as the rulers of Muslims. Hence, it is baseless to think that a state also has a religion and there is a need to Islamise it through an objective resolution and that it must be constitutionally bound to not make any law repugnant to the Qur'ān and Sunnah."[523]

According to Ghāmidī, moral life of the individual advances with the servitude to God and not through the establishment of an Islamic system. Contrary to Mawdūdī's claim that the Qur'ānic depicts Muḥammad's prophethood so that Muslims can emulate it, Ghāmidī argues that this depiction is, in fact, a muqadamā, a case to consider, for Muslim and non-Muslim alike. As noted earlier, this muqadamā consists of the narrative representation of Muḥammad's prophethood (peghambar ki sargazashat-e-indhār), which describes Muḥammad's warning and delivery of God's justice to Abraham's two communities, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites.[524] The intention of this narrative is to engage with the Muslim's moral function as knower and chooser. By appealing to their intellect (ʻaql) with the presentation of the argument and evidence of God's truth, the Dīn, as embodied in it, the muqadamā creates the opportunity for man to exercise choice (ik̲h̲tiyār) by accepting or rejecting the Dīn. The exercise of choice in favour of Dīn and subsequent servitude to God is the beginning of the moral purification central to the experience of Dīn: taz̲kiyah.[525]

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[521] Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*, 9.

[522] Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, 241.

[523] Ghāmidī, *Islam and the State: A Counter Narrative*.

[524] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 49.

[525] Ghāmidī, 53–55.

It is worth pointing out that Ghāmidī's account of politics in Islam is profoundly and most directly concerned with responding to Mawdūdī's. There are three main reasons why this is so. Firstly, during his Jamā'at years from 1968 to 1977, Ghāmidī closely associated with Mawdūdī. During this time, he not only looked up to Mawdūdī as a role model but also engaged with him on what politics is in Islam and to Muslims.[526] Secondly, Ghāmidī regarded Mawdūdī as the founding thinker of the first systematic political interpretation of Islam (dīn kī siyāsī ta'bīr).[527] Lastly, Mawdūdī's normative political theory unavoidably featured in Ghāmidī's subsequent debates on the role of politics in Islam with other schools of thought, most of which were heavily influenced by Mawdūdī.[528] These not only included Dr Isrār Aḥmad Khān (d. 2010)'s Tanẓīm-e-Islāmī, but also the Dēōbandī, Barelvi, and Ahl-e-Ḥadīth movements. The second reason is the most important to Ghāmidī, as he himself explains:

> "It is in your knowledge that the political interpretation of religion has been highlighted by Maulānā Sayyid Abū al-A 'lā Mawdūdī, my celebrated and respected teacher, and you know how much respect I have for him in my heart, it was by his pen that the political interpretation of religion has been highlighted for the first time as a complete interpretation. Not that there were no traces of it before, but he has given a proper and organized interpretation to that. And he has provided a totally new rationale for doing that. So now whenever criticism on it will be made, it will be made on him. That is, it will be about him. So, see when I had to criticize him, I have chosen the title as "error of interpretation", and I have limited my point … that interpretation."[529]

Significantly, the widespread influence of Mawdūdī's political interpretation led Ghāmidī to appendage his entire account of politics with a "counter-narrative" (jawābī byānīyah). Published in 2015 in Pakistani newspapers nationwide, this counter-narrative publicly and directly dealt with the relationship between Islam and the state:

> "If at some place a Muslim government exists, it is generally asked to implement the Sharī'ah. This expression is misleading because it gives the impression that Islam has given the right to a government to forcibly implement all the directives of the Sharī'ah on people. The fact is that the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth do not give this authority to any government."[530]

While Ghāmidī's case against the use of politics to morally transform a community relies upon the distinction between prophetic and post-prophetic life, he does not formally situate

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[526] *Major Islamic Movements in 1400 Years - History, Development and Ideology*.

[527] *Major Islamic Movements in 1400 Years - History, Development and Ideology*.

[528] *Major Islamic Movements in 1400 Years - History, Development and Ideology*.

[529] *Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi Per Kia Gaya Aitraaz - Part 2 - Javed Ahmed Ghāmidī*.

[530] Ghāmidī, *Islam and the State: A Counter Narrative*.

his case within the structure of prophethood. There is, in fact, only one documented instance where he formally states that Islamism appropriates risālat.[531] This chapter will advance Ghāmidī's case that Islamism emulatively appropriates prophethood. It argues that Islamism seeks to appropriates last three (marāḥil) stages of prophethood: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā[532]. Based on this characterization of Islamism, this chapter will further argue that Islamism might be appropriately understood as a theory for the formation and implementation of a perpetual 'reckoner-community'.

In light of Ghāmidī's critique of Islamism and the thesis's conceptual framework, it will be argued that Islamism's representation of prophethood can be understood as that of the reckoner-community, a community that prophetically delivers not only God's warning but also rewards and punishments to this world. As will be demonstrated, this representation of prophethood is progressive, unfolding in two distinct sequences. The first sequence involves the creation of the reckoner-community. Here, the community undergoes shock and apocalypse, which parallel the last three stages of prophetic apocalypse, before transforming into a reckoner-community. This reckoner-community, however, does not end within a particular time in history. Instead, after having undergone its own cycle of transformation, it continues to implement prophetic apocalypse in all the world's remaining communities. The reckoner-community of Islamism thus serves as an illustration of a constructive apocalypse, in which the Islamists deliver shock through political institutions to create further prophetic communities.

In order to develop the basis for this series of arguments, the following section is a necessary analysis of Ghāmidī's account of politics in Islam. This analysis highlights Ghāmidī's conceptualisation of politics, and with it, his case that divine sovereignty (ḥākimīyah) cannot be accessed through the Islamic State to morally transform a community.

2. Ghāmidī's Account of Politics

Ghāmidī argues for what might be characterised as an 'ordinary' politics, which exists as the resolution of everyday obstacles rather than the moral transformation of people, and which limits the role of revelation to only those things that could not be resolved in everyday life. In a canonically recognisable 'contractarian' or 'constructivist' account of politics[533], Ghāmidī describes politics as a necessary and inevitable outcome of an improvising fiṭrah (sound nature), which out of the need to preserve society (tamaddun) and its delicate moral life against the destructive effects of misappropriated intellect and volition (irādā u ikhtiyār kā sū-e-istemāl), creates and inaugurates politics with a social contract (muāhidā-e-imrānī). During subsequent politics, however, while this improvisation continues to resolve further issues, there are certain fundamental issues that frustrate even its adequacies. Ghāmidī invokes a liminality of cognition to insist that this frustration occurs because decisions over these fundamental issues lie on the 'other side' of human intellect ('aql-e-insānī) in that

[531] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2020.

[532] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 53–56.

[533] Ghāmidī, 486.

human intellect is unable to decide over them with finality (qatī'at) despite the unfolding of history (and more fundamentally, temporality itself). In the context of politics, it is this 'undecidability' over certain fundamental issues that acts as the occasion for God's entry into history through revelation, which discloses the morally essential Decision, the political Sharī'ah[534]. This narrow setting for the Sharī'ah's existence dramatically limits its scope in the lives of people. According to Ghāmidī, Islam confines its guidance to the following: the foundational principle (bunyādī uṣūl) of politics, the authentic responsibility (aṣl zimādārī) of politics, the system of government (nizām-e-hukūmat), the religious obligations (dīnī farā'iz) in politics, and the rights given in politics (shahrīyat aur us ke ḥuqūq)[535].

This account of political Sharī'ah distances itself from the recreation of any politics seen during Muḥammad's prophethood, most immediately on two counts: the rights given in politics, and the authentic responsibility of politics. Ghāmidī first uses his pragmatics of coherence to argue that Muslims and non-Muslims have equal, in fact indistinguishable, political rights. Anything that politically distinguishes Muslims from non-Muslims in the Qur'ān, such as the jizyah, is specific to the prophethood of Muḥammad and is no longer applicable. Muslims and non-Muslims exist together in their creation and maintenance of politics based on their universal fiṭrah and its common improvisation.[536] Ghāmidī additionally argues that no one can appoint themselves as a community's political authority. Elucidating on who should bear this authentic responsibility, who is eligible for the Qur'ānic description hakamtu bāyn-an nass ["when you judge between men"] (4:58), Ghāmidī introduces the following ḥadīth (Muslim: 6644): "By God, we will not appoint anyone who asks for it and has desired for it." Ghāmidī is explicitly responding here to the vanguard politics of Islamism, which Gudrun Kramer says seeks the "power of definition"[537] when interpreting and implementing Sharī'ah. According to Ghāmidī, no one is morally able to interpret and implement religion above everyone else, except the prophets, who were appointed by God. The only moral responsibility of anyone in political authority is to perform their function with justice and fairness: "God commands you to hand over the trusts to their rightful owners and when you judge between men, pass this judgment with fairness. Indeed, this is from God an excellent admonition. Indeed, God is He who hears and sees all things" (4:58).

2.1 The Relationship Between Morality and Politics

Ghāmidī's account of politics primarily refutes the perfectionist claim made by Mawdūdī and others that politics is the site of a community's moral transformation by arguing for a limited and non-transformative relationship between morality and politics. The foundational principle states firstly that the Qur'ān and the Prophet are the final source (ḥujjat) of any moral life in politics, and secondly, that political stability (as opposed to excellence) needs to be maintained by obedience to those in authority (ūlī al-amr) (4:59): "Believers! Obey

[534] Ghāmidī, 485.

[535] Ghāmidī, 486–89.

[536] Gẖāmidī, *Islam*, 461.

[537] Kramer, 21.

God and obey the Prophet and those of you who are in authority, and if you disagree among yourselves in any matter, refer it to God and the Prophet if you believe in Allāh and the Last Day. This is better and seemlier as regards the consequences." By setting great store by political stability as well as the 'one utterance' of the Qur'ān and the Prophet, Ghāmidī places himself both within the established Sunnī juristic tradition, and as the foil to the two radical unions of moral life and politics in the Muslim tradition: the Shi'i conception of the charismatic ruler and the Khawārij conception of the charismatic community.[538] But Ghāmidī does not favour political stability over moral life as seen with the quietist Sunnī *imaginaire political* that historically and intellectually emerged as an "oppositional critique" to the "theocratic idealism" of Shī'ism and Khārijism.[539] Instead, as seen in his contractarian beginnings of politics, his support for political stability allows for the delicate moral virtue of a community to remain relatively unaffected by turmoil. This community has a limited but necessary scope: it acts as an everyday framework where ingrained habits and customs and social limits contain and endure within any moral life.[540] If political stability is lost, this delicate framework providing the critical moral cache will also be lost, and the individual, as the Muslim perennialist Gai Eaton apprehends it, will be "left with the obligation to make moral choices at every twist and turn of his life." "This", Eaton in agreement with Ghāmidī, declares "he will not do. It is far more likely that, as soon as all the familiar restraints are removed, something comparable to the force of gravity will lead him on a downward path".[541] Uncoincidentally, Ghāmidī, like Eaton, cites the following consequentialist ḥadīth in support of his exegesis: "He who sees something despicable in his ruler should bear it, for he who even slightly disassociates himself from the state authority and dies in this condition shall die the death of jāhīliyah" (Buhkari: 4708). Ghāmidī advances this exegesis still, to times of political anarchy and chaos, citing another ḥadīth (Muslim: 4784): "[in such a state of chaos], you should remain attached to the state authority and to the ruler of the Muslims."[542]

Ghāmidī qualifies both the morality and stability of politics with a recognition of pluralism: "The believers indeed have a right to disagree with those in authority, but they cannot disagree with Allāh and His Prophet. In fact, in any disagreement between believers, the decision must be made in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnah."[543] The mechanism for resolving disagreements relies upon the method of government and political arbitration given in the Qur'ān: the determination of collective issues through mutual consultation, amrāhum shūrā baynahum [And their system is based on their consultation] (42:38). The significance of the mechanism will be discussed shortly, but not before a brief comment on its significance for political rebellion (khurūj) within any community. While Ghāmidī believes that a rebellion which undermines the existence of a community is fiṭnah (disorder), he also discerns that it is possible if there is a universal agreement to remove someone in

[538] Eaton, *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, 115.

[539] Brown, *The Challenge of Islam: The Prophetic Tradition - Lectures*, 81.

[540] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 486–89.

[541] Eaton, *Islam and the Destiny of Man*, 116.

[542] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 486.

[543] Ghāmidī, 486.

political authority.[544] In other words, rebellion here is defined as a mass abandonment by a people of a political authority while remaining within and maintaining the community itself. Rebellion taken this way is selective and ameliorative, directed at the contingent occupiers of political authority but not at the community itself.[545]

Ghāmidī's refusal to accept politics as the site for moral transformation bears resemblance the exoteric conception (zāhirī ta'bīr) of Ibn Taymīyyah,[546] who by virtue of his characteristically Hanbalī preference for "doctrinal unity over political control"[547], privileged and held antecedent to politics the accomplishment of ritual and communal uniformity among Muslims. Unlike Ibn Taymīyyah, who had anchored moral life in the communal instead of the political in recognition of the loss of political and territorial hegemony of Islam in the post-Abbasid period,[548] Islamist theorists like Mawdūdī have responded to the decline of Islam's political and territorial hegemony under colonialism and post-colonial imperialism by locating moral life within politics.[549] This is most visible in the Islamist doctrine of 'natural religion' (dīn al-fiṭrah), which for the purpose of defending the suitability of an Islamic system against a non-Islamic one, claims that "Divine law is perfectly suited to the needs, desires and inclinations of actual human beings—it is the 'natural religion,' the dīn al-fiṭrah".[550] As Andrew March argues, normative theories of the most influential intellectuals of Islamism, Mawdūdī but also Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966), use this doctrine whilst making their central claim in favour of an Islamic State.[551] Sharī'ah, once introduced into society through politics is naturally, easily and perpetually assumed by people because it is fluently natural to their fiṭrah.[552] Therefore, these normative Islamist theories present what March calls 'realistic utopias'.[553] As self-sufficient political systems, realistic utopias justify themselves on the bases of a naturally assumable religion, and account for their own perpetual stability through the perpetual assumption of that natural religion.[554] Nevertheless, it should be said that Mawdūdī was aware of the tensions between the overlaps of politics and morality he was suggesting. As Iqtidar notes, Mawdūdī "recognized that the idea of popular sovereignty held a complicated, nonlinear relationship with the sovereignty of the modern state … yet he was also enthusiastic about the potential

[544] Ghāmidī, 489.

[545] Ghāmidī, 487–89.

[546] See, for example: Hassan, 'Modern Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya'.

[547] Heck, '"Jihad" Revisited', 115.

[548] Heck, 114.

[549] MARCH, 'Taking People As They Are: Islam As a "Realistic Utopia" in the Political Theory of Sayyid Qutb', 2010, 190.

[550] MARCH, 190.

[551] MARCH, 190.

[552] MARCH, 190.

[553] MARCH, 190.

[554] MARCH, 190.

for the state to transform individual morality, using the colonial liberal state as both a model and a foil for his arguments."[555]

Ghāmidī, specifically in disagreement with Mawdūdī, offers an account of moral life and stability in politics that overturns the natural religion doctrine. Moral life, according to Ghāmidī, can be protected (at best) by politics but not established by it, and stability can be acquired in politics through obedience but can never be experienced as a given through the taking of natural religion. In effect, it is our very moral nature that allows us to not accept Islam naturally. What Ghāmidī, therefore, highlights and criticises is the determinism often implicit in Islamist theories: people arrive at positions of natural religion without needing to access their essential moral character as knower and chooser. Islam, Ghāmidī asserts, while being natural and innate, is also received and chosen over time. He squarely calls for the open engagement of our moral character (taẕkiyah-e-nafs) as fostered by the Qur'ān.[556]

2.2 How Should a Community Govern Itself?

amrāhum shūrā baynahum: "And their system is based on their consultation" (42:38). Ghāmidī takes this frequently cited yet infrequently understood verse to laconically but sufficiently define the system of government that should endure over others within any community:

> "The style and pattern of the words demand that even the head of a state be appointed through consultation; the system itself be based on consultation; everyone should have an equal right in consultation; whatever is done through consultation should only be undone through consultation; everyone that is part of the system should have a say in its affairs".[557]

Ghāmidī draws attention to the meaning of the crucial word, shūrā, by dispelling confusion over a contested Qur'ānic parallel and through counterfactual illustration: "the meaning of the verse is not the same as of the verse: "consult them in the affairs of the state and when you reach a decision, put your trust in God" (3:159), which is often quoted as its parallel. To convey the same meaning as this verse, the words should, perhaps, have been something like wa fī al-amr hum yushāwarūn (and in the affairs [of state] they are consulted)"[558]. For amrāhum shūrā baynahum to have meant that 'consultation be received from people or their recognised elite without the bind of an already placed political leader', he argues, the verse would have taken the following form: wa fī al-amr hum yushāwarūn[559]. This evidently is not the case. With this, Ghāmidī advances his argument against not only Mawdūdī but early theorists of Islamic reform, such as Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935) who wrote of a possible Caliph

[555] Iqtidar, 'Theorizing Popular Sovereignty in the Colony', 596.

[556] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 68–81.

[557] Ghāmidī, 489.

[558] Ghāmidī, 489.

[559] Ghāmidī, 489.

receiving the unbinding consultation of a recognised but unelected elite ahl al-ḥall wa-l-ʿaqd ("the people who bind and loose")[560].

Ghāmidī's use of the principle of consultation also leads him to critique claims that justify non-consultative forms of political authority. Like Riḍā's contemporary foil, 'Ali 'Abd al-Raziq (d. 1966), Ghāmidī rejects the Riḍā's claim that Quraysh genealogy is the only basis to hold political authority among Muslims. He argues that Muḥammad had not used the principle of genealogy but the principle of consultation, to counsel supporters of the anṣār to not undermine the political authority of the Quraysh: "People in this matter follow the Quraysh. The believers of Arabia are the followers of their believers, and the disbelievers of Arabia are the followers of their disbelievers." In other words, the Quraysh had been given political authority and not the Anṣār "since the majority of the Arabian Muslims professed confidence in the Quraysh... [T]hey were solely entitled to take charge as the rulers of Arabia in the light of the Qur'ānic directive (their system is based on their consultation) ... [T]hey would be passed on the political authority, not because of any racial precedence or superiority, but only by virtue of this position"[561]. The rejection of "racial precedence or superiority" also allows Ghāmidī to doubt Ibn Khaldūn's (d. 1382) sociological argument of ʿaṣabiyya (tribal kinship) as a basis of political authority. In fact, Ghāmidī sees ʿaṣabiyya as a negative characteristic. He highlights that the Prophet was cautioning the Anṣār over their own ʿaṣabiyya against the popularly acquired legitimacy of the Quraysh.[562]

On what specific form of government (tarz-e-hukūmat) should be derived from the principle of consultation, Ghāmidī provides both an exegetically and pragmatically informed answer. Firstly, he writes, the Qur'ān and the Prophet are silent over any specific form of government, though no form of government can be accepted that lies outside the jurisdiction of the principle of consultation. Ghāmidī insists that, rather than religious leaders moulding a specific form of government, it is for relevant professionals to use their expertise to develop a form of government best suited to represent the principle of consultation. Political development is, therefore, the domain of everyday human action (insano kā rūba-e-ʿamal)[563]. But this open-endedness does not prevent Ghāmidī from endorsing democracy (jumhūrīyat) as the best-suited of these out of the historical 'archive' of possible forms of government. Ghāmidī specifically cites pragmatism (faṣl-e-naza'at) to argue that in cases where consensus cannot be achieved, "the majority opinion should decide the matter"[564]. This pragmatism also extends to religious obligations that specifically relate to collective affairs. In cases where there is no consensus, the interpretation and implementation of collective

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[560] Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 316.

[561] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 497.

[562] Ghāmidī in this way suggests that human improvisation—driven by a knowing and choosing *fiṭrah*—shapes politics as opposed to Ibn Khaldūn, who positions *ʿaṣabiyya* not only as a fundamental bond among people but also something that drives human history, and with it, shapes politics. Ghāmidī conceptualize politics as something that should be determined by mutual consensus and pluralism rather than by in-group belonging and absolutism.

[563] Ghāmidī, *Islam and the State: A Counter Narrative*.

[564] Ghāmidī.

matters of religion should be decided by the majority. Ghāmidī's support for democracy is not only because it best suits the principle of mutual consultation. It is also because democracy utilises consultation to ensure political stability: it offers a peaceful method for the transition of power (intiqāl-e-iqtedār).[565] Ghāmidī accordingly rejects systems of non-democratic rule, such as monarchies and papacies, by regarding them as despotic (istibdādī), and also rejects anti-western stances among Islamists and traditionalists who essentially associate democracy with western culture. Democracy, Ghāmidī contends, is a form of government conceived by humans, and human innovations (insānī ijitihādāt) such as democratic government are the heritage (mīrāth) of all humans.[566]

Mawdūdī, in contrast to Ghāmidī, is interested in the unprecedented intervention that the modern state had in regulating and determining religious life. This interest arguably stems from his personal experience as a Muslim residing under a modern British colonial state.[567] In contrast to the marginal pre-modern Mughal state, the colonial state penetrated all aspects of human life in India, and in particular the religious life of Indian Muslims. Mawdūdī accordingly judged the state as being indispensable to religion, and proceeded to completely equate the 'arena' of religion with the 'arena' of politics. If appropriately analysed from a Parsonian standpoint[568], therefore, Mawdūdī was proposing the Islamic State not only theologically but also structurally. He wanted to deliver structures that both protect and empower Islam. Mawdūdī wanted to both shield normative ideas of Islam against turbulent secularising social forces while at the same time maximize the influence of these ideas upon society to forge a just Muslim society. The only way Mawdūdī saw this happening was not in maintaining religious life structures of the pre-modern era, but in appropriating the very structures that threatened and limited the influence of Islam's religious ideas during colonial British India: that of the modern state. Islam would, in both in effect and norm, be interpreted and implemented by the state: "[T]he struggle for obtaining control over the organs of the state, when motivated by the urge to establish the Dīn [religion] and the Islamic Sharī'ah and to enforce the Islamic injunctions, is not only permissible but is positively desirable and as such obligatory."[569] Ghāmidī on the other hand believes that this is not possible. He directly introduces Mawdūdī's commentary on amrāhum shūrā

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[565] Ghāmidī.

[566] Ghāmidī.

[567] Ahmad, 'Genealogy of the Islamic State'.

[568] "Parsonian standpoint" refers to an analytical perspective grounded in the sociological theories of Talcott Parsons (d. 1979), an American sociologist. One of the central aspects of Parsons' theory is the role of cultural systems, including shared values and norms (ideas), in social integration and stability. His functionalism posits that social systems are maintained through the interplay between social action and shared values or norms, and that these ideas are instrumental in coordinating and regulating individuals' actions within various subsystems such as family, religion, economy, and politics. Furthermore, in Parsons' framework, political structures can serve as a means of protecting these ideas by enforcing norms and values through legislation, policymaking, and governance. In the context of this text, applying a Parsonian standpoint to Mawdūdī's approach would involve examining how religious ideas can be integrated within the political structures of the state to foster societal cohesion and stability, and how politics can safeguard these religious ideas from detrimental forces.

[569] Mawdūdī, *Musalman Aur Maujudah Seyasi Kasmakash (Muslims and the Present Political Predicament)*.

baynahum in *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* to emphasise that even though Mawdūdī undermined consultation in politics, he could not deny its stated significance in Islam. Ghāmidī cites the following commentary by Mawdūdī: "The Almighty has not said: 'they are consulted in their affairs'; on the contrary, He has said: 'their system is based on their consultation.' Merely consulting people does not fulfil this directive; it is necessary that a consensus or majority opinion be considered as decisive in running the affairs."[570] "In this case," Ghāmidī counters, "it would have been necessary that in a community, the rulers and the ruled be distinct".[571] Political authority would need to be ratified from somewhere outside the community itself, in this case God, which Ghāmidī argues is not possible except during prophethood. Against any possible theocratic idealism, Ghāmidī proceeds to uphold the principle of consultation into the very heart of the Mawdūdī's argument and project, the interpretation of religion (dīn kī tā'bīr):

> "Since the Qur'ān has not specified it by any other adjective except by appending it to a pronoun [to the word 'system', amrāhum], all sub-systems which are part of the political system must be considered included in its connotation. In fact, all affairs of state like the municipal affairs, national and provincial affairs, political and social directives, rules of legislation, delegation and revocation of powers, dismissal and appointment of officials, and interpretation of Islam for the collective affairs of life—all of them fall under the principle laid down in this verse. In other words, no area or department of a Muslim state can be beyond the jurisdiction of this principle"[572].

2.3 Politics and the Question of Religious Obligations

On the testimony of a verse in the Meccan sūra, Ḥajj (22:41), Ghāmidī states that a community can consider only four religious obligations: establishing the arrangement of prayer (ṣalāḥ), distributing charity (zakāt), enjoining good (marʿrūf), and forbidding evil (munkar).[573] On the specific question of what is included in the last two obligations, he enlists directives only relating to collective matters. For example, for the obligation of forbidding evil, Ghāmidī includes directives that constitute the penal Sharī'ah of Islam and correspond to punishments of five grave crimes against life, wealth, honour and the collective system of a society: muḥārabah, murder and injury, theft, fornication, and qadhf (accusing someone of fornication).[574] On the question of who should discharge these two obligations, he argues against their implementation in an individual capacity in favour of collective capacity by citing the naṣṣ "from within you should a group be constituted such that it should call towards what is virtuous, enjoin good and forbid evil" (3: 104) to justify that "the state should constitute a group of people which should be entrusted"[575] with this

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[570] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 496.

[571] Ghāmidī, 495.

[572] Ghāmidī, 495.

[573] Ghāmidī, 491.

[574] Ghāmidī, 611–12.

[575] Ghāmidī, 491.

duty. Specifically, on the matter of ḥudūd, the Qur'ānic context of the penal Sharī'ah also speaks to Ghāmidī as corroboration of his broader interpretation of implementation by collective capacity rather than individual capacity, for the reason that the sūras containing the penal Sharī'ah were revealed in Medina, where political rule had already been established by the Prophet. On how to collectively implement these two obligations, he categorises them as the subject of daʿwā, except for five punishments of ḥudūd, which he says are to be implemented by force of law.[576]

A question that arises here is this: how does the voluntarist principle of consultation reconcile itself with the ostensibly non-voluntarist idea of a religious 'obligation'? In other words, does a system of government appearing in a community need to coercively implement these religious obligations without recourse to mutual consent? Ghāmidī's voluntarism itself provides the answer to this question, and he uses this answer to deliberately critique Islamism's theology of law. Consistent with his requirement of mutual consent over the interpretation of collective religious matters, Ghāmidī states that the overriding principle of consultation would also apply to the assumption and realisation of these four religious obligations.[577] In other words, religious obligations remain unimplemented for as long as people themselves do not voluntarily—by consent—accept these obligations. By resting obligation entirely upon choice, Ghāmidī presents the political principle of consultation as an eminently moral principle. Moreover, these obligations exist to give our moral character the opportunity to engage itself with revelation: the epistemic work has been done by revelation, but the moral work still remains to be done by us.[578] Revelation is, therefore, above all, acting as a reminder to us of our essentially moral nature as knower and chooser. This leads Ghāmidī to a morally deontological account of politics. As discussed above, the irreducible use of choice (*ikẖtiyār)* in moral life breaks down the 'natural religion doctrine' of Islamist thought. Despite our innate disposition for God's truth, no political system can realistically claim to naturally turn us to God's truth unless or until we chose to do so. The deontologically sound transformation of the content of choice is an irreducible process for religion, and as such, an irreducible problem for any perfectionist account of moral transformation.

The pure emphasis on choice manifestly sets up and builds a discursive rather than systemic account of the interpretation of religion and the implementation of interpreted religion. It follows that for Ghāmidī, the idea of the Islamic State ignores the political Sharī'ah's need for mutual consent to be the beginning and end of all formations of politics: "the system itself be based on consultation ... whatever is done through consultation should only be undone through consultation".[579] The formation of any politics is, therefore, at once an ongoing generative and destructive process, open-ended, reversible, and never complete. Ghāmidī does acknowledge that, politics is in part violent and in part consensual, and the

[576] Ghāmidī, 491.

[577] Ghāmidī, 486.

[578] See also: MARCH, 'Taking People As They Are: Islam As a "Realistic Utopia" in the Political Theory of Sayyid Qutb', 2010.

[579] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 486.

site of antimony between existing ‘conventional’ institutions and possible ‘exceptional’ institutions. But he uses it to advocate democracy as the form of government that least disables and most enables a politics created from mutual consent.[580]

It can be argued that Ghāmidī’s account of politics prioritises a useable religion (hidāyat) over a useable past (minhāj). While highlighting that the historical events of the prophethood cannot be experienced again, Ghāmidī maintains that prophethood remains entirely accessible as the content of religion. Ghāmidī’s move to shift the role of prophethood within the Qur’ānic text, and therefore, within politics also limits what kind of central authority—sovereignty—is possible in politics. It sees the elision of prophetic events that Islamists claim can occur and are needed for a community to be able to access God’s sovereignty. Direct appointment by God to rule over a community is no longer possible because it uniquely occurred when prophets were specifically assigned to a community. Self-appointment is not possible either, since shūrā implies consultation between, as opposed to consultation with, a community. No one is morally able to interpret and implement religion, or for that matter all aspects of life, outside of the community, above everyone else, except for prophets, who were specially appointed by God for this purpose. The absence of God’s sovereignty on earth, ḥākimīyah, is most clearly felt in Ghāmidī’s specific elision of the chronological stage (marḥala) of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat.[581] He points out that a community can reach an agreement on ultimate moral purposes if it no longer experiences any hesitation about God’s truth. The truth needs to be made undeniable, and that is what is precisely achieved with Itmām-e-Ḥujjat.[582] Passage through this stage leads to the last two stages of Bar’at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā, which see the moral transformation of a community finally occur.[583] This account of moral transformation allows Ghāmidī to exegetically question the Islamist doctrine of natural religion. The only way that a community could morally transform with the introduction of God’s truth is if it was done so within the prophetic stresses of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat.

It can be contended that the Islamists fail to recognise this. A key reason for this failure is that Islamism arguably establishes a continuity between any transformative politics of the post-prophetic Muslim community and the prophetic apocalypse of Muḥammad’s reckoner-community. The interpreted continuity with Muḥammad’s past apocalypse recall’s Catlos’s arrangement of shards from a shattered mirror, each reflecting a distorted fraction of our own perspectives and biases.[584] In the case of Islamism, its politics might be seen as a verisimilitude of Muḥammad’s prophetic apocalypse, as they attempt to reconstruct it. A key “shard”[585] in their interpretation is the event of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, alongside its subsequent stages. While the Islamism may strive to create a verisimilitude of Muḥammad’s prophetic

[580] Ghāmidī, 495.

[581] Ghāmidī, 540–41.

[582] Ghāmidī, 540–41.

[583] Ghāmidī, 541–49.

[584] Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c*, 519.

[585] Catlos, 519.

apocalypse in its political endeavours by piecing together the "shards"[586] of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat and its subsequent stages, Ghāmidī's analysis discloses the limitations of this pursuit. In other words, Islamism politics is inherently flawed because of its verisimilitude. The Islamists' interpretation of the past and their desire to emulate the prophetic events, such as Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, overlook the crucial fact that not only such events cannot be experienced again, but that overlook how it happens. It requires the revelatory effect of prophethood, which is no longer available.

The revelatory effect of prophethood that provokes a people into becoming a reckoner-community might be described as 'shock'. In other words, the verisimilar use of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat by Islamism can be viewed as an event of Walter Benjamin's "shock experience" [Chockerlebnis].[587] While the unceasing force of destructive shock, jāhilīyah, of the world destructively thwarts the individual from recognizing God's truth, the extraordinary mechanisms of the Islamic State, through its unique capacity to shatter our guard, overtakes this destructive shock with its constructive shock. Much like the aesthetic shock of Rilke's 'Archaic Torso of Apollo', where the radiant light emanating from the incomplete statue penetrates the beholder's core, the Islamic State transforms people:

> denn da ist keine Stelle,
> die dich nicht sieht. Du mußt dein Leben ändern.
> [… for here there is no place
> that does not see you. You must change your life.][588]

As Peter Bürger explains, shock "is aimed for as a stimulus to change one's conduct of life." Just as Rilke's broken statue possesses transformational power, the Islamic State's "gaze / now turned to low, / gleams in all its power,"[589] supersedes our 'acquisitive' disposition characterised by human intellect ('aql) and choice (ikhtiyār) to awaken the conscience of a traumatized public to the causes of its own destruction.[590] Within the framework of Islamism's 'natural religion doctrine', the "conscience" is our innate disposition for God's truth (fiṭrah), which morally transforms all individuals exposed to the Islamist Chockerlebnis.

The vital feature of this morally perfectionist account of politics is that the effect of the shock constructively delivered through the Islamic State is both permanent and highly specific. As Liesl Olson notes, aesthetic shock may be "dangerously nonspecific."[591] As Bürger further explains, "Even a possible breaking through the aesthetic immanence does

[586] Catlos, 519.

[587] Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 328–30.

[588] Rilke, Mitchell, and Hass, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke: Bilingual Edition*, 60.

[589] Rilke, Mitchell, and Hass, 60.

[590] Polgovsky Ezcurra, 'On 'Shock'.

[591] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 8.

not insure that the recipient's change of behavior is given a particular direction…"[592] In the case of the Islamic State, the outcomes are highly specific, with its Islamic System, its morally perfected individuals and community, and the emergent ḥākimīyah. Bürger also worries about the "impossibility to make permanent"[593] the effect of shock. The impermanence of shock is beautifully evoked in the works of Virginia Woolf, which show that ordinary is life's context—"a world where things happen"[594]—to which any incident of shock inevitably must return to. Walter Pater's 'naked' shock is not possible. For instance, in the middle part of her novel *To the Lighthouse*, "Time Passes", Woolf writes of a fictionalized version of her family.[595] Mundane moments, like a dinner party, or the loss of a necklace occupy the lives of the Ramsay's. As Olson notes,

> ""Time Passes" privileges the routines of cleaning over the shock of war, even as cleaning takes on a dramatically new meaning in conjunction with the losses that shake the Ramsay family and the world outside of their house. The ordinary becomes a means by which the unprecedented magnitude of the war can be managed. The powerful, bracketed moments in "Time Passes," emphasizing the devastations of war, put pressure on the ordinary: the ordinary is the place where shock is absorbed, a place where life asserts itself, continuing."[596]

The transformative account of the Islamic State's constructive shock, which establishes an unyielding bond between the individual's innate disposition and God's divine will, denies that its shock can be absorbed back into ordinary life. Ghāmidī's criticism of Mawdūdī, including his insistence on the abolished nature of the prophetic events and the importance of consultation in the absence of divine authority, can be read as an insistence on the everyday realism of moral life, which is deeply intertwined with and flooded with the everyday world we inhabit, and characterised by less drastic modes of choice as well as the genre of everyday objects and events. Woolf's interest in domestic life corresponds significantly with Ghāmidī's emphasis on the ordinary, including the family. The domestic space not only serves as a counterpoint to the stark anti-domesticity present in Mawdūdī's politics of the apocalyptic community but also functions as the central model for moral life and, when it occurs, moral change.

According to Ghāmidī, another key reason why the Islamist doctrine of natural religion fails to recognise that that the kind of moral transformation it seeks is only possible within the prophetic shock of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, is that Islamism establishes a political continuity between the contemporary Muslim community and the original community of Prophet Muḥammad through his Companions.[597] The nature of this continuity is one of transitivity,

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[592] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 80.

[593] Bürger, 80.

[594] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 9.

[595] Woolf and Bradshaw, *To the Lighthouse*, 101–18.

[596] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*, 82.

[597] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

which states that if Muḥammad was imitated by the Companions and the Companions are imitated by Muslims, then Muḥammad can also be imitated by Muslims. In the eyes of Islamists, Ghāmidī explains, the key action that catalysed this transitivity between Muḥammad and the Muslims is the conquest of non-Muslim territories beyond Muḥammad's Companions.

Mawdūdī argues that the post-prophetic conquests by Muḥammad's Companions (ṣaḥābah) were conducted in order to remove the political obstacles to the invitation (da'wat) to and preaching (tablīgh) of Islam. In *Rasāʾil-o-Masāʾil* ['Epistles and Questions'] (1978), he makes his argument as follows:

> "There were dynastic governments (shaḵẖṣī ḥukūmatẽ) in these territories, and these would remain in power indefinitely. This indefinite rule was the most significant obstacle (rukāwaṭ) to the spread of Islam (ishā'at-e-Islām). In the presence of these dynastic governments, neither was there any possibility (imkān) that their subjects could receive an invitation (da'wat) to Islam, nor was it possible for these subjects to have the freedom of opinion (āzādī-e-ra'y) and freedom of action (āzādī-e-'amal) that they could accept (qabūl) and follow ('amal pāira) this rightful invitation (da'wat-e-ḥaqq). Given these conditions, it was neither possible to spread Islam nor to achieve its desired outcomes without removing (nimtē bag̲ẖair) the rulers of these governments."[598]

As Mawdūdī explains in *Al-Jihād fī al-Islām* ['The Concept of Jihad in Islam'] (1927), the removal of neighbouring governments by the Companions was not borne out of similar religious opposition, but instead, a measure to address the unjust and oppressive political conditions in which people lived.[599] Mawdūdī is, therefore, able to frame the actions of Companions as the first post-prophetic action to establish an Islamic system (iqāmat al-dīn). Removing these territories' governments comprised the removal of 'non-Islamic systems' that stood as the obstacle to the realisation of religious life in these territories. Mawdūdī accordingly described the Companion's conquests as an emancipatory war (musallaḥanah jang).

Unlike Mawdūdī, Ghāmidī does not situate the actions of the Companions within political Sharī'ah. He instead conceptualises these as the specific outcome of the third stage of prophethood, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat. According to this conceptualisation, Muḥammad's neighbouring territories also achieved Itmām-e-Ḥujjat. These territories, especially their rulers, became witnesses to God's truth (shahādah) as they watched Muḥammad's delivery of divine justice on earth (qiyāmat-e-ṣughrā) to the Israelites and Ishmaelites unfold in Arabia. This process of bearing witness (shahādah) culminated during the last four years of Muḥammad's life, when he sent formal letters of warning to these territories, visited their borders, and gave them the opportunity to visit and speak with him. Ghāmidī supports this

[598] Mawdūdī, *Rasail-o-Masail*, IV:190–92.

[599] Mawdūdī, *Al-Jihad Fi Islam*, 175–76.

characterisation with the following Qur'ānic verse (9:6): "And if anyone among the Idolaters asks you for asylum, grant it to him so that he may hear the Word of Allah and then escort him to where he can be secure. That is because they are men without knowledge." After this four-year period[600], these territories were given the last opportunity to either accept God's truth or face God's punishment (sazā). Ghāmidī summarises this entire sequence of warning and judgement as follows:

> "The Prophet was speaking with these territories as the Messenger from the Creator of this world. This is not an ordinary thing. He was not simply inviting them to do good. He was warning them that he had come to them as God's court of justice and to decide their verdict."[601]

According to Ghāmidī, therefore, the conquests of neighbouring territories by Muḥammad's Companions were not to establish religion (iqāmat al-dīn) but deliver divine punishment to those who had refused to accept God's truth. It follows that the Companions' actions do not define any political requirement in the Sharī'ah of Muslims.

It is important to note that Ghāmidī developed the foundational basis for this argument over time. When he first published it in *Maqāmāt*, his collection of rhythmic prose on often biographical topics, he originally argued that the Companions post-prophetically implemented this divine punishment based on their independent reasoning (ijtihād). They specifically believed that since the neighbouring territories had been formally warned by Muḥammad during his lifetime, the prophetic injunction of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat would have in due course been applied to them. Despite Muḥammad's death, therefore, the Companions reasoned that these territories would still receive divine judgment, and reward and punishment (Jazā-o-Sazā) based on the prophetic injunction of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat. Ghāmidī further corroborated his interpretation by emphasising that the punitive option of jizyah was used by the Companions, which, as shown earlier, is uniquely characteristic of a prophet's apocalyptic actions. Ghāmidī later reflected on this foundational basis as follows: "Initially, we knew that the Prophet had invited these kingdoms to Islam directly, that he gave them time directly, and then he spent four years with them. All of these things happened on the will of the Prophet. After the Prophet's death, the Companions applied [the pending prophetic law] using their independent reasoning."[602]

Ghāmidī has since revised, and intensified, the foundational basis for the argument the Companions' conquests following Muḥammad's death were the definite continuation of the Prophet's apocalypse. During the course of his Ḥadīth project, titled *'Ilm al-Nabī* ['The Knowledge of the Prophet'] (2019-), which was initiated after Ghāmidī completed his translation and commentary of the Qur'ān, *Al-Bayān* 2019. In a series of three articles

[600] The Israelites and Ishmaelites underwent a comparable process of prophetic engagement over a 13-years period.

[601] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

[602] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

published under this project and titled, *Itmām-e-Ḥujjat Aur ʻAẕāb* [‘Conclusive Proof and Divine Punishment’] (2020), Ghāmidī presented his discovery and analysis of the following ḥadīth in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī to argue that the Companions did not act based on independent reason (ijtihād) but based on the direct and explicit instruction (ḥukm) from the Prophet himself:

> “Narrated by Jubair bin Haiya: ‘Umar sent the Muslims to the great territories to fight the pagans. When Al-Hurmuzan embraced Islam, ‘Umar said to him. “I would like to consult you regarding these territories which I intend to invade.” Al-Hurmuzan said, “Yes, the example of these territories and their inhabitants who are the enemies. of the Muslims, is like a bird with a head, two wings and two legs; If one of its wings got broken, it would get up over its two legs, with one wing and the head; and if the other wing got broken, it would get up with two legs and a head, but if its head got destroyed, then the two legs, two wings and the head would become useless. The head stands for Khosrau, and one wing stands for Caesar and the other wing stands for Faris. So, order the Muslims to go towards Khosrau.” So, ‘Umar sent us (to Khosrau) appointing An-Nu’man bin Muqrin as our commander. When we reached the land of the enemy, the representative of Khosrau came out with forty-thousand warriors, and an interpreter got up saying, “Let one of you talk to me!” Al-Mughira replied, “Ask whatever you wish.” The other asked, “Who are you?” Al-Mughira replied, “We are some people from the Arabs; we led a hard, miserable, disastrous life: we used to suck the hides and the date stones from hunger; we used to wear clothes made up of fur of camels and hair of goats, and to worship trees and stones. While we were in this state, the Lord of the Heavens and the Earths, Elevated is His Remembrance and Majestic is His Highness, sent to us from among ourselves a Prophet whose father and mother are known to us. Our Prophet, the Messenger of our Lord, has ordered us to fight you till you worship Allah Alone or give jizyah (i.e. tribute); and our Prophet has informed us that our Lord says: “Whoever amongst us is killed (i.e. martyred), shall go to Paradise to lead such a luxurious life as he has never seen, and whoever amongst us remain alive, shall become your master.” (Al-Mughira, then blamed An-Nu’man for delaying the attack and) An-Nu’ man said to Al-Mughira, “If you had participated in a similar battle, in the company of Allah’s Messenger he would not have blamed you for waiting, nor would he have disgraced you. But I accompanied Allah’s Apostle in many battles, and it was his custom that if he did not fight early by daytime, he would wait till the wind had started blowing and the time for the prayer was due (i.e., after midday).” (Bukhārī: 3159, 3160)

Ghāmidī identifies the prophetic instruction in the statement “Our Prophet, the Messenger of our Lord, has ordered us” (amaranā nabīyunā rasūlu rabinā). According to the ḥadīth, the key instruction the Prophet gave to his Companions was to specifically wage a war (ḥattā taʿbu ḏullāh) only against a specific government until they either accepted God or accepted subservience in its place (aw tabaddul jizyah).[603] For Ghāmidī, this ḥadīth is reliable

[603] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

historical evidence that demonstrates that the Prophet clearly delegated his Companions to implement prophetic punishment to people who achieved Itmām-e-Ḥujjat: "There is no room for any sort of inference now. Because if these steps would have been just about expanding into territories, or about the expansion of the Muslim sultanate, or about ending the autocratic governments or about strengthening the path of the Prophet's message of Islam, then there was no right to enforce jizyah upon them."[604] Ghāmidī also reiterates the unique role of the Prophet's Companions that he had systematically established in his exegesis of the Qur'ān. In it, he had already highlighted how God used the Companions to punish those who rejected the Prophet. For example, Ghāmidī highlights that in Sūrah Anfal, God clearly punished the Ishmaelites in the Battle of Badr through the Prophet's Companions: "God says in the Sūrah Anfal that we ordered the angels to hold the polytheists' finger-joints and their necks, and then asked the Companions to cut their throats."[605] Ghāmidī accordingly concludes:

> "It is basically an application of 'the law of completion of proof' (Itmām-e-Ḥujjat). In this case, no action was taken by the Companions independently. All the actions that they took were by the Prophet. This is reflected in what Abu Bakr said that about the Companions: 'Usama's army was already armed and armoured by the Prophet. I cannot make it stop.' Only the stage of punishment was left, and just as this punishment was given during the time of the Prophet, the Companions do so in the case of the eight neighbouring kingdoms."[606]

3. Islamism's Representation of Prophethood

As initially mentioned, it can be argued that Islamism offers representation of prophethood that can be understood as that of a perpetual reckoner-community, a community that prophetically delivers not only God's warning but also rewards and punishments to this world. This representation of prophethood is progressive, unfolding in two distinct sequences. The first sequence involves the creation of the reckoner-community. Here, the community undergoes shock and apocalypse, which parallel the last three stages of prophetic apocalypse, before transforming into a reckoner-community. This reckoner-community, however, does not end within a particular time in history. Instead, after having undergone its own cycle of transformation, it continues to implement prophetic apocalypse in all the world's remaining communities. The reckoner-community of Islamism thus serves as an illustration of a constructive apocalypse, in which the Islamists deliver shock through political institutions to create further prophetic communities. The representation of prophethood in Islamism can, therefore, be formally structured as follows. (See also Figure below)

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[604] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

[605] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

[606] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

1. First Sequence: Creation of the Reckoner-Community

   During the first sequence of the community's creation into the reckoner-community, corresponds to the following representation of prophetic apocalypse:

   1.1 Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth): The community experiences shock, disclosing divine truth to provoke a permanent transformation (transfiguration).

   1.2 Stage 4 Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Apocalypse: Separation of Good from Evil): The fourth stage involves the separation between believers and non-believers within the community in anticipation of God's reckoning.

   1.3 Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Compensation): The community experiences a communal apocalypse, with the death of the old community and the birth of a new community. The resulting transformation is considered the Divine reward and also the authorisation to outwardly deliver prophetic apocalypse. Those who reject the shock are punished with death, or subjected to subservience and jizyah payment.

2. Second Sequence: Creating Other Reckoner-Communities

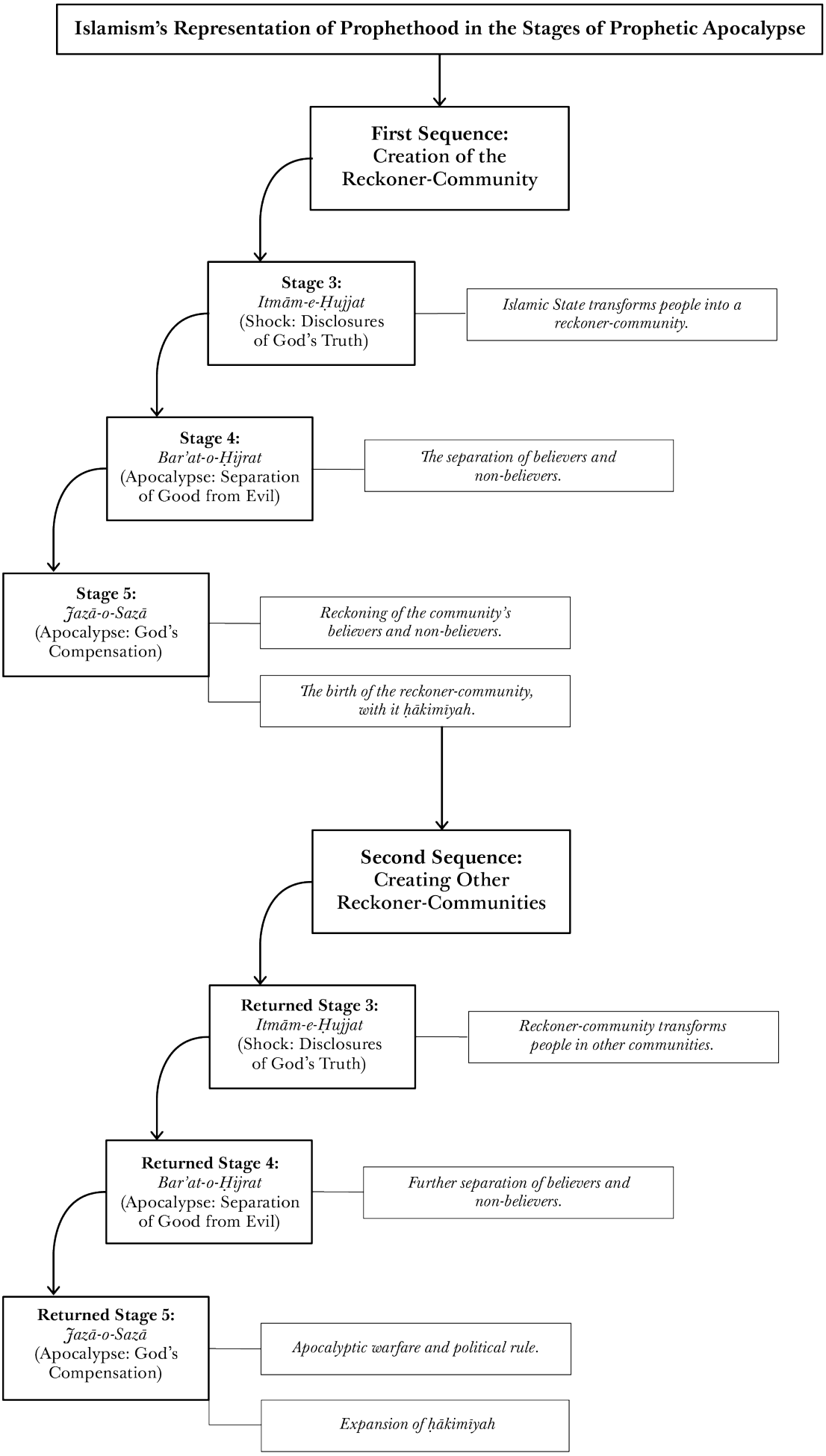
   During the second sequence, in which the new-found reckoner-community delivers shock to other communities, this representation corresponds with prophetic apocalypse in the following way:

   2.1 Returned Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth): The community experiences shock, disclosing divine truth to provoke a permanent transformation (transfiguration). This is a cyclically apocalyptic role. The reckoner-community delivers shock to other communities, akin to how a prophet would in the third stage of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat. Moreover, the reckoner-community becomes a constructive institution in an apocalyptic world, on the verge of collapse.

   2.2 Returned Stage 4 - Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Apocalypse: Separation of Good from Evil): The fourth stage involves the separation between believers and non-believers within other communities in anticipation of God's reckoning.

   2.3 Returned Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Compensation): The reckoner-community delivers a communal apocalypse, with the death of the old community and the birth of a new community. The resulting transformation is considered the Divine reward and also the authorisation to outwardly deliver prophetic apocalypse. Those who reject the shock are punished with death, or subjected to subservience and jizyah payment.

To summarize, the representation of prophethood in Islamism arguably corresponds to stages 3, 4, and 5 over a two-sequence prophetic apocalypse.


Islamism's Representation of Prophethood in the Stages of Prophetic Apocalypse
First Sequence: Creation of the Reckoner-Community
Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth)
Islamic State transforms people into a reckoner-community.
Stage 4: Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Apocalypse: Separation of Good from Evil)
The separation of believers and non-believers.
Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Compensation)
Reckoning of the community's believers and non-believers.
The birth of the reckoner-community, with it ḥākimīyah.
Second Sequence: Creating Other Reckoner-Communities
Returned Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth)
Reckoner-community transforms people in other communities.
Returned Stage 4: Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Apocalypse: Separation of Good from Evil)
Further separation of believers and non-believers.
Returned Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Compensation)
Apocalyptic warfare and political rule.
Expansion of ḥākimīyah

Mawdūdī's view of why this post-prophetic action happened is evidently informed by two other formal propositions of his political thought. Firstly, that politics is morally perfectionist and that the Islamic State "has to encourage and popularize those good practices that Islam desires humanity to adopt and to discourage, eradicate, and crush with full force all those evils from which Islam aims to purge mankind."[607] Secondly, no law outside of God's law has the right to exist or be followed in this world. The Islamic State, therefore, establishes God's legal sovereignty (ḥākimiyyat Allāh al-qānūniyya): "The Qur'ān establishes that obedience must be rendered to God alone and that only His law [qānūn] must be followed. It is forbidden for man to neglect or abandon this law and follow the laws of others, or his own law [Sharī'ah] or whims.… Similarly, the Qur'ān says that every rule or judgment that opposes the law of God is not only a mistake or a sin, but is unbelief, error, injustice, and depravity. Any such law is the law of pagan ignorance (jāhilīyah)."[608] In both substance and effect, therefore, Mawdūdī regards the actions of the Companions as an essential part of the political Sharī'ah of Islam.

The comparison of Ghāmidī and Mawdūdī, especially over the latter's emphasis on establishing and then utilising the political state and its ongoing wars to overtake jāhilīyah with God's legal sovereignty (ḥākimiyyat Allāh al-qānūniyya) reveals the essentially apocalyptic nature of Mawdūdī's reckoner-community. Like in the case of Sufism, it can be considered apocalyptic, since it signifies both the end and beginning of its subject. In this case, of course, the rebirth is not of an individual alone, but of an entire community, and theoretically, eventually all 'remaining' communities. Similarly, there is distinct element of a reckoning, both ameliorative—"encourage and popularize those good practices that Islam desires humanity to adopt"[609]—and punitive—to discourage, eradicate, and crush with full force all those evils from which Islam aims to purge mankind" [610]—that is distinctly present in Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse.

It is equally significant to propose that Mawdūdī's view of an immanent ignorance (jāhilīyah) across the world that needs to be overtaken only through unending salvific methods of prophetic apocalypse draw him very close to Sufism in two specific ways. Like the Sufis, whose radically individual apocalypse unfolds across the ontological plane of wāḥdat-ul wujūd ('oneness with God') and whose warner-prophet emerges as salvific figure amidst a chaotic world on the verge of collapse, Mawdūdī's reckoner-community rises in a world in destructive ignorance, where this prophetic community emerges as an instrument to establish the hitherto unimplemented divine will. The reality of the world that the reckoner-community inhabits is ontologically apocalyptic. The other similarity to Sufism is that the Islamist reckoner-community, with its perpetual movement to move to implement God's legal sovereignty (ḥākimiyyat Allāh al-qānūniyya), is also involved in a prophetic journey that can be ontologically understood as a cyclical apocalypse. The notion of a continuous cycle of apocalypse gains resonance when considering that following its own creation, the reckoner-

[607] Mawdūdī, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 127–28.

[608] Mawdūdī, *Khilafat-o-Mulukiyat*, 20.

[609] Mawdūdī, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 127–28.

[610] Mawdūdī, 127–28.

community implements prophetic apocalypse across other communities, arguably in a bid to be absorbed into and to expand the original reckoner-community.

It is important to qualify, however, that both the Sufi's apocalypse and its apocalyptic milieu remain cosmogenically superior to Islamism's own apocalypse and its apocalyptic milieu. This is crucially because of the transcendent nature of the Sufi representation of prophethood, which, mentioned earlier, surpasses the stages (marāḥil) of prophethood with its union with God, and with its view that all wāḥdat-ul wujūd is a singular, all-encompassing plane where all authentic and ultimate aspects related to the individual and worldly apocalypse occur, whether these relate to prophethood or politics.

The above observation about the apocalyptic milieu of the reckoner-community, and its cyclical apocalypse, is analytically made more sustainable if one considers the permanence of Islamism's shock and its refusal to return to the everyday. Arguably, this permanence is possible if there is no everyday at all but just apocalypse, both before and after the shock. In other words, the reckoner-community's own actions within this apocalyptic world are a special case of apocalypse. The key inference that can be made that this is a specialised, prophetically-inspired 'constructive' apocalypse while all other actions in this apocalyptic world are unyielding to Divine guidance, and therefore, destructive representations of apocalypse. This constructive movement from chaos to consciousness resonates with Wallace Steven's "It must be that in time / The real will from its crude compoundings come, / Seeming, at first, a beast disgorged, unlike, Warmed by a desperate milk."[611] Wallace Stevens writes here of the emergence of reality or "the real"[612] from a crude, unrefined state. Over time, the true essence of something will arise from its raw beginnings, initially appearing strange and unrecognizable. The movement occurs from the unsettling "beast disgorged"[613] is transformed through the nurturing process of being "warmed by a desperate milk"[614].

This idea also brings back the concept of 'shock', or more specifically its derivative, 'shock-modernity'[615], which describes the disorientation and imbalance experienced in modern society due to rapid changes, continuous stimuli, and conflicting elements, leading to a state where utopia and wasteland coexist in equal measure, and individuals struggle to maintain their autonomy and individuality against overwhelming social forces.[616] Drawing from the concept of 'shock-modernity,' Mawdūdī's apocalyptic milieu shares, uncoincidentally, several parallels with the disorientation and imbalance experienced in modern society. The state of ignorance experienced by people faced with overwhelming chaos and destruction in Mawdūdī's world resembles the disorientation brought on by the rapid pace of change and

[611] ADAMSON, 'Apocalyptic Hysteria in Stevens', 8.

[612] ADAMSON, 8.

[613] ADAMSON, 8.

[614] ADAMSON, 8.

[615] Cassegård, *Shock and Naturalization in Contemporary Japanese Literature*, 4.

[616] Mawdūdī, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, 127–28.

constant stimuli in 'shock-modernity.'[617] According to Benjamin, shock is a "crystal"[618] in which the conflicting elements of modernity are visible in a condensed form, and modernity is both utopia and wasteland in equal measure. Moreover, just as shock-modernity disrupts the rhythm of society and the individual's heart, Islamism's shock disrupts jāhilīyah, with no return to it. Instead, the movement shifts towards ḥākimīyah (God's sovereignty), reflecting the struggle to maintain individuality and autonomy amidst the overwhelming forces of shock-modernity. In 'shock-modernity,' the tempo and acceleration of modern life lead to an "intensification of nerve-life,"[619] as described by Georg Simmel. Baudelaire also notes that things seem to change faster than the "mortal heart"[620] can keep up with. Simmel and Baudelaire's instantaneity of tempo and acceleration almost appears to be directly describing the spontaneity of moral transformation imagined by Islamism's 'natural religion doctrine'. Apocalyptic themes are central to both 'shock-modernity' and Mawdūdī's worldview, with the reckoner-community inhabiting an ontologically apocalyptic world. This is analogous to the struggle for individuality and autonomy in the face of the overpowering forces of shock-modernity, as illustrated by Adorno's description of the individual's consciousness of their "nothingness"[621] in the face of the "gigantic machine of the entire system"[622]. Lastly, the differentiation between the reckoner-community's prophetically-inspired 'constructive' apocalypse and the destructive representations of apocalypse resembles the tension between utopia and wasteland in 'shock-modernity,' where the balance or conflict between these opposing forces characterizes the modern condition. The perception of society as a superhumanly powerful machine or system further underscores this tension, as individuals struggle to maintain their autonomy and individuality against the forces of shock-modernity.

4. Conclusion: Sharī'ah and Eschatology and the Islamic State

This chapter has explored Ghāmidī's ordinary account of politics alongside Mawdūdī's morally transformative politics. Ghāmidī questions Mawdūdī's morally perfectionist view that an Islamic State can and should be created to transform a community into an Islamic system. Such a transformation, Ghāmidī broadly argues, is unique to the Prophet Muḥammad's risālat. This chapter, accordingly, highlights Islamism as another example where divine law for prophethood (sunnatullāh) is conflated with the divine law for politics (Sharī'ah). Ghāmidī is especially seen to be concerned with the need to distinguish the eternal but exclusive (k̲h̲āṣ) law of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat from the universal and eternal (ābādī) of political Sharī'ah of Muslims. As discussed previously, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat during prophethood occurs at the scale of the community, within a defined time and place. According to Ghāmidī, Mawdūdī assumes that the events of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat can again be achieved by a community within a specific time and place. Ghāmidī is, of course, able to specify the role of prophethood in the Qur'ānic text, and therefore, in politics in this way because of his unique pragmatics of the Qur'ān. By arguing that the Qur'ān's coherence (naẓm) provides the

[617] Cassegård, *Shock and Naturalization in Contemporary Japanese Literature*, 4.

[618] Cassegård, 3.

[619] Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', 410.

[620] Cassegård, *Shock and Naturalization in Contemporary Japanese Literature*, 4.

[621] Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, 113.

[622] Adorno, 113.

context for its own interpretation, Ghāmidī is able fully to abandon the entire Ḥadīth genre of asbāb al-nuzūl. This allows him to use the specificity of context and reference as the interpretive norm rather than the universality of context and reference, as one his students Asif Iftikhar notes:

> "The basic assumption of an exegete should not be that each verse of the Qur'ān (and any directive emanating from it) is universal in application unless its specificity can be proved from the context; instead, the basic assumption should be absolutely the other way around: each verse of the Qur'ān (and any directive emanating from it) is specific to its first addresses and their times unless its universality and generality is proved from the context."[623]

This shift in pragmatics allows Ghāmidī to argue that the prophetic stages of Muḥammad's risālat—Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat and Jazā-o-Sazā—are not intended to be experienced beyond the people who originally experienced these. For everyone else, the exceptional prophetic stages are part of the larger narrative of warning (deynūniyat) that reminds people of God's truth and the final day of judgement, qiyāmah.[624] Ghāmidī's exegetical methodology, therefore, not only shapes his account of politics but also his criticism of Islamism.[625] For example, he consistently highlights that Mawdūdī's interpretation of the Qur'ān by opinion (tafsīr bi-al-ra'y) [626] amalgamates prophetic political actions with post-prophetic political life.[627]

This chapter further examined how post-prophetic political life, according to Ghāmidī, relies on a morally voluntarist Sharī'ah. This Sharī'ah elevates individual moral character and choice as the basis for any political development within a Muslim community. Ghāmidī's morally voluntarist account of politics, as a result, insists that any government—and indeed any aspect of shared life—can be made and unmade by mutual consultation. While Ghāmidī does believe it to be morally worthy for politics to perform religious obligations for the community, he also makes it clear that these obligations are finite in their scope and outcomes. Politics, seen in this way, cannot morally perfect any individual or an entire

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[623] Iftikhar, 'Jihad and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative Study of the Worldviews and Interpretative Approaches of Abü al-A'la Mawdüdi and Javed Ahmad Ghāmidī (Master's Thesis)', 64.

[624] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 51–56.

[625] Recognising the importance of methodological differences may be crucial to explaining how contemporary Islamic political thought has reconceptualise political Sharī'ah around the modern state. A series of papers by Andrew March are notable in this still rarefied direction of enquiry: largely through readings of modern Islamic apologetics, he has made unprecedented investigations on how foundational ambiguities have led to failures in the reformist projects by scrutinising thinkers such as Muḥammad 'Allāl al-Fāsī (d. 1974) and Tariq Ramadan (b. 1962).

[626] Iftikhar, 'Jihad and the Establishment of Islamic Global Order: A Comparative Study of the Worldviews and Interpretative Approaches of Abü al-A'la Mawdüdi and Javed Ahmad Ghāmidī (Master's Thesis)', 11.

[627] Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'ān*, 66.

community. It instead recognises and exists around people's hesitations about God's truth, and lets them respond differently to this truth. This open-ended relationship between politics and moral purification (taẕkiyah-e-nafs) is part of Ghāmidī's metaphysics, which maintains that moral closure, like the one observed in the Prophet's life, can only occur post-prophetically once people leave their 'place-of-trial' (imtiḥān gāh) in this world for their 'place-of-settlement' (ābād gāh) in the world after.[628]

This chapter has finally examined how Ghāmidī and Mawdūdī have disagreed over whether Muslims can utilise the Companions' post-prophetic conquests to make further claims about politics. Mawdūdī claims, on the one hand, that once established, an Islamic system is obligated to also transform other communities morally. Ghāmidī conversely argues that the Companions' post-prophetic conquests were strictly the unfolding of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, whereby the Companions were not morally transforming neighbouring territories but punishing them for rejecting God's prophet. Based on Ghāmidī's reading of Mawdūdī's claims about these conquests specifically and about morally transformative politics generally, it can be argued that the Islamist account of politics seeks to explain how Muslims can create and implement a 'reckoner-community'.

As highlighted in the introduction, a reckoner-community implements all five stages of prophethood. Mawdūdī's normative theory can be seen to essentially describe how this reckoner-community can be created through the epistemic and moral labour of Muslims, and furthermore, how this reckoner-community can in turn authoritatively transform other communities. This community, therefore, is formed and acts much like the community of Muḥammad's Companions. The crucial difference, of course, is that while the reckoner-community of Muḥammad's Companions existed only for a specific time and place, the reckoner-community that Mawdūdī articulated can exist indefinitely and everywhere. In other words, Mawdūdī remodelled the discrete reckoner-community of the prophetic context into a perpetual reckoner-community in the post-prophetic context. Islamism, it can therefore be argued, is a movement of reckoner-communities.

In his most recent publication, *The Caliphate of Man* (2019), Andrew March specifically argues that Islamism introduced divine sovereignty into politics with a unique theory of 'popular sovereignty'.[629] According to this theory, divine sovereignty rests not in any individual but in the collective moral authority of a representative people. According to this chapter's analysis, March's 'morally authorized people'[630] might also be understood as 'the reckoner-community'. Furthermore, by reframing this morally authorized people as an attempted approximation of a certain type of prophethood, their unitary authority can also be adequately described as 'prophetic sovereignty' rather than 'popular sovereignty'. It follows that contrary to March's claims that the Islamist ideal of a morally authorized people is unprecedented in Islamic thought, such an ideal is in fact a recurrently appearing. As this

[628] *Qanoon e Itmam e Hujjat Aur Sahaba Ka Iqdam*.

[629] March, *The Caliphate of Man*.

[630] March.

thesis argues and the next chapter will further explore, both classical and contemporary Islamic thought has arguably imagined several forms of reckoner-communities. More tentatively, Islamism's perfectionist claim that prophetic sovereignty can reappear to morally transform a community can be seen as part of a wider case that prophethood has been a central instrument of revival and reform in Islam.

At the close, there are two key observations that need to be made in relation this reckoner-community. Firstly, what is the role of the Islamic state in the normative theory of Mawdūdī? Standard accounts of Mawdūdī's political thought largely maintain that the Islamic State is the central component of his theory. The Islamic State is essential to the creation of a Muslim polity, and that this Islamic State then maintains and expands the polity. There is no discernible disagreement over this assessment of Mawdūdī's political thought. But when examined from the analytical perspective of prophethood, as was done earlier in this chapter, Mawdūdī's normative theory appears to mostly concern itself with the creation and replication of a reckoner-community that consists of epistemically and morally sincere Muslims. The problem around the role of the Islamic State arises once such a community comes into existence. In the presence of such a people, should not the role of the Islamic State—a sovereignty bearing/accessing institution—reduce immediately and significantly? The heightened role of the community has only been recently recognised in scholarship. Andrew March has notably argued in *The Caliphate of Man* (2019) that divine sovereignty in the theories of Islamists such as Mawdūdī rests in the collective moral authority of a representative people.[631] March's account, however, does not reflect on what happens to the Islamic State once this 'popular sovereignty' is achieved. He instead, as has been traditionally maintained, assumes that Islamism locates the collective moral authority in the unitary and representative institution of the Islamic State. The reckoner-community corroborates March's account of a morally authorized people. Such a people, much like the Companions of the Prophet, is permanently created as the result of the transformative moral impact—shock—of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat. But once the Islamic State delivers the shock of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, should it not become redundant? Within a reckoner-community, the prophetic substantiation of the people means that the Islamic State loses significant agency in governing these people. Instead of the Islamic State, the prophetically-substantiated morally and epistemically sincere Muslims deliver something akin to self-governance [c.f. khawarij, charismatic community]. Mawdūdī's account does indeed acknowledge this. He argues that sovereignty rests in God's law, Sharī'ah, that governs people's lives. Moreover, this law is not implemented by the Islamic State. While officials of the state are meant to protect the law, it is the specialists of law—the 'ulamā—who have charge of the law. Muslims, according to this reading of Mawdūdī, at least socially self-govern through the law. So what role is left to the Islamic State then?

Ghāmidī offers a systematic and productive account of divine laws which may answer this. His concept of sunnatullāh (plainly translated 'Practice of God') describes laws that can emanate from no one but God. The introduction of sunnatullāh allows Ghāmidī to clearly define Sharī'ah, divine laws in which human beings have agency. Ghāmidī identifies seven

[631] March.

sunan: divine tests and trials of human beings; divine guidance to human beings against moral error; divine restraint in burdening human beings beyond their capacity; divine selection of nations to rise and fall; divine help of individuals or communities entrusted with God's missions; divine mercy of repentant human beings; and divine reward and punishment of human beings, in both this world and the next.[632] Crucially, these divine laws can be said to lead to the emergence of the autonomous and unchanging 'everyday' within which the ordinary happens.

These laws can be understood with the distinction between divine laws with intrinsic rationality and those without. Divine laws that inherently possess rationality are accessible to or discoverable by humans "because it expresses the profound structures of a permanent natural order."[633] These laws exist to satisfy a pre-existing natural or human need. Divine laws without any intrinsic rationality have their basis of authority in divine will, such as revelation. This divine will does not have any inherent quality accessible to or discoverable by humans "because it emanates from a god who is master of history."[634] This law exists for the extrinsic purpose of demonstrating obedience to God. Building upon Rémi Brague's work, Christine Hayes's sets forth this account of divine law in 'What's Divine about Divine Law? Early Perspectives'[635]. While tracing the pre-Islamic construction of rabbinic divine law, she historically locates these divine laws in two distinctive discourses. The Greco-Roman discourse conceptualised divine law as intrinsically rational, truthful, universal, and immutable. The Pauline discourse grounded divine law in revelation and did not necessarily have any intrinsic rationality, truth, universality, or immutability. Amidst her analysis, Hayes also deploys the supporting concepts of trans-historical divine laws, which are valid throughout time, and historically-conditioned divine laws, which are valid at a certain point in time. As a work of intellectual history, Hayes offers primary and secondary categories and heuristics that can be readily used to analyse divine laws in both classical and contemporary Islamic thought. Hayes herself confirms this utility, concluding her book with the "hope that specialists in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic divine law discourse in the medieval and modern periods will take up the categories and questions raised by this book and write the next chapters of this story."[636]

Hayes' conceptual distinctions of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' divine laws is particularly useful in capturing Ghāmidī's recurring critique that Muslims traditions have often conflated different divine laws with each other. For example, he argues that Muslims conceptualised what is obligatory (farẓ) in Islam and what is allowed (ḥalāl) and forbidden (ḥarām) as emanating from intrinsic divine laws, seeking to maximize anthropocentric benefits (fawā'id). He, instead, argues that obligations and prohibitions exist for the extrinsic purpose of demonstrating obedience to God.

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[632] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 109–23.

[633] Brague, *The Law of God*, 18.

[634] Brague, 18.

[635] Hayes, *What's Divine about Divine Law? Early Perspectives*.

[636] Hayes, 371.

The supporting conceptual distinction of trans-historical and historically-conditioned divine laws is also useful in analysing Ghāmidī's thought. There are two types of trans-historical divine laws. The first is universal and eternal divine law (ābādī), which is for anyone at any time. The second is specific but eternal divine law (k̲h̲āṣ), which is valid at any time but only for someone specific. Historically-conditioned divine law is specific and temporary (waqtī), valid only for a specific time for someone specific. Across this logical space, Ghāmidī again argues that Muslims traditions have often conflated different divine laws with each other. The most noteworthy of conflations is over prophethood, which he believes to be determined by a specific but eternal, and therefore, exclusive (k̲h̲āṣ) law in contrast to what he fears most traditions reckon it to be: a universal and eternal (ābādī) law. Moreover, by viewing prophethood as the product of a universal and eternal (ābādī) law, Ghāmidī argues that Muslim traditions—both classical and contemporary—mistake prophethood to be Sharī'ah rather than sunnatullāh. In other words, the central problem that Ghāmidī's differentiated and hierarchical—politburo—account of divine law highlights is the lack of structured resolution of different divine laws, where each law has its own role and position.

The conceptual distinctions of the ordinary and divine laws as follows. Islamic traditions have historically resisted the prominence of the ordinary within Islam, with most arguing that the extraordinary can and does occur during the course of our existence. A key example of this is prophethood, the extraordinary *par excellence* in Islam, which Islamic traditions have, in one way or the other, tried to incorporate into moral life. In order to incorporate the extraordinary, most notably prophethood, Islamic traditions have prioritized a certain kind of trans-historical conceptualization of divine law while encompasses not only Sharī'ah but also God's sunan.

While the people are prophetically substantiated with an epistemically and morally sincere capacity to implement Sharī'ah themselves, other prophetic tasks, such as the transformation of other communities, and more broadly the external project of shock and apocalypse, which go even further than what Sharī'ah can deliver, remains. Its tasks, as was shown above, fall within sunnatullāh, not Sharī'ah; that is, the divine laws that God implements upon people, but never with or by people. It can be argued that the Islamic States exists in order to implement sunnatullāh if not Sharī'ah. The perpetual action of reckoner-community allows the Islamic State to remain feasible and relevant, especially when viewed from the perspective of divine law. So, the Islamic State is above all, and most directly about, the implementation of sunnatullāh and not Sharī'ah.

The second observation is in relation to growing literature on Islam that argues that Islam, including the actions of the Prophet's community, were driven by eschatological imperialism and warfare. This argument, for scholars producing this literature, explains a significant number of historical events, especially those that followed the death of Muḥammad. For example, in their analyses, Stephen Shoemaker[637] and Michael Cook[638] argue that the early

[637] Shoemaker, 'Cultures of Eschatology'.

[638] Cook, 'Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad'.

conquests of Islam, and broadly Islam itself, can be explained by eschatological imperialism and warfare. They maintain that the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad expected the end of the world to come soon after his death, and this eschatological belief was a driving force behind the rapid expansion of the Islamic community through military conquests. However, this argument may be flawed when considering the perspective of Ghāmidī, who posits that any wars by the Prophet Muḥammad were limited to the prophetic apocalypse he brought to this world, which ended with him. As such, Islam is not eschatological in the sense that Shoemaker and Cook argue, though it remains eschatologically confident. Shoemaker and Cook's argument is grounded in the idea that the Qur'ān is an eschatological book, with its teachings focused on the imminent end of the world and the need for believers to expand God's dominion through military force. As Cook himself notes, "the Qur'ān is an eschatological book and not an apocalyptic book"[639]. They suggest that Muḥammad's followers must have understood these two key principles of their religious worldview as correlative, with the expansion of the Islamic community through armed struggle being instrumental to the Hour's immediate advent. Shoemaker argues, "One imagines that Muḥammad's followers must have understood these two key principles of their religious worldview as correlative, so that they believed that the formation and expansion of their community through armed struggle were instrumental to the Hour's immediate advent"[640]. However, Ghāmidī's interpretation of a prophetic apocalypse challenges this understanding.

Ghāmidī argues that the wars waged by the Prophet Muḥammad were specific to the prophetic apocalypse he brought to this world, which ended with his death. This implies that the eschatological nature of Islam is not inherently tied to its expansion through military conquests. Instead, it is centred around the prophetic message and teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad. In this sense, Islam is eschatologically confident without being inherently imperialistic or focused on warfare. Moreover, Shoemaker and Cook's emphasis on eschatological immediacy in the Qur'ān may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the Islamic worldview. As Cook himself notes, the distinction between an eschatological and an apocalyptic book suggests that the eschatological aspects of the Qur'ān are more concerned with the believer's actions in this world, rather than solely focusing on an imminent end of the world scenario.[641] It is crucial to recognize the multifaceted nature of the Islamic faith, which cannot be reduced to a single eschatological perspective. Shoemaker and Cook's argument that the early conquests of Islam and the broader Islamic faith can be explained by eschatological imperialism and warfare is challenged also by Mawdūdī's project of the perpetual reckoner-community, which conversely maintains that the Prophet Muḥammad's wars were not limited to the prophetic apocalypse he brought to this world. It continues with a select community. As will be shown in the next chapter, Islam's eschatological confidence should not, of course, be conflated with an inherent drive for imperialism and warfare.

[639] Cook, 71.

[640] Shoemaker, 'Cultures of Eschatology', 297.

[641] Cook, 'Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad'.

CHAPTER 3
APOCALYPSE AND THE TERMINAL RECKONER-COMMUNITY

Abstract

This chapter examines Sunnī eschatology, specifically focusing on the anticipated appearance of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus. It retraces Ghāmidī's refutation of these beliefs within the Sunnī tradition. Ghāmidī argues that neither figure will appear, contending that these beliefs have been mistakenly accepted as literal events. He argues, instead, that the Mahdī and the return of Jesus should not be considered articles of faith (ʻaqīdah). By asserting that these events do not exist, Ghāmidī eliminates the need to believe in them. Building upon Ghāmidī's reading, this chapter argues that Sunnī eschatology seeks a return to a prophetic apocalypse right before the eschaton, 'shocking' Muslims into one last 'reckoner-community'.

1. Introduction

Scholarly genres of Sunnī Islam significantly feature eschatological literature that heralds the Day of Judgement (yawm al-qiyāmah) with the arrival of two eschaton figures: the Mahdī, a rightly-guided descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad, and Jesus, the prophet who came before Muḥammad. After confounding the wicked, and restoring religion and justice, both the Mahdī and Jesus will die. Their deaths will be followed by the end of the world, and the judgment of the individual dead and their everlasting life (al-ḥayāt al-bāqiyah) or punishment (al-ʿaḏhab al-qayyim). As Christopher Melchert notes, even though "[m]ost Islamic apocalypticism is in ḥadīth" and not in the Qur'ān[642], the authority of this Islamic eschatology has not been openly questioned in Sunnī tradition. This is, at least nominally, because Ḥadīth in the Sunnī tradition has increasingly become "equally authoritative with the Qur'ān."[643] The appearance of the Mahdī (Ẓuhūr al-Mahdī) and the non-prophetic return of Jesus (Nuzūl ʿĪsā ibn Maryam) remain widely regarded as divinely revealed signs (āyāt) of the Day of Judgement. With the support of Ḥadīth and tafsīr literature,[644] their arrivals are traditionally believed to be prophecies narrated by Muḥammad himself. As a result, the transformative presence of the Mahdī and Jesus during the eschaton has particularly become accepted as an indispensable part of the late Sunnī Islamic creed (ʻaqīdah): those who accept the Prophet must accept his prophecy. In Ghāmidī's South Asian context, for example, the authoritative Urdu-language Islamic encyclopaedia published in Pakistan in 1980 by the University of Punjab, *Urdu Dā'irah Ma'ārif-e-Islāmīyah* ['Encyclopaedia of Islamic Knowledge'] describes both events the bold detail of convincing and accurate records of the future. Under

[642] Melchert, 'Apocalypticism in Sunnī Ḥadīth', 267.

[643] Melchert, 267.

[644] These notably include the ḥadīth books of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī compiled by Imām Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 870), Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim compiled by Imām Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 875), Musnad Aḥmad which was compiled by Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), Sunan Abū Dāwūd collected by Abū Dāwūd as-Sijistānī (d. 889), and Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī which was compiled by Imām Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā at-Tirmidhī (d. 892).

the entry ‘Ẓuhūr-e-Mahdī’ [‘The Appearance of the Mahdī’], the encyclopaedia records the following:

> “Many narrations attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad, and some too which are attributed to Ali, state that: “Till the time that mujaddid appears, neither will the world come to an end nor will the qiyāmah take place. The Mahdī will be from my family (iṯ̲rat) from my ummah, and a son of Fatima and his name would be my name, and his father’s name would be the name of my father and he would be like a Messenger among people, but in looks, he will be different. There will not be a hair on his forehead, his nose will be curvaceous and high. At that time, the world will be full of oppression, vices, and infidelity and disbelief in God will reign supreme. Any person remembering God will be killed. The Mahdī will establish justice and tolerance in the world, and he will give corporal punishment to people till the time they do not tend toward God i.e., truth. And under him, the Muslims will achieve such prosperity which would be unprecedented or unheard of earlier. The earth will produce its best fruit and there will be showers of blessings from the sky. The wealth would be such in magnitude that people will tread upon it. It will be in plenty. A person will say, ‘O Mahdī! Give me that wealth.’ And he will reply, ‘Of course, take it, and he will fill his garment with as much wealth as he can carry.’”[645]

The encyclopaedia proceeds to describe the return of Jesus as follows under the entry, ‘*‘Īsá kī Āmad-e-Sanwī’* [‘The Second Coming of Jesus’]:

> “It is said that in the last days, near qiyāmah, there will be the appearance of the Mahdī, after a few years of which the Al-Dajjāl will surface, and after that to kill him, Jesus will descend. His return will be in Damascus just after the fajr prayer, on the eastern minaret of the Great Mosque. He will descend by putting both his palms on the wings of angels. On his coming, Imam Mahdī will retreat from his position of imām of the prayer and will offer him the imāmat. However, Jesus will command Imam Mahdī to continue leading the prayer. Why will Jesus return? According to mutawātir ḥadīths**,** there is a consensus of the ummah on the view that Jesus will break the cross, kill the pig, will revoke jizyah, and will give the da‘wah (message) of Islam to all people. Hence, except Muslims, God will destroy all nations of the time, and Jesus will kill the Al-Dajjāl. Peace and tranquillity shall reign on the whole of the Earth. The tiger will graze with camels and so will the leopards with cows and oxen, sheep, and goats. Jesus will stay on earth for 40 years and then die. The Muslims will perform his funeral prayer and lay him to rest.”[646]

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[645] ‘Ẓuhūr-i Mahdī’.

[646] ‘‘Īsá Kī Āmad-e-Sanwī’.

The *Urdu Dā'irah Ma'ārif-e-Islāmīyah* represents a dynamic and resilient South Asian tradition in which new eschatological literature to both defend and advance the arrival of the Mahdī and Jesus has been developed for over a century. These notably include two Deobandī publications, Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī's (d. 1933) refutation of the Aḥmadiyyah movement *al-Taṣrīḥ Bimā Tawātarā Fī Nuzūl al-Masīḥ* ['Elucidation of What Has Been Successively Transmitted Regarding the Descent of the Messiah'], and Thānvī's refutation of Ibn Khaldūn, *Muwakhkharāt al-Ẓunūn ʿan Ibn Khaldūn* ['Removing the Doubts of Ibn Khaldun'].

Notwithstanding the resilience of this interpretation, a late tradition of opposition to this view has also emerged in South Asia at the same time, which consists of the ambiguous views of Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938)[647], and more systematic commentary by Tamannā 'Imādī[648], Ḥabīburraḥmān Ṣiddīqī Kāndhalvī (d. 1991)[649], and Ghāmidī. All share the argument that the Mahdī and Jesus will not appear before the Day of Judgement. Iqbāl and 'Imādī examined the question of the eschatological Mahdī and Jesus, however, strictly to refute the contemporary emergence of the Aḥmadiyyah movement. 'Imādī, in fact, wrote his book *Intiẓār-e-Mehdī-o-Masīḥ* ['Waiting for the Mahdī and the Messiah'] at the request of Iqbāl.[650] Furthermore, their works were limited to domains of their expertise or interest. Iqbāl developed a characteristically philosophical response[651], while 'Imādī focused on the criticism of ḥadīth literature.

Ghāmidī's account of the Mahdī and Jesus stands out in comparison to Iqbāl and 'Imādī, particularly through his unique approach to addressing traditional Sunnī eschatology. He develops a systematic and foundationally comprehensive refutation to the arrivals of both the Mahdī and Jesus, implementing exegesis of the Qur'ān as well as what can be described as a neo-classical scrutiny of Ḥadīth scholarship. Moreover, instead of reacting to the minority view of the Aḥmadiyyah movement, he directly and openly criticizes the mainstream of traditional Sunnī eschatology, setting his perspective apart from others in the field. Ghāmidī implements his refutation while raising a number of critical epistemological and methodological questions about the scholarly genres of Ḥadīth as well as tafsīr, such as about the relationship between signs and faith, the difference between the transmission of religion and the transmission of Ḥadīth, the competing scopes of Qur'ānic translation and

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[647] Iqbāl, *Iqbālnāmah (Majmū'ah-e-Makātib-e-Iqbāl)*, II:231.

[648] 'Imādī, *Intiẓār-e-Mahdī-o-Masīh*.

[649] Kāndhalvī, *'Aqīdah Ẓuhūr-e-Mahdī*.

[650] 'Imādī, *Intiẓār-e-Mahdī-o-Masīh*, 7.

[651] In his letter dated 7 April 1932 to Muḥammad Aḥsan, Iqbāl states that, according to his firm belief ('aqīdah), all traditions relating to Mahdī, masīḥiyyat and mujaddidiyyat are the product of Persian and non-Arab imagination; and he adds that certainly they have nothing to do with the true spirit of the Qur'ān. Contrary to the prevalent Islamic belief of Jesus' ascension to the heavens and his second coming, as well as the appearance of Mahdi as a distinct person, Iqbal appears to reinterpret their roles and significance. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing spiritual potential within individuals. Through his writings, he suggests that individuals can embody the qualities traditionally associated with Mahdi by awakening their inner self and realizing their human potential. Additionally, he seems to encourage a search for divinity within oneself rather than anticipating the second coming of Jesus or the arrival of Mahdi as external saviours. These interpretations are reflective of Iqbal's wider philosophical thought.

interpretation, and the difference between dreams and events, all to challenge the Sunnī belief in the Mahdī and Jesus.

After retracing Ghāmidī's footsteps, this chapter will argue that traditional Sunnī eschatology seeks a return to a prophetic apocalypse right before eschaton, 'shocking' Muslims into one last 'reckoner-community'. In light of Ghāmidī's critique and also the thesis's conceptual framework, it will be argued that this representation of prophethood can be understood as that of the reckoner-community, a community that prophetically delivers not only God's eschatological warning but also establishes the final apocalyptic milieu in preparation of the Day of Judgement.

As will be demonstrated, this representation of prophethood is non-progressive, unfolding in one distinct sequence. The sequence involves the creation and death of a singular reckoner-community. With the arrival of the Mahdī and Jesus, the community rapidly undergoes shock and apocalypse, which parallel the last three stages of prophetic apocalypse, before transforming into a reckoner-community. This reckoner-community ends within a particular time in history, with the deaths of both the Mahdī and Jesus. The case of Sunnī eschatology, therefore, illustration of a terminal reckoner-community, one which like Islamism, delivers constructive apocalypse, but one whose only task is building the apocalyptic milieu, and with it, the escalation towards the end of time itself.

2. Eschatology and Belief

Ghāmidī first criticizes the traditional evidence for the arrival of Mahdī and Jesus in Mīzān.[652] At the very outset, Ghāmidī limits the role of Islamic eschatology in how it shapes the Islamic creed ('aqīdah). He builds this limitation by arguing that creed can only be based on the Qur'ān. All constituent elements, he explains, of creed should be and are clearly stated in the Qur'ān. Other direct prophetic evidence, such as *Ḥadīth-e-Jibrīl*[653], correspondingly only repeat these clearly stated elements in the Qur'ān. In his chapter regarding 'imānīyāt—a

[652] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 160–61.

[653] See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 50, Book 2: Belief, Chapter 37: The asking of Gabriel from the Prophet about Iman, Islam, Ihsan and the knowledge of the Hour. Narrated Abū Hurayrah: One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Messenger replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection." Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Messenger replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan." Then he further asked, "What is Ihsan (perfection)?" Allah's Messenger replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." Then he further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allah's Messenger replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents. When a slave (lady) gives birth to her master. When the shepherds of black camels start boasting and competing with others in the construction of higher buildings. And the Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah. The Prophet then recited: "Verily, with Allah (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour" (31.34). Then that man (Gabriel) left, and the Prophet asked his companions to call him back, but they could not see him. Then the Prophet said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion." Abu 'Abdullah said: He (the Prophet) considered all that as a part of faith.

term he prefers for 'articles of faith' over the post-prophetic and now popular term 'aqīdah—Ghāmidī reiterates an early classical position. He directly reports the following verse from Sūrah al-Baqarah to clarify that Islam requires a Muslim to believe in God, angels, prophets, divine books, and the Day of Judgement[654]:

> "The Messenger has believed in what has been revealed to him by His Lord, and so do those who follow [him]. All of them professed faith in God and His angels and His books and His messengers. [They affirmed:] "We do not discriminate between any of God's messengers," and they said: "We heard and have obeyed. Lord! We seek Your forgiveness, and [believe that on the Day of Judgment] to You shall we return." (2:285)

According to Ghāmidī, this verse appears in the Qur'ān once after the third stage of prophethood, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, is completed in relation to the Israelites, when God's truth is finally made conclusive to them. Therefore, the verse not only highlights that the Israelites were only partially professing faith in God's religion by rejecting crucial tenets, but also establishes articles of faith to covenantally activate Muḥammad's community, the Ishmaelites, as a new warner-community. Ghāmidī addresses each of these five articles of faith, finally closing with a commentary on belief in the Day of Judgement. He argues that the Day of Judgement can be seen as the satisfaction of man's desire for justice:

> "If God is just and fair, then such a day must come. His providence, mercy, power, and wisdom as well as His laws and practices all entail that man face a day of accountability. Without belief in such a day, religion is mere wishful thinking. The concepts of virtue, piety, justice, reward, and punishment become baseless. Without such a day, the universe has no purpose and can only be regarded as the playground of divine forces."[655]

He accordingly writes that the Day of Judgement was "central"[656] to the "preaching mission of prophets."[657] The prophets—including Abraham, Jesus and Muḥammad— foretold the al-nabā' al-'aẓīm ('the great news').[658] The Qur'ān, as the Book of Muḥammad, is "a bearer of warnings and glad tidings for this Day."[659] This day, Ghāmidī explains from the Qur'ān, will

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[654] While Ghāmidī's catalogue of beliefs may already come across as sparse in comparison to other renderings of the Islamic creed, it is revealed to be even more attenuated than originally imagined. Upon a closer reading, Ghāmidī's list of five beliefs can be further reduced to a list of only two. The equality of the list hides the fact that belief in God and the Day of Judgement are in fact the indispensable beliefs, while belief in angels, prophets and divine books is desired to ultimately access belief in God and the Day of Judgement.

[655] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 161.

[656] Ghāmidī, 160.

[657] Ghāmidī, 160.

[658] Ghāmidī, 160.

[659] Ghāmidī, 160.

be one of final and absolute moral accountability for each and every one of us. The deeds of each person will be shown to them in their closest detail and weighed on scales:

> "On that Day, men will issue forth individually so that their deeds can be shown to them. Then whoever has done the smallest bit of good he also shall see it, and whoever has done the smallest bit of evil, he also shall see it." (99:1-8)

Depending on which end their scales tilt, a person will be sent to Paradise or Hell.

So, when will the Day of Judgement come? Ghāmidī states that the Qur'ān (in 7:187, 20:15, and 41:47) makes it clear that "no one except God has knowledge of this."[660] Even the prophets or angels do not have this knowledge. However, God does reveal signs that will signal the arrival of this day. Besides describing how mankind will rise from their graves on this day and the judgment that will follow, Ghāmidī asserts that both the Qur'ān and Muḥammad offer indications leading up to this significant event. Based on a close examination of both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, Ghāmidī concludes that the following 10 are these signs: the sinking of the earth in the East; the sinking of the earth in the West; the sinking of the earth in the Arabian Peninsula; smoke; the arrival of the Dajjāl ('a great deceiver'), who will falsely claim to be Jesus; a land animal born directly from the earth; the onslaught of the people of Gog and Magog; the rising of the sun in the West; a fire rising from a pit of the Yemenite city of Eden; and a wind that will blow people away into the sea.[661] Sieving through the Qur'ān and other prophetic evidence, Ghāmidī observes that there is no mention of the Mahdī or Jesus as signs leading up to the Day of Judgement. He, therefore, concludes: "Besides these signs, the arrival of the Mahdī and Jesus from the heavens are also regarded as signs for the Day of Judgement. [But] I have not mentioned them."[662]

Whether or not the Mahdī and Jesus are mentioned as signs of the Day of Judgement, Ghāmidī argues that signs are not part of 'imānīyāt. He reasons that any news (akhbār)—of the past, the present and the future—cannot be regarded as an article of faith. According to Ghāmidī, both the Qur'ān and the Prophet offer news, of the past, the present and the future. The Qur'ān, for example, offers akhbār of the past: of the Throne of Queen Bilqīs', the Hud Hud, the 'Ashāb-e-Kahf, and Zulqarnain.[663] Signs of the Day of Judgement, more clearly, therefore, are information about the future.[664] Signs, he clarifies, are specifically akhbār-un nabī: news shared by the Prophet Muḥammad. Like other prophets before Muḥammad, this information was shared in answer to questions by their followers and also for what Ghāmidī

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[660] Ghāmidī, 179.

[661] Ghāmidī, 179–81.

[662] Ghāmidī, 181.

[663] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[664] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

uniquely calls izdīyād-e-īmān: information that increases one's faith.[665] For the followers during the Prophet's time, this information elevated their experience of faith. For the people after the Prophet's time, both those who follow him and not, this information acts as proof of Muḥammad's veracity and status as a true prophet.[666]

This clears the space for Ghāmidī to elaborate on the important distinction between ʻimānīyāt and akhbār. Akhbār, on the one hand, are 'epistemic' objects that can be subjected to interpretation (tawīl), and as result, discussed and debated with differing viewpoints:

> "Even the accounts of events chronicled in the Qur'ān may be subject to varied interpretations; be it your comprehension or mine, or the interpretations of esteemed scholars like Abū Ḥanīfah, Shāfiʻī, Shāṭibī, Zamakhsharī, or Ālūsī. Whether found within the sacred Book of Allah or Ḥadīth, these matters are intrinsically epistemological, and may give rise to thousands of differing viewpoints."[667]

ʻImānīyāt, in contrast, are 'moral' objects that need to be accepted without interpretation. "Whenever we look at the īmān (belief) of any person, then we will only consider five articles of faith"[668], Ghāmidī says, while adding that these five articles of faith remain unchanged for any person of any time.

> "These articles of faith are unchanged from the time of Adam, since all the prophets came with the complete religion and all the things that are necessary for us to accept have been taught to the prophets from the first day they appeared. When the Qur'ān came and gave da'wa to Banī Ismāʻīl, these very same ʻimānīyāt were presented to them."[669]

The distinction Ghāmidī makes between ʻimānīyāt and akhbār is more fundamentally a distinction between ʻimānīyāt (faith) and ʻilm (knowledge). Not everything in religion is a matter of faith. This includes ʻilm (knowledge). Not all ʻilm shared by the Qur'ān or the Prophet can be elevated to the status of ʻimānīyāt. Ghāmidī recognises this distinction, and as a critical one. He argues that signs, and akhbār more generally, belong more appropriately to what can be classified as the Kitāb al-ʻIlm ('Book of Knowledge') in Islam. He concludes his position by stating that no one has the right to add or subtract anything to or from ʻimānīyāt. To include akhbār into ʻimānīyāt would be to introduce a bidʻa (innovation) in religion itself. "There is no question of it. There are only five ʻimānīyāt."[670] With this, Ghāmidī

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[665] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[666] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[667] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[668] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[669] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[670] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

epistemologically excludes the eschatological signs of Mahdī and Jesus from Islam's ʻimānīyāt.

2. The Arrival of the Mahdī

Ghāmidī pushes further against the claims about the Mahdī and Jesus on the basis of another epistemological question. Even though the Ḥadīth literature on the Mahdī and Jesus is large, are there any authoritative ḥadīths supporting their arrival, he asks? Ghāmidī uses classically accepted indicators of transmission chains (sanad) and faithfulness to the Qur'ān (matn) to measure Sunnī eschatological Ḥadīth literature for its reliability. After a formal process of scrutiny, variously described by him as tanqīḥ (critique) and riwayat kī taḥlīl (analysis of narrations). Ghāmidī concludes that this ḥadīth literature does not communicate the return of either figure.[671] At best, the ḥadīths specifically regarding the return of Jesus are objects of review (maḥall-e-nazar). The ḥadīth narrations on the Mahdī, however, Ghāmidī observes, "do not conform to the qawāʻid (standards) of ḥadīth criticism set forth by the muhaddithīn (founding scholars of Ḥadīth)."[672] He highlights that some of these narrations are weak (ẓaʻīf), and some are fabricated, while others are acceptable with regard to their chain of transmission but inform us of the coming of a generous caliph instead of a Mahdī. On his latter point, Ghāmidī elaborates that if carefully examined in close consultation with the qawāʻid (standards) of ḥadīth criticism, it becomes evident that the person these narrations refer to is the last caliph of the early history of the Muslims, ʻUmar ibn ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz (d. 720). "This prediction by the Prophet," Ghāmidī declares, "has, therefore, already materialized, word for word. One does not need to wait for a Mahdī now."[673]

While examining ḥadīth narrations on the Mahdī, Ghāmidī also reiterates the importance of another classical indicator of reliability that was originally recognised by muhaddithūn. It is the distinction between what is mutawātir (massively transmitted) in religion and mutawātir in ḥadīth. Ghāmidī highlights that classically, tawātur in religion has been distinguished with the term, tawātur-e-ṭabaqah (generational transmission): all Muslims, right from the days of the Prophet's community, have transferred knowledge and action from one generation to the next (naql al-kaffah ʻan al-kaffah). This process of transfer relates to religion in general, including the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Ghāmidī emphasises that this tawātur, which was formally classified by Imam Shafi'i (d. 820)[674], is different from what the muhaddithīn called tawātur-e-akhbār. The latter tawātur specifically relates to what the Shāfiʻī ḥadīth scholar Imām al-Nawawī (d. 1277))[675] classified as khabar-e-wāḥid: a report of what the Prophet Muḥammad said that can be traced back to one single authority. This report was not massively transmitted, from many people to many other people at the same time, but instead transmitted from a single person to a one or a few persons. According to Ghāmidī, Muslim scholars have

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[671] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[672] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 181.

[673] Ghāmidī, 181.

[674] Al-Shāfiʻī, *Musnad Al-Imām al-Shāfiʻī*.

[675] See, for example, Nawawī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, and Abū al-Khayr, *al-Minhāj fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-musammá ikhtiṣāran Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. and Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-asmā' wa-al-lughāt*.

traditionally applied the status of tawātur-e-ṭabaqah instead of tawātur-e-akhbār on ḥadīth narrations on the Mahdī, even though these narrations are fully recognised as khabar-e-wāḥid.[676] In other words, positive definitions of a scholarly genre are being conflated with, and even replacing, the descriptive definitions of religion itself.

> "So, there should not be any misunderstanding about the word tawātur. The tawātur that is under discussion here has no relation with that tawātur with which religion is transferred. It is a completely different concept, and it comes in the context of akhbār in the literature."[677]

Ghāmidī's diagnosis of this methodological error by Muslim scholars does hold water when the use of tawātur is examined in relation to the Mahdī. The Shāfi'ī scholar, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 1449), stated in his commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Fatḥ al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* ['Explanation of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī'] (1414), that the "ḥadīths for the appearance of the Mahdī has reached to the standard of *tawātur*".[678] Another Shāfi'ī scholar, al-Suyūṭī, classified the ḥadīth narrations on the Mahdī as "tawātur-e-ma'navī"[679]: ḥadīths in which the meaning is absolute. The Ḥanafī scholar 'Abd al-Ḥaqq "Muḥaddiṣ" al-Dihlawī (d. 1642) later wrote that "there are very many narrations regarding this which is almost approaching towards tawātur."[680] The salafī scholar Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d. 1839) subsequently confirmed this consensus even outside the traditional Sunnī madhāhib (schools of jurisprudence) by declaring that the narrations concerning the appearance of the Mahdī reach "the extent of tawātur."[681] This peculiar use of tawātur for ḥadīths on the Mahdī also appears in Ghāmidī's more immediate historical setting, not only in Kashmīrī and Thānvī's works but significantly, in the late Ẓiyā' al-Raḥmān 'Aẓmī (d. 2016) seminal collection of ḥadīths, *Jāmi' Al-Kāmil Fī Al-Ḥadīth Al-Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Shāmil Al-Murattaḥ 'alá Abwāb Al-Fiqh* ['The Complete Collection of Authentic Hadiths Arranged According to the Chapters of Jurisprudence'] (2016).[682]

Despite the clear difference between tawātur-e-ṭabaqah and tawātur-e-akhbār, why would Muslim scholars consistently conflate the two? Ghāmidī believes that one reason for this methodological error—or choice—is the phenomenon of ṭuruq: variations on a single ḥadīth. Ghāmidī's assessment confirms that ḥadīth literature on the Mahdī originates from seven reports from four Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad.[683] But he also identifies as many

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[676] *Western Sydney University (Parramatta Campus) Session with Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī.*

[677] *Western Sydney University (Parramatta Campus) Session with Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī.*

[678] Al-Asqalānī, *Fatḥ Al-Bārī Fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:*, 385.

[679] Suyūṭī, *'Arf Al-Wārdī Fī Akhbār al-Imām al-Mahdī.*

[680] Al-Dehlawī, *Akhbār Al-Akhyār Fī Aḥwāl al-Abrr*.

[681] Shawkānī, *Nayl Al-Awṭār Min Asrār Muntakhá al-Akhyā*.

[682] 'Aẓmī, *Jāmi' Al-Kāmil Fī al-Ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Shāmil al-Murattab 'alá Abwāb al-Fiqh*.

[683] *Western Sydney University (Parramatta Campus) Session with Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī.*

as 500 ṭuruq of ḥadīths on the Mahdī.[684] Because the overwhelming number of ṭuruq is so disproportionately larger than the number of original reports, Ghāmidī argues that Muslim scholars have appreciated the few-to-many transmission ḥadīths on the Mahdī as, or as equivalent to the many-to-many transmission ḥadīths. Ghāmidī's appraisal of tawātur and ṭuruq of ḥadīths on the Mahdī is particularly salient to Thānvī's criticism of Ibn Khaldūn's refutation in his *Muqaddimah* ['Prolegomenon'] (1377) of the authenticity of all ḥadīths concerning the Mahdī. Thānvī defended the belief in the Mahdī precisely by arguing the ṭuruq of ḥadīths on the Mahdī were numerous to the point of tawātur and that this numerous ṭuruq in fact represented an early consensus (ijmā') among Muslims about the authenticity of ḥadīths on the Mahdī.[685]

Ghāmidī's use of classical indicators—sanad, matn, tawātur—to test for ḥadīth reliability represents an attempt to revive the foundational scholarship of the muhaddithīn. As seen with the ḥadīths on the Mahdī, this revival notably occurs as a reaction against the late excesses in the mainstream Sunnī tradition's acceptance of unreliable ḥadīth. This is not dissimilar to 'Imādī, who also used classical indicators *Intiẓār-e-Mehdī-o-Masīḥ* to contest ḥadīth literature on the Mahdī. It is also not dissimilar to the "more stringent position"[686] against unreliable ḥadīths that has more typically emerged in movements of revival and reform during the early modern and modern periods. What differentiates Ghāmidī from other contemporary attempts, however, is that his use of foundational ḥadīth scholarship is part of his systematic effort to "fix" the "outer boundaries of authoritative ḥadīth".[687] As mentioned earlier, after he completed his ten-year translation and commentary of the Qur'ān, *Al-Bayān,* Ghāmidī launched the *'Ilm al-Nabī* project to revisit, and even restore, the boundaries of authoritative ḥadīth. This project is not only attempting to fix the boundary between reliable and unreliable ḥadīths, but also fix the boundaries between Ḥadīth, and the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In demarcating reliable ḥadīths from unreliable one, Ghāmidī seeks to position Ḥadīth as a frontline defence against false interpretations in religion. By clarifying the distinctions between Ḥadīth, Qur'ān, and Sunnah, Ghāmidī positions Ḥadīth as a non-categorical (dhannī) source of religion in contrast to the categorical (qaṭ'ī) and coeval sources of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Sunnī eschatology, in other words, constructs its representation of prophethood by employing Muḥammad's own words in the form of ḥadīth to resist the abolition of prophethood after his passing. This reliance on Ḥadīth as a scholarly genre in shaping representations of prophethood has led to the mainstream Sunnī tradition's acceptance of numerous unreliable narrations. Ghāmidī's systematic effort to fix the outer boundaries of authoritative ḥadīth, through his project *'Ilm al-Nabī*, directly addresses this issue by distinguishing between reliable and unreliable ḥadīths, thus limiting the use of unverified prophetic sayings in constructing these representations. By re-evaluating the authenticity of ḥadīths, Ghāmidī

[684] See, for example, in 'Aẓmī, *Jāmi' Al-Kāmil Fī al-Ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Shāmil al-Murattab 'alá Abwāb al-Fiqh*.

[685] Khaldūn and Rosenthal, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 184.

[686] Brown, 'Even If It's Not True It's True: Using Unreliable Hadīths in Sunnī Islam', 1.

[687] Melchert, 'Apocalypticism in Sunnī Ḥadīth', 267.

seeks to prevent the misuse of Muḥammad's words to sustain prophethood beyond his lifetime. His emphasis on Qur'ān and Sunnah as categorical (qaṭ'ī) sources of religion, in contrast to the non-categorical (dhannī) nature of Ḥadīth as a scholarly genre, is a clear indication of his intention to curb the proliferation of unreliable ḥadīths in constructing prophetic representations. This approach aligns with the more stringent positions against unreliable ḥadīths that have emerged in movements of revival and reform during the early modern and modern periods. Ghāmidī aims to ensure that only authenticated prophetic sayings contribute to the understanding of prophethood in Islamic tradition, effectively limiting the use of Muḥammad's words to perpetuate prophethood beyond his lifetime.

3. The Return of Jesus

In terms of its sanad and matn, the primary ḥadīth traditionally used to evidence the return of Jesus is considered far less refutable in its authenticity than the ḥadīths used in the case of the arrival of the Mahdī. In *Kitāb Ṣifat al-Nabī Ṣallāhu 'Alaihi Wasallam* ['Book of the Description of the Prophet—Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon Him'] of Al-Muwaṭṭa, Imām Mālik reported the following ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth:

> "Yahya related to me from Mālik from Nāfiʿ from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "I dreamt at night that I was at the Ka'bah, and I saw a dark man like the most handsome of dark men you have ever seen. He had hair reaching to between his ears and his shoulders like the most excellent of such hair that you have seen. He had combed his hair, and water was dripping from it. He was leaning on two men or the shoulders of two men doing ṭawāf around Ka'bah. I asked, 'Who is this?' It was said, 'al-Masīḥ ibn Maryam.' Then we were with a man with wiry hair and blind in his right eye, as if it was a floating grape. I asked, 'Who is this?' It was said to me, 'This is al-Masih ad-Al-Dajjāl'" (49:2).

Imām Mālik offers the most widely accepted and widely regarded, if not one of the earliest, formalizations of this ḥadīth. In his chapter on the Prophet Muḥammad's appearance, for example, Imām Bukhārī accepts and reproduces Imām Mālik's ḥadīth and its classification of ṣaḥīḥ.[688]

As shown above, Imām Mālik attributes this ḥadīth to Nāfi', who related it from 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, who in turn related it directly from the Prophet Muḥammad. Within ḥadīth scholarship, the sanad of an-Nāfi' and 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar is called Silsilat al-Dhahab, 'The Golden Chain'. In other words, the ḥadīth is authentic and securely transmitted to Muslims

[688] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (77:119): "Allah's Messenger said, "Today I saw myself in a dream near the Ka'bah. I saw a whitish brown man, the handsomest of all brown men you might ever see. He had the most beautiful Limma (hair hanging down to the earlobes) you might ever see. He had combed it and it was dripping water; and he was performing the Ṭawāf around the Ka'bah leaning on two men or on the shoulders of two men. l asked, "Who is this?" It was said. "Messiah, the son of Mary." Suddenly I saw a curly-haired man, blind in the right eye which looked like a protruding out grape. I asked, "Who is this?" It was said, "He is Masiah ad-*Al-Dajjāl*."

through this chain of transmission. While the Prophet Muḥammad did not offer an interpretation of this ḥadīth, Muslims have traditionally interpreted it in light of other ḥadīths to conclude that this is a representation of the second coming of Jesus and the appearance of the Al-Dajjāl. For example, in his book about the interpretation of Imām Mālik's Al-Muwaṭṭa ['The Well-Trodden Path'], Al-Tamhīd limā fī al-Muwaṭṭaʾ min al-Maʿānī al-Asānīd ['Commentary on al-Muwaṭṭa'], the Mālikite scholar Abū ʿUmar Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 1071) concludes the following: "In this ḥadīth—Allah knows best—there is evidence that Jesus will descend on shrines and will make tawāf (circumambulation) around the Ka'bah."[689] This interpretation treats the narrative in the ḥadīth as an actual event, and therefore, as a sign of the Day of Judgment. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's interpretation is indeed a widely produced interpretation by major Muslim traditions, including the Mālikī school of thought and the wider Sunnī tradition.[690] It follows that the return of Jesus is regarded as a pivotal sign of the Day of Judgment.

Within Ghāmidī's contemporary settings, Mawdūdī most prominently interprets this ḥadīth in support of the traditional Sunnī eschatology. In addition to sharing this interpretation in his translation and commentary, Mawdūdī specifically writes an appendix (zamīmah) in *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* to argue that this ḥadīth needs to be reviewed in light of the wider, albeit 'weaker', ḥadīth literature. To make his argument, Mawdūdī evaluated how the unreliable but prolific ḥadīth literature supported the second coming of Jesus. It should be noted that Mawdūdī's scholarly contribution is not conventional. It departs from previous scholarship by taking, in the framework of Ghāmidī, an investigative (muḥaqqiqnah) approach rather than a synthetic (mu'allimnah) one. Ghāmidī frequently acknowledges Mawdūdī's refusal to straightforwardly study and reproduce standard exegeses on Jesus. Ghāmidī, for example, recounts a visit by Aḥmadī missionaries to Mawdūdī's home:

> "They came in and started their discussion. They asked him 'Maulānā, some people say that Jesus is alive in heaven.' Maulānā [Mawdūdī] said: 'Alhamdulillāh!' They replied, 'No, no, some people say he is dead'. Maulānā [Mawdūdī] then said 'Inna Lillāhi wa inna ilayhi raji'ūn.'"[691]

Despite his acceptance of the return of Jesus, Mawdūdī's critical exegesis offers rich information to Ghāmidī, who, as will be shown below, utilises *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* to make the critical case for the death of Jesus.

Ghāmidī believes Imām Mālik's ḥadīth to be authentic, by fully acknowledging 'The Golden Chain'. But Ghāmidī refuses to rely upon other, 'weaker', ḥadīths to interpret it. In *Mīzān*, he

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[689] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Al-Tamhīd Limā Fī al-Muwattā' Min al-Ma'Ānī Wa al-Asānīd (Commentary on al-Muwatta')*.

[690] Ibn 'Abd al-Barr himself recognises the dominant status of this interpretation in his subsequent book *Al-Istidhkaar (sharh al-Muwatta):* "[Based on this *ḥadīth*], the Ahl al-Sunnah believe in the descent of Jesus." See: Ibn 'Abd al-Barr.

[691] *Western Sydney University (Parramatta Campus) Session with Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī.*

states that the return of Jesus cannot be derived from this authentic ḥadīth because the other ḥadīths used in this derivation to contextualise the ḥadīth, as Mawdūdī most prominently did, are not reliable. These ḥadīths, Ghāmidī states, do not conform to the standards of criticism set forth by ḥadīth scholars (muhaddithīn): "Some of them are weak (ẓa'īf) and some fabricated."[692] Instead, he seeks to deploy a high-fidelity interpretation of the ḥadīth with a close reading of its language. At the very start, Ghāmidī notes that the ḥadīth unambiguously specifies what the Prophet Muḥammad had seen to be a vision: "I was shown a vision that I was near the Ka'bah [qur'āni-l-lailati 'inda-l-Ka'bah]."[693] Ghāmidī asserts that because the ḥadīth is about a vision, not a literal event. So, the ḥadīth's narrative cannot used to speak of an event that occurred.

Ghāmidī's argument is based on his systematic account of visions within prophethood that he most prominently applies in the case of his responses to al-Isrā' wa al-Mi'rāj (The Night Journey and Ascent) of Muḥammad'.[694] In this account, Ghāmidī claims that what happens in a vision is never a literal event in history. Ghāmidī builds this principle claim by first defining what a prophet's vision is. Based on his exegesis of Sūrah al-Shūrā's explanation of how revelation is sent to prophets, he states that God speaks with prophets in two forms of speech (mukhāṭabāt). [695] One form of speech is the prophet's revelation (waḥy). In addition to revelation, God also speaks with prophets through visions (ru'yah). God shows prophets visions, sometimes when they are awake and sometimes when they are asleep.[696] The purpose of these visions is to communicate information that cannot be described, and instead, needs to be shown. A prophet's vision, therefore, is always allegorical: a symbolic representation (tamsīl) that conveys a meaning not explicitly set forth in the narrative of the vision. A vision has a meaning that requires a prophet to participate in an interpretive process to achieve comprehension. Crucially, prophets' visions are always shown in relation to significant events either in the past or the future.[697]

According to Ghāmidī, the ḥadīth reported by Imām Mālik, and later by Bukhārī, recounts the Prophet's vision. It cannot be read literally, he cautions.[698] As the communication of an allegory, the ḥadīth requires interpretation (muhtāj-e-ta'bīr). So, what is the allegory in the ḥadīth about? Ghāmidī fleetingly explains that it is an allegory of what will happen to the community (ummah) of the Prophet Muḥammad. It shows a sequence of future events that the Muslims will face after the death of the Prophet. The vision compacts centuries' worth of events, from the conquest of Constantinople to the appearance of the Dajjāl.[699] Ghāmidī

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[692] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*.

[693] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[694] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 34-37 - The Night Journey (Isra and Miraj)*.

[695] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[696] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[697] Ghāmidī explains visions with the example of the prophet Yusuf. In Sūrah Yusuf, the prophet is shown the vision that 11 stars, and the Sun and the Moon are bowing to him. The prophet interprets this dream and shares it with her father, the prophet Yaqub.

[698] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[699] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

concludes, consequently, that while this ḥadīth is not inauthentic, it has been interpreted and explained incorrectly within Sunnī eschatology. While the ḥadīth describes a vision, its allegorical information has been perceived as an account of literal events. Without the interpretation (ta'bīr) of its allegorical information, people accept its narrative as a prediction of actual events: signs instead of symbols. This reinforces Ghāmidī's wider epistemological case that the return of Jesus cannot be considered an article of faith ('aqīdah). *By claiming that this event does not exist at all, it is no longer an event to believe in.*

Ghāmidī's more substantive case against the return of Jesus is developed within his exegesis of Qur'ān. His examination distinctly focuses on not what the Qur'ān does not say about Jesus but how completely it does. Ghāmidī highlights the completeness of this account is as follows:

> "The Qur'ān does not mention Jesus once or twice. We see him mentioned in Sūrah Maryam, Sūrat Āli 'Imrān, Sūrah an-Nisā', and Sūrah al-Mā'idah. In so many sūrahs. These variously discuss his personality, his birth, his message, what miracles he performed, and the reaction of his community. The Qur'ān also discusses what God did to him in the end. If all of these are discussed, then why was his return not mentioned?"[700]

Ghāmidī extends this specific line of argument while he evaluates the Qur'ānic account of the Day of Judgement (qiyāmah):

> "The turmoil on the Day of Judgement (qiyāmah) is an exceptional subject of the Qur'ān. When will it come? What will happen when it comes? What will happen before it comes? All these things are mentioned in so many places in the Qur'ān. But why not the return of Jesus? Surely, the return of a great prophet is not a commonplace event." [701]

This is a crucial point for Ghāmidī because his entire hermeneutics argues that everything—inclusions as well as omissions of information—matters in the Qur'ān. It is highly purposeful. Moreover, Ghāmidī also regards the Qur'ān itself as the inzār-e-qiyāmah (warning for the Day of Judgement). The omission of the return of Jesus, an occurrence so central to the Day of Judgement if true, would not be possible. Ghāmidī, accordingly, concludes: "There is not even a trace (sha'ibah) of this incident in the Qur'ān. We cannot find it in the Qur'ān from beginning to end. Can our intellect or knowledge be satisfied with such silence (khamoshī par mutma'īn)?" [702]

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[700] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[701] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[702] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

Ghāmidī completes his case against the return of Jesus by insisting that Jesus did die. He develops the account of Jesus's death intra-textually, focus on the covariance and imminent features of the Qur'ānic text. He, therefore, characteristically looking at two key verses side by side: 55 in Sūrah Āli 'Imrān (3:55) and 177 in Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:177). Sūrah Āli 'Imrān sees God tell Jesus how his prophethood will come to an end:

> "O, Jesus! I have decided to give death to you and raise you to Myself and cleanse you from these people who have denied [you]. I shall make those who follow you superior to those who reject faith till the Day of Judgement. Then to Me you shall all return. So, at that time I shall give My verdict in what you have been differing in." (3:55)

Sūrah al-Mā'idah reports a conversation that will take place between God and Jesus on the Day of Judgement, and discloses what will happen to Jesus and his followers. God asks Jesus why the Christians went astray by making him and his mother Mary divine. Jesus replies in defence of any charge of self-deification:

> "Never did I say to them except what You commanded me to do: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord,' and I was a witness over them while I lived with them. When You gave death to me, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness over all things." (5:117)

Nowhere in this conversation, Ghāmidī points out, is anything said between God and Jesus that suggests that he came into this world a second time. "In such a case," Ghāmidī elaborates, "Jesus should have responded by saying that he knew what happened with them and that a little earlier he had gone to warn them of their grievous faults."[703] The silence, as before, is significant for Ghāmidī.

Ghāmidī advances his exegetical case by juxtaposing verse 177 in Sūrah al-Mā'idah with verse 56 in Sūrah Āli 'Imrān in a specific sequence. Based on the exegetical rationale that a primary verse can be understood by any parallel verse that offers secondary details and not vice versa, Ghāmidī points out the correct order (tadrīj) needed to understand these two verses together is that verse 55 in Sūrah Āli 'Imrān offers an abridgement (ijmā'l) of the account of Jesus's death while verse 177 in Sūrah al-Mā'idah offers the details (tafṣīl) of this account. Examined in this order, the verses complete the following account: in order to protect him from the actions of disbelievers, Jesus was given his death (mutawaffīkā), and then his body was returned (rāfi'ukā) to God.

Ghāmidī's teacher and predecessor, Iṣlaḥī, interprets the word tawaffā in verse 55 in Sūrah Āli 'Imrān traditionally, as 'ascent'. In *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* ['Pondering Over the Qur'ān'] (1980), he writes that:

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[703] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

> "The occasion is one of glad tidings and promise of help from God to Jesus and his disciples. The shared experience of prophets is when their nations intend to kill them, then God assures them of His help and protection. Here too, if you glance at the verse, you will realize that the whole verse is about giving the glad tidings and the promise for help."[704]

Based on this reading, Iṣlaḥī questions whether the verse can be read as God telling Jesus that, "I am going to give you death."[705] Giving death is the very thing which the Israelites were seeking to inflict upon Jesus, and thus this does not appear to qualify as "glad tidings and promise of help" to Iṣlaḥī[706]. "The only difference", Iṣlaḥī concludes, "would have been that the death would not have been at the hands of the Israelites but given naturally."[707] Iṣlaḥī essentially argues that interpreting the word tawaffā as 'death' instead of 'ascent' is not consistent with the verse's subject of God's blessings and help.

Ghāmidī disagrees with Iṣlaḥī, by highlighting a methodological oversight in Iṣlaḥī's interpretation: "Iṣlaḥī did not pay attention to the meaning of rāfiʿuka ilayya. If he had paid attention to the fact that when rāfiʿuka ilayya comes after mutawaffīkā, then it implies that the body will be lifted by God."[708] Jesus was given death before anyone could kill him; his body was lifted before anyone could mutilate it. This, Ghāmidī emphasises, is the blessing and help—bashārat—that God promised to Jesus.[709] This reading is consistent with Ghāmidī's specific claim that while rasūls are given death, they are a special category of prophets.[710] They never die at the hands of the people that they were sent to. According to divine law, God protects these prophets. For them to complete their mission, their opponents cannot harm them in any way. God necessarily shields these prophets from this evil.

Ghāmidī defends his difference with Iṣlaḥī by arguing that Iṣlaḥī himself did not use his own methodology:

> "The appreciation of the language, the understanding of a particular word, the composition of a sentence, the style of the Qur'ān: I learned all of these from

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[704] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[705] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[706] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[707] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[708] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[709] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 31 - Return of Jesus*.

[710] Like his two predecessors, Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlaḥī (1904-1997) and Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī (1863-1930), Ghāmidī distinguishes *nabī* and *rasūl* by virtue of whether they do or do not deliver the event of God's direct and final judgment after delivering God's warning. *Rusul* do while *anbiyā* do not. This differs from the traditionally accepted positions that states that *nabī* does not receive a *kitāb* (revealed text) or a *sharīa* (revealed law) while the *rasūl* does.

> him [Iṣlaḥī]. Whatever I am doing here is purely an application of his own methodology."[711]

In his broader response to those arguing that tawaffā (death) does not refer to the standard meaning of death but to 'ascent' instead, Ghāmidī points out that a qualifier (qārīnah) would need to accompany tawaffā for this non-standard meaning to hold. Moreover, this qualifier would need to appear from inside the text, not the outside.[712] This is an epistemologically important observation for Ghāmidī. By bringing in qualifiers from outside the Qur'ān to interpret these verses, he observes, Muslim scholars introduce tawīl (interpretation) into a situation that strictly requires tarjumah (translation). In Ghāmidī's methodology, verses should always be first straightforwardly translated on the basis of known (ma'rūf) Arabic, without the need for support from external resources. Ghāmidī believes this is particularly so in the case of verse 55 in Sūrah Āli 'Imrān and verse 177 in Sūrah al-Mā'idah, both of which he regards straightforwardly accessible to translation. It can be argued, therefore, that the debate about the return of Jesus is a hermeneutical fight about the scope of translation (tarjumah) and interpretation (tawīl). On the one hand, the interpretation (tawīl) of orthodox Sunnī scholarship has traditionally interpreted the Qur'ānic verses on Jesus with istimbāṭī istidlāl (inferential argumentation), a diachronic approach that relies on external context, such as the occasions of Revelation and Ḥadīth, to understand the meaning of the verses. This method places emphasis on the historical or spiritual contexts in which the verses were revealed or even later transposed. On the other hand, the translation (tarjumah) of Ghāmidī seeks to interpret these verses with naṣ ka istidlāl (textual argumentation), a synchronic approach that focuses on the Qur'ānic text itself without considering external resources. This method emphasizes the immediate features of the text and relies upon straightforward translation based on known Arabic, seeking to uncover meaning without resorting to external qualifiers or context.

4. Jesus and the Lost Stages of Prophethood

In addition to, and as a direct result of, his close examination of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth on the question of the reappearance of Jesus, Ghāmidī builds a big-picture reading that provides different information to answer the same problem. He argues that traditional efforts to interpret evidence on the return of Jesus have failed to recognise and access the style (uṣlūb) of the language that communicates what would happen after Jesus died. This failure, he concludes, has led to two serially interrelated erroneous views. Firstly, Jesus's prophetic mission remains incomplete. Secondly, Jesus will come again to complete this mission. In other words, the return of Jesus is seen as the completion of his prophetic mission with the people he was sent to, the Israelites. In the prevalent traditional Sunnī conceptualizations of Jesus's return, it is argued that he would return to the Israelites to deliver God's justice upon them for rejecting him as God's prophet. Despite the current absence of justice, these conceptualizations still situate the Israelites in a post-exilic state which will only end when justice is delivered during the eschaton. Ghāmidī contests this conceptualization, while

[711] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 26 - Arrival of Mahdī.*

[712] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 26 - Arrival of Mahdī.*

elucidating at least three different passages of the Qur'ān, two of which were examined earlier.[713]

As part of intergenerational exegeses of biblical intertexts characteristic of his school of thought and largely unprecedented in the Urdu-speaking Muslim tradition,[714] he additionally elucidates biblical text. Ghāmidī argues both the Qur'ān and the Bible share a key stylistic feature that traditional Sunnī conceptualizations have overlooked. This is the literary representation of divine punishment (ā'zāb kī tā'bīr) in these revelatory texts. In the case of biblical text specifically, Ghāmidī contends that biblical exegesis has traditionally failed to recognise the rhetorical style (balāghat ke asālīb) used while referring to divine punishment. Ghāmidī argues that the promised second coming of Jesus at the end of historical time is in fact the promised reckoning of the Israelites at the end of his prophetic mission. Ghāmidī most strongly conveys this argument in his examination of the 'The Parable of the Fig Tree' (Matthew 24:32-35) and 'The Necessity for Watchfulness' (Matthew 24:36-43). In these contiguous passages, Jesus says to his people:

> "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, know/be aware that it is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven nor the Son but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and

[713] The third Qur'ānic passage that Ghāmidī examines is in Sūrah Nisa (4:159): "Every one of the People of the Book will definitely believe in it before his death. And on the Day of Judgment, it will be a witness against them." ("*Wa immin ahlil kitaabi illa la yu minnana bihi qabla mautihi wa yaumal qiyamati yakunu alaihim shaheedah"*). According to the traditional interpretation, found in its earliest form in the exegesis by Abū Hurayrah (d. 681), this verse is understood as follows: even though God ascended Jesus, his truth will become evident to all the People of the Book when he returns to this world. There are two key conditions placed in this interpretation: Jesus has to return, and all the People of the Book—at the time of his ascent to his return—will become believers. Ghāmidī picks apart the later condition in order to also relieve the first condition. He notes that insisting on the second condition means that all the People of the Book that have departed from this world till the Day of Judgement will also be brought back to life and to be physically present to witness Jesus upon his return. This incredible resurrection of people seems untenable to Ghāmidī, since these events will immediately be following by the Day of Judgement in which people will again be raised from the dead. Otherwise, this interpretation does not hold ground. Ghāmidī raises a second, more reliable possibility: "the words of the Qur'ān are '*immin ahlil kitaab'*: 'each one from among the People of the Book'"[713]. In other words, "everyone" of the People of the Book means "each one out of" the People of the Book that the Qur'ānis addressing. Ghāmidī further points out that these can only be the People of the Book that the Qur'ānis addressing and not the ones before the Day of Judgement because that is attribution is not stated in the verse.

[714] This exegesis is a significant feature of Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021., and also important precedents in Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān*.

> one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."[715]

Ghāmidī says that these "ḥadīths"[716]—which he considers an example of the "beautiful … allegories"[717] spoken by Jesus—are declarations of the second of two possible outcomes that may occur in the last stage of prophethood, 'reward and punishment' (Jazā-o-Sazā).[718] Because Jesus did not have the necessary worldly power to deliver justice himself, God directly punished the people who rejected him. It is, in other words, an application of the Qur'ānic principle (uṣūl) of reward and punishment (Jazā-o-Sazā) that occurs after the departure of a rasūl. In this biblical passage, Jesus is seen to be saying that this reckoning will take place after him, but at a time—"day and hour"—that nobody has knowledge of. Ghāmidī notes that the Prophet Muḥammad, like Jesus, told his people the reckoning will happen, but he did not know when, and whether directly from the heavens or indirectly, by his hands: "Whereby Allah should torment you, whether from Himself or at our hands." By saying that "I will come", Jesus is allegorically telling his people that God's punishment (*deynūniyat*)—*not he*—will come to community the Israelites he was sent to. The same allegorical reference of "I will come" is used in the case of the Prophet Muḥammad. In Sūrah Hashar, the People of the Book are warned that if they opposed the Prophet, their God will come: "God will come and will uproot them from their base". In this prophethood, this 'coming' occurred indirectly, with Muḥammad's worldly power over the Quraysh and the Jews and the Christians. Ghāmidī points out other Qur'ānic examples of the very same allegorical reference of "I will come" made to either prophetic outcome: Prophet Lot and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Prophet Saleh, and the tribe(s) of Thamud, and Prophet Hud and the people of 'Aad. Ghāmidī points out that Jesus clearly communicates this uṣūl with the example of the Prophet Noah.[719] "What had happened in the days of Noah?" Ghāmidī asks, "The punishment came. The same form of punishment will come that came in the time of Noah, [when] the instant the Deluge came and swept everything in its way."[720] Jesus makes this form of punishment indistinguishable from himself by using the substitutive representation of "Son of Man" for "punishment". The "beautiful style" of this representation, Ghāmidī says, "has, unfortunately, not been understood. [As a result,] the belief in the second coming of Jesus also emerged among the Christians."[721]

Ghāmidī is able to utilize biblical passages in his methodology as he believes that the Bible can serve interpretive purposes. The defining factor in his approach is the recognition of the same "beautiful style" of prophetic apocalyptic literature in the Bible that is uniformly

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[715] Translation adapted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1971) prepared by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

[716] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[717] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[718] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 51–56.

[719] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[720] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[721] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

present and structured within the Qur'ān. This is very close to what Todd Lawson calls the "apocalyptic substrate"[722] of the Qur'ān. "The Qur'ān is … an apocalypse,"[723] he observes. The Bible for Ghāmidī, to frame it in Lawson's words, shares this substrate wherever it has retained the original apocalyptic narrative of Prophet Jesus. This overlap allows Ghāmidī to engage with the biblical text, drawing connections and insights between the two scriptures while maintaining the Qur'ān's status as the most complete and well-preserved benchmark of the divine voice. By identifying and focusing on this shared stylistic element, Ghāmidī demonstrates the intertextual relationship between the Qur'ān and the Judeo-Christian scriptures, bridging the gap between these religious texts in a unique and insightful manner. In other words, he inverts the standard historical-critical intertextual relationship by relying upon the Qur'ān to understand and utilise Judeo-Christian scriptures.

So, what happened after the death of Jesus? Ghāmidī explains that after his death, God's punishment of the Israelites who rejected him came in the form of the Roman offensive that led to their expulsion from Jerusalem. This "incident" was no "ordinary happening", Ghāmidī claims.[724] In light of the Qur'ānic principle (uṣūl) of reward and punishment (Jazā-o-Sazā), Ghāmidī further explains that since the Israelites were monotheists, their punishment was not death but subordination at the hands of the people that believed in Jesus. Ghāmidī cites Mawdūdī's exegesis of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl in *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* to describe God's punishment of subordination:

> "Ultimately, the Roman Empire quelled the rebellion with decisive military action. In the aftermath, divine law took effect, and in 70 C.E., Titus seized Jerusalem by force. This event led to a widespread massacre, with 133,000 people killed and 66,000 captured as slaves. Thousands were sent to labour in Egyptian mines or shipped to various cities to become gladiators, facing wild beasts in amphitheatres and colosseums, or serving as human shields in sword-fighting games. The conquerors claimed all the tall and beautiful women for themselves, and Jerusalem's city and places of worship were utterly destroyed. For the next 2,000 years, the Jews of Jerusalem remained powerless, their influence diminished. The Grand Temple of Jerusalem was never rebuilt. Even when Emperor Hadrian eventually repopulated the city, renaming it Aelia [Capitolina], the Jews were not allowed entry for a significant period."[725]

"This was the punishment that befell them after Jesus," Ghāmidī concludes. "This was his prophecy: "You are casting me off, but I am not gone. I shall return. You will be punished according to the divine law that exists for prophets."[726]

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[722] Lawson, 'Duality, Opposition and Typology in the Qur'an'.

[723] Lawson, 36.

[724] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

[725] Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm Al-Qurʾān*. See also: Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm Al-Qur'ān*.

[726] *Response to 23 Questions - Part 33 - Return of Jesus*.

Ghāmidī accordingly argues that God has already delivered justice, and therefore, the reckoning of Jesus's prophetic apocalypse, to the Israelites. This, as explained above, occurs soon after Jesus is given death. It follows that since the prophetic apocalypse has already been delivered to the Israelites who denied Jesus, there is no conforming need for him to return. Instead, his mission has been concluded. The final reckoning of his prophethood, which escalated from Itmām-e-Ḥujjat into led to Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat and Jazā-o-Sazā, had in fact been completed. As shown earlier in his Qur'ānic exegesis, Ghāmidī reinforces this conclusion with the autobiographical chronology that Jesus reflexively constructs when speaking with God on the Day of Judgement. Ghāmidī further clarifies that any other tribulations faced by the community of the Israelites are the result of another divine law that covenantally applies to all of God's chosen people, warner-communities as the thesis classifies them. Since this warner-community is covenantally tasked to represent God's truth in this world, it can be directly rewarded or punished in this world depending on whether it upholds or abandons His truth.[727] The Israelites, therefore, are in a post-exilic state because they have abandoned their responsibility. The Israelites' covenant was established with their first Prophet Moses. The last divine intervention to revive their eventually abandoned covenant was made by their last prophet, Jesus. He was sent by God in an urgent and final bid to reanimate this covenant. Ghāmidī points out that it was the urgent nature of this bid that led Jesus to not marry, and to perform miracles that broke the conventions of this world in striking ways. This is precisely the abandoned covenant that the Qur'ān responds to in the sūrah pair of Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, when it covenantally activates Muḥammad's community, the Ishmaelites, as the new warner-community. Introducing the sūrah pair in *Al-Bayān*, Ghāmidī explains it as follows:

> "Both these Sūrahs form a pair concerning their subject matter. In the first Sūrah, the truth is communicated decisively to the Jews, while in the second one, after the truth is conveyed conclusively to the Christians, the establishment of a new Muslim Ummah is announced. Although the Prophet (sws) and the idolaters are addressed in both Surahs, their primary addressees are the People of the Book, and subsequently, the Muslims. The subject matter reveals that these Surahs were revealed after the migration to Medina when a Muslim state had been formally established, and the Prophet (sws) was decisively communicating the truth to the People of the Book while spiritually purifying the Muslims and separating them from the disbelievers. The theme of Sūrah al-Baqarah is the decisive communication of the truth to the People of the Book, the establishment of a new Ummah, and a discussion of its obligations. The theme of Sūrah Āli 'Imrān is the decisive communication of the truth to the People of the Book, particularly the Christians, the establishment of a new Ummah in its place, and the spiritual purification of this Ummah, separating it from the disbelievers."

The Israelites, have of course not been replaced, Ghāmidī argues, and they can be set free of this punishment if they restored their covenant with God.[728]

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[727] *Khudā Ke Faisle*.

[728] *Khudā Ke Faisle*.

5. Sunnī Eschatology's Representation of Prophethood

As initially mentioned, it can be argued that Sunnī eschatology offers a distinct representation of prophethood, corresponding to various stages of prophetic apocalypse within a single sequence. This sequence involves the creation and death of a singular reckoner-community, which leaves in its wake an apocalyptic milieu continuous with the Day of Judgement. The encyclopaedia entries on the appearance of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus, therefore, can be read as a genre-driven portrayal of a series of events that lead to the creation and death of a terminal reckoner-community. The appearance of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus serve as revelatory shocks, marking significant turning points in human history. As the entry on 'Ẓuhūr-e-Mahdī' states, "The Mahdī will establish justice and tolerance in the world, and he will give corporal punishment to people till the time they do not tend toward God i.e., truth."[729] These events lead to the transformation of the world through the establishment of justice. Following this, the Mahdī and Jesus work together to separate the good from the evil, creating a morally sincere community that confronts the Al-Dajjāl and his followers. This separation of good from evil is evident in the entry on the return of Jesus, which describes how Jesus will "break the cross, kill the pig, will revoke jizyah, and will give the da'wah (message) of Islam to all people."[730] This community, guided by the Mahdī and Jesus, then embarks on the final reckoning of evil forces, leading to the defeat of the Al-Dajjāl and the establishment of peace and tranquillity on Earth. In this apocalyptic milieu, the world prepares for God's Day of Judgment, with Muslims uniting under the leadership of the Mahdī and Jesus. This unity is exemplified in the entry on the return of Jesus, where it is mentioned that "Imam Mahdī will retreat from his position of imām of the prayer and will offer him [Jesus] the imāmat."[731] By defeating the Al-Dajjāl and his followers, the morally good community serves as a catalyst, arguably ontological as well as salvific, for the ultimate judgment by God. The representation of prophethood in Sunnī eschatology can, therefore, be formally structured as follows. (See also Figure below)

1. First Sequence: Creation of the Terminal Reckoner-Community

   During the first sequence of the community's creation into the reckoner-community, corresponds to the following representation of prophetic apocalypse:

   1.1 Stage 3: Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (Shock: Disclosures of God's Truth): The community experiences shock, caused by the appearance of the Mahdī and Jesus, disclosing divine truth to provoke a permanent transformation (transfiguration) in the community.

   1.2 Stage 4 - Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (Apocalypse: Separation of Good from Evil): The fourth stage involves the separation between believers, the Muslims, and non-believers, especially the Al-Dajjāl and his followers, in anticipation of God's reckoning.

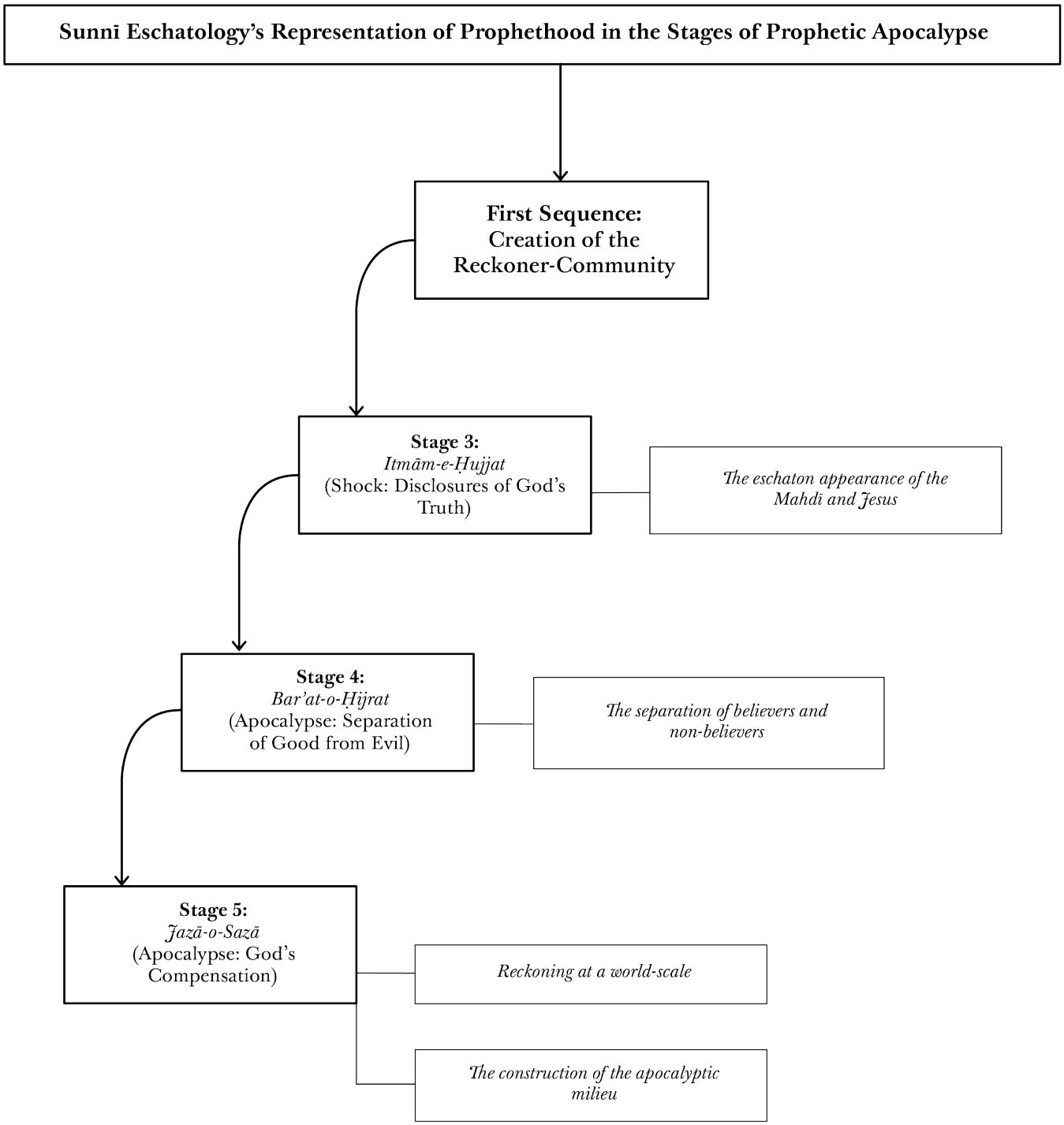
[729] 'Ẓuhūr-i Mahdī'.

[730] ''Īsá Kī Āmad-e-Sanwī'.

[731] ''Īsá Kī Āmad-e-Sanwī'.

1.3 Stage 5: Jazā-o-Sazā (Apocalypse: God's Reckoning): The community delivers a reckoning at the scale of the world, with the death of the old world and the birth of a new one. The resulting transformation is deeper, however, offering not only salvific compensation to the members of the terminal reckoner-community but ontologically rupturing the everyday reality of the world in order to construct an apocalyptic one.

To summarize, the representation of prophethood in Sunnī Eschatology arguably corresponds to stages 3, 4, and 5 within a singular sequence of prophetic apocalypse.



6. Conclusion

This chapter retraced Ghāmidī's refutation of eschatological beliefs within the Sunnī tradition, spotlighting his case against the appearances of the Mahdī and Jesus. Within the context of contemporary South Asia, Ghāmidī's case is arguably epistemologically and methodologically more systematic than other refutational attempts. It stands out in contrast to the model of Iqbāl, 'Imādī and Kāndhalvī because he participates in but is not limited to the criticism of ḥadīth literature on the Mahdī and Jesus. Ghāmidī advances to also implement Qur'ānic exegesis, notably excluding signs and faith and also offering a closely-read account of Jesus prophethood and death. Ghāmidī's use of the Qur'ān is not additive, however. He seeks to diagnose and solve epistemological and methodological inconsistencies shaping the relationship between ḥadīths and the Qur'ān and Sunnah. His efforts to mediate the scope of Qur'ānic translation and interpretation, insist on the allegorical status of prophetic visions, and articulate the difference between the transmissions of Qur'ān and Sunnah and the ḥadīths, are all representative of his programme to definitively demarcate the authority of Ḥadīth in Islam.

A further distinctive aspect of his refutational attempt is how he integrates biblical intertexts to advance his case. Instead of refuting the Bible, he reinterprets it in much the same way as he reinterprets the Qur'ān: both, in language and message, are above all apocalyptic. This is clearly seen when he understands the eschatological signs in the Bible instead as apocalyptic warnings. Crucially, in contrast to traditional Sunnī accounts of the Mahdī and Jesus, Ghāmidī's engagement with the Bible is cooperative, not hostile. He recognises the Bible as a source of reliable knowledge, much like authentic ḥadīth is. Ghāmidī's stance on the Bible is not arbitrary but as indicated earlier, the direct result of a century-long tradition of Urdu-language exegesis that deliberately seeks to incorporate biblical intertexts. But what separates Ghāmidī even within this tradition is that rather than incorporating biblical intertexts as a matter of practice, he incorporates biblical intertexts as a matter of principle (uṣūl).

A major conclusion that Ghāmidī draws out from his refutation is that traditional Sunnī eschatology appropriates the last stage of prophethood: divine punishment. This chapter thus argues that this eschatology mobilises the figures of the Mahdī and Jesus to especially convene a 'reckoner-community' at the end of historical time. Both figures reanimate the struggling warner-community of the Ishmaelites into a powerful 'reckoner-community'. This warner-community is not only transformed by undergoing the three prophetic stages of Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā, but then also implements these stages upon the rest of the world, much like the Prophet Muḥammad's Companions. This, based on the previous chapter's analysis, bears significant resemblance to Mawdūdī's reckoner-community in the post-prophetic context. There are two key differences, however. Firstly, unlike Mawdūdī's reckoner-community—which is perpetual—the reckoner-community of traditional Sunnī eschatology exists within a specific time and place. Secondly, instead of being the result of an active—revolutionary—investment of human labour that shapes history, the reckoner-community of traditional Sunnī eschatology only happens with God's intervention in history. These two differences—of frequency and praxis respectively—draw out a broader difference. While Mawdūdī remodels the traditional reckoner-community of the prophetic context for post-prophetic purposes, traditional Sunnī eschatology reproduces the

traditional reckoner-community within post-prophetic history. Mawdūdī's model of the perpetual and historically active reckoner-community is palpable in his account of the Mahdī. Mawdūdī, who as highlighted earlier, also believed in the Mahdī and Jesus, claimed that the Mahdī would not be distinguishable from the Muslims' khalīfah. Performatively, the Mahdī would establish the Islamic system (iqāmat al-dīn) exactly as would a khalīfah.

> "I estimate that the person will be a modern leader of the times. He will have a deep insight into all the prevailing sciences of the day. He will possess a proper understanding of all the important daily laws. He will have complete authority in mental leadership, political strategy, and war-time expertise. He will be so much more modern than the others that I fear the maulvī and Sufīs will be first to raise a hue and cry…. Those Muslims who believe in Imam Mahdī … think that Imam Mahdī will be some kind of future maulvī or Sufī who will suddenly emerge from a certain madrasah or khānqāh with a tasbīḥ in his hand. Upon arrival, he will announce "I am Mahdī". [732] It would only be after his death that the Mahdī would be given his eschatological title.[733]

Mawdūdī, therefore, directly carries over his perpetual reckoner-community from politics into eschatology. In other words, the reckoner-community of the Mahdī and Jesus is a continuation, or instalment, of an perpetual series of reckoner-communities of the faithful.

In addition to proposing further developments in the prophethood of reckoner-community in Islamic discourse, the present examination of Ghāmidī's refutational literature about the Mahdī and Jesus also assists in making two further analytically useful observations. The first is that, despite positioning the Mahdī and reducing Jesus to non-prophetic figures, the resulting transformations that traditional Sunnī eschatology describes are unique to risālat. This chapter correspondingly argues that traditional Sunnī eschatology does re-mobilise divine law (sunnatullāh) for prophethood from its natural apocalyptic settings to an unfamiliar eschatological setting. This is, therefore, an expansion of divine law (sunnatullāh) for prophethood, where the law remains eternal but exclusive (k̲h̲āṣ), but the criterion of exclusivity is revised to include non-prophetic figures, prophetic figures of non-prophetic status, and post-prophetic communities. This expansion of divine law is, building upon the previous chapters, indicative of wider attempts in Islamic discourse to overcome the 'ordinariness' of religious life with religious genre of the extraordinary. In the case of traditional Sunnī eschatology, the source of imagination for this religious genre of the extraordinary is especially the Prophet Muḥammad and specifically prophethood.

[732] Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī, *Tajdīd-e-Ahyā'-o-Dīn*, vol. 17 (Lahore: Tarjumān al-Qur'ān, 1940), 330.

[733] Mawdūdī, 17:330.

CHAPTER 4
THE ORDINARY AND THE COVENANTAL MONOTHEISM OF MORAL LIFE

Abstract

In the fourth and final core chapter, the focus is on Ghāmidī's account of moral life (taẕkiyah-e-nafs) and how it eschews the role of the extraordinary in shaping it. Through its analysis of this account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, the chapter argues for the ordinariness of moral life in Islam, tracing it in everyday obligations (farā'iẓ) of worship and physical practices, as well as permissions and prohibitions (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt) in moral conduct and dietary practices. It will be argued that taẕkiyah-e-nafs represents Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism, which involves not only the 'belief-bond' in one God but also the everyday fulfilment of obligations (farā'iẓ) and regulations (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt) to demonstrate commitment to the covenant between God and humans. The chapter concludes that moral life consists not of moral perfection or even moral development but rather a subtly distinct process: an unbreakable cycle of tests (imtiḥān) of moral character to assess an individual's fidelity to the covenant. This test of character, crucially, is grounded in everyday reality rather than an extraordinary event or an apocalyptic milieu.

1. Introduction

Taẕkiyah-e-nafs has long been regarded as an important outcome of moral development in Islam. Across both classical and contemporary discourse and practice, it has consisted of two specific features. Firstly, taẕkiyah-e-nafs has exclusively consisted of personal spiritual activities. It follows that taẕkiyah-e-nafs has classically been considered within the domain of Sufism, where it functions as either a prerequisite to or an ongoing practice of personal spiritual development. Secondly, taẕkiyah-e-nafs involves the revision of the relationship between the individual and the world. There are two types of revisions: transcendence of the individual from worldly states of self; and non-participation in the world by the individual.

The most significant theory and practice of moral development in Islam arguably comes from Sufism (taṣawwuf). Defining it as the purification of the soul, Sufism utilises taẕkiyah-e-nafs[734] as the central way to bring our natural desires into equilibrium, so that the mystic is able to "approach God without distraction."[735] Sufism bases this practice on the Qur'ān: "He has succeeded who purifies the soul, and he has failed who corrupts the soul" (91:9-10). The practitioner of taẕkiyah-e-nafs relinquishes impurity (takhalli)[736] and acquires purity

[734] The word *taẕkiyah* does not appear in the Qur'ān. However, its Arabic root word do appear, which imply meanings of 'purity' and 'development'. In contrast, the word *nafs* and its derivatives do appear frequently in the Qur'ān (398 times by one estimate). This word has been traditionally translated to the "self" or "soul". These words have been combined to produce the concept of *taẕkiyah-e-nafs*.

[735] Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazālī on Disciplining the Soul*.

[736] Translates to: "removing all vices from the soul".

(tahalli)[737] across certain spiritual stages of the nafs,[738] which would otherwise exist as "the lowest dimension of man's inward existence, his animal and satanic nature."[739] Framing the nafs this way positions it as the comprehensive site for "all the blameworthy characteristics in the human being."[740] This view of the nafs as the animalistic and sensuous part of the self has been explored in various works of Islamic literature. Rūmī, in his *Maṯnavī* examined the concept of nafs, often using metaphors of wild animals to represent the uncontrolled and untamed desires of the lower self. Another influential work, Al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, offered a detailed analysis of the nafs and its stages of development. Al-Ghazālī emphasized the importance of self-discipline, knowledge, and spiritual practice in overcoming the temptations and negative aspects of the nafs. Similarly, Ibn ʻArabī, the prominent Andalusian Sufi mystic and philosopher, discussed the nafs in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, highlighting the importance of understanding and transcending the animalistic nature of the self in order to achieve spiritual growth.[741]

While the name and numbers of spiritual stages vary across Sufism[742], three stages of the nafs always act as milestones to taẕkiyah-e-nafs: nafs al-ammārah ("the soul which commands"), where the soul rebels against God; nafs al-lawwāmah ("the soul that self-blames"), where the soul becomes mindful of its faults; and nafs al-muṭma'innah ("the soul at peace"), where the soul completely submits to the will of God. In other words, God can only be successfully reached if the purification of the soul occurs according across transcendent stages. Unsurprisingly, a significant body of Sufi literature on taẕkiyah-e-nafs consists of spiritual instructions and private discourses with the Divine. These 'manuals' concentrate on the practical steps and the essential states of moral development in Islam, offering guidance on the performance of supererogatory prayers, adherence to otherworldliness, devotion to extraordinary amounts of prayer, and the cultivation of a mutual love and mystical union with the Divine. Two prominent examples of such manuals are *Al-Risālah al-Qushayrīyah fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf* ['The Qushayrīyān Epistle on the Science of Sufism'] (1045) by the Persian

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[737] Translates to: "adorning the soul with virtuous traits".

[738] al-Ghazālī, for example, says that *nafs* consists of two moral parts: "Know that *nafs* has two intrinsic qualities, which are lower desire (*hawā'*) and anger (*ghadab*), and all the blameworthy characteristics are begotten from them. Its purification can be achieved by their equilibrium (*iʿtidāl*)." He accordingly defines purification as the "clearance of all blameworthy characteristics" and "taking on the attributes of the praiseworthy characteristics". See: Sa'ari, 'A Purification of Soul According to Sufis: A Study of al-Ghazali's Theory'.

[739] Jalāl al-Din Rūmī and Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love*, 12.

[740] Picken, *Spiritual Purification and Islam*, 155.

[741] Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350), a prominent medieval Islamic theologian, also delves into the topic of nafs in his book *Madarij al-Salikin* ['The Stages of the Seekers'] (1350), providing practical guidance for the purification and development of the self. Through the examination of these works, and many others, it becomes evident that the concept of nafs as the animalistic and sensuous part of the self is deeply rooted in Islamic literature. The recurring theme across these texts is the importance of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, or the purification of the soul, as a means to achieve spiritual growth and approach God without distraction. By recognizing and addressing the animalistic aspects of the nafs, practitioners of Sufism strive to attain a higher state of being, ultimately transcending the limitations of the lower self in pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

[742] Frager, *Heart, Self & Soul*.

Sufi mystic al-Qushayrī, and *Kashf al-Maḥjúb* by the South Asian Sufi mystic Al-Hujwīrī. Both works provide comprehensive insights into Sufi doctrine and practice, as well as practical guidance for those seeking spiritual growth and purification of the soul.

As Picken notes, limited classical literature exists outside of Sufism on the theory and practice taẕkiyah-e-nafs.[743] This is so, as Picken further explains, because taẕkiyah-e-nafs has been primarily "perceived to be a 'spiritual' or even 'mystical' field of study"[744], and therefore, the exclusive domain of Sufism.[745] Contemporary discourse outside of Sufism, however, has also increasingly focused on taẕkiyah-e-nafs, re-examining and reconceptualising the practice by variously rejecting, reforming or reiterating the Sufi account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs. Based on these characteristic views of taẕkiyah-e-nafs in classical and contemporary discourses, it can be argued that while taẕkiyah-e-nafs is a spiritual practice for both Sufism and Islamic revival and reform, the classical taẕkiyah-e-nafs of Sufism is a composite of transcendence (overcoming or rising above worldly states of self) and renunciation (withdrawing from or abstaining from worldly desires, possessions, and attachments), while the contemporary taẕkiyah-e-nafs of Islamic revival and reform is a composite of transcendence (achieving a higher spiritual state) and imitation (following and emulating the prophetic life as a means of achieving moral development).

Two key examples of taẕkiyah-e-nafs in Islamic revival and reform are the Dēōbandī and Islamist movements such as the Jamā'at-e-Islāmī and Tablīghī Jamā'at. While the Dēōbandī movement's model of ta'līm-o-ta'allum (education and learning) has emphasised Sufism's transcendence, Islamist movements have focused more on imitation. The Dēōbandī scholar Thānvī emphasises the model of ta'līm-o-ta'allum for taẕkiyah-e-nafs as follows: "Taẕkiyah-e-nafs (self-purification) is farẓ (incumbent) upon each and every individual. It is possible to achieve taẕkiyah through seeking 'ilm (knowledge) and more importantly, acting upon the 'ilm provided it was obtained from reliable sources and teachers. Spiritual development under the auspicious supervision of a capable Shaykh (spiritual guide) will enable an individual to reach levels of spirituality which are not easily attainable independently. The most fundamental tenet in this path is the constant or prolonged company and supervision of a Shaykh. This can be achieved with or without bay'ah. Therefore, taking bay'ah will be a mustaḥabb act. However, given that bay'ah can be proven from rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhī wa-sallam and the ṣaḥābah, taking bay'ah will be a means of barakah (blessings) and ease on this journey of taẕkiyah."[746]

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[743] Sufi literature often uses *taẕkiyah-e-nafs* interchangeably with the term *'ilm al-ihsan (*science of *ihsan)*.

[744] Picken, '*Tazkiyat al-Nafs*', 101.

[745] For example, one of the earliest pieces of literature on *taẕkiyah-e-nafs* was produced by the Sufi al-Muhaasibi (d. 857). While no dedicated text by al-Muhaasibi exists on the subject, it appears across his overall body of work, including in '*ar-Ri ʿayah li-huquq Allah'* (Book of Observance of the Rights of Allah). Al-Ghazālī offers a more systematic account of *taẕkiyah-e-nafs*, writing on the subject in multiple texts, especially *'Jami' al-Haqa'iq bi Tajrid al-'Ala'iq'*.

[746] Thanawi, *Imdaadul Fatawa*, V:246–47.

Islamist accounts of moral development can be seen to offer an alternative account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs. This account claims moral development relies upon moral transformation not only on the individual level but also the moral transformation of the community. Significantly, these individual and communal transformations do not only rely on the pursuit of Sharī'ah but also the imitation of the prophetic context as defined under the establishment of the Islamic system (iqāmat al-dīn). Taẕkiyah-e-nafs of the individual is only possible once the systemic obstacle to the realisation of religious life—the 'non-Islamic system'—is removed. Mawdūdī, notably, rejects taẕkiyah-e-nafs as "personal spiritual development"[747] and instead argues that taẕkiyah-e-nafs is achieved when one "passes through collective life"[748]. This consists of performing one's "obligations towards others"[749] and adhering to the limits set by God and how one "discharges their role as His vicegerent."[750] Mawdūdī argues against the renunciant account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs:

> "The Islamic concept of virtue loses all its meaning if an individual severs his ties with collective, social life…. One who opts for the renunciation of life and lives as an ascetic abandons the test altogether in neglecting the opportunities available to him for his self-development."[751]

The key benchmark for Mawdūdī to taẕkiyah-e-nafs is "removing ungodly persons from positions of power and authority and in devoting one's total energy and resources to upholding and enforcing Sharī'ah in the land, which will put an end to mischief and corruption, promote virtue and piety while forbidding evil."[752]

2. Ghāmidī's Account of Taẕkiyah-e-Nafs

Ghamīdī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs suggests that the 'objective of religion', as stated in the Qur'ān, is tazkīyah, meaning that the individual and collective lives of people should be purified, and their beliefs and deeds be developed in the right direction. He quotes the Qur'ān: "[At that time], however, successful shall be he who purified himself, and remembered his Lord's name, then prayed. [No], in fact, you give preference to this worldly life in spite of the fact that the life to come is better and more lasting" (87:14-17). The "right direction" refers to Ghāmidī's understanding of monotheism not simply as tawḥīd ('oneness of God'), but as he elaborates during his exegesis of Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, to follow the right path: "Ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm" ('Guide us on the straight path'). As discussed in Chapter 1, Ghāmidī underscores monotheism, or Tawḥīd, through a variety of imminent features. He exegetes that the Sūrah not only sets the foundation for the belief in the one true God but with the verse "Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn" ('You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help'), emphasizes that this monotheism involves the sole worship and dependence on

[747] Siddiqui, *Tazkiyah*, 2015, 7.

[748] Siddiqui, 4.

[749] Siddiqui, 4.

[750] Siddiqui, 4.

[751] Siddiqui, 4.

[752] Siddiqui, 5.

Allah. Ghāmidī explains, "Consequently, the verse does not merely say that we human beings worship the Almighty; it emphasizes that we worship only the Almighty and seek only His help."[753] Ghāmidī, therefore, elevates the monotheism of Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah to serve as a guide for believers to adhere to this principle.

Taẕkiyah-e-nafs, as explained by Ghamīdī, is a practice with the purpose of purification and moral attainment in Islam. Ghamīdī highlights that the purpose of religion is purification, and the means to ultimate moral attainment is to establish the relationship between the servant and the Lord in the correct way.[754] The stronger this relationship, the more progress a person makes in the purity of their knowledge and actions. According to Ghamīdī, love, fear, sincerity, loyalty, and the emotions of gratitude and recognition for God's countless blessings and infinite favours are the inner manifestations of this relationship.[755] This relationship, Ghamīdī exegetes in *Al-Bayān*, is specifically a covenant between God and humans. Known as the 'Ahd-e-Alast ('Covenant of Alast'), it specifically appears in Sūrah Al-Araf. In this Sūrah, Allah reminds the Prophet and people of a time when He made the children of Adam testify to His lordship, saying, "Am I not your Lord?" to which the souls of Adam's progeny reply, "Yes, [You alone are our Lord.] We bear witness to it" (7:172).

Ghāmidī's exegesis further elaborates on the significance of this event, stating that "the acknowledgement of a Creator is found in a person's nature. The very existence of creatures necessitates a creator. No logical reasoning is even required to prove His existence to them. The only thing needed is to direct their attention."[756] This innate knowledge of God is essential for establishing a strong relationship with Allah, which is the foundation of taẕkiyah-e-nafs. Moreover, Ghāmidī asserts that this covenant is so significant that "each person will be held accountable before God merely on the basis of this testimony".[757] This means, he explains, that no one can present the excuse that they were unaware of this truth or that their forefathers had adopted polytheism, leading them astray. Instead, humans are accountable for their beliefs based on their innate knowledge of God.

Furthermore, Ghāmidī explains that the Qur'ān serves as a reminder of this innate knowledge: "An explanation of the signs of God is instrumental in reminding people of this knowledge. For this reason, the Qur'ān calls itself dhikr (reminder) and dhikrá (reminder), and regards the messengers as mudhakkir (one who reminds)".[758] Therefore, the practice of taẕkiyah-e-nafs is deeply rooted in the innate knowledge of God and the 'Covenant of Alast', as emphasized in Sūrah Al-Araf and Ghāmidī's exegesis.

[753] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 1:22.

[754] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 69.

[755] Ghāmidī, 267.

[756] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 2:241.

[757] Ghāmidī, 2:242–43.

[758] Ghāmidī, 2:243.

This view on taẕkiyah-e-nafs is distinct from both classical and contemporary discourses. Ghamīdī emphasizes that the relationship between the servant and the Lord manifests in worship, ‘ibādah. It can, therefore, be argued that Ghāmidī’s account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs represents what can be described as ‘covenantal monotheism’, which involves not only the belief in one God but the demonstration of that commitment to the covenant between God and humans. This commitment is demonstrated in our ritual worship (parāstīsh), obedience to God (itā’at), and support to and protection from God (nazā’rat).[759] The chapter, therefore, argues, that moral life consists not of moral perfection or even moral development but rather a subtly distinct process: an unbreakable test of moral character to assess an individual’s fidelity to the covenant with God.

Significantly, for Ghāmidī, taẕkiyah-e-nafs is rooted in establishing a strong relationship with God through the significant, heuristic participation in ordinary forms of everyday life. He formally recognises that our covenantal commitment, ‘ibādah**,** cannot be restricted to simply worship. While describing this commitment in *Mīzān*, he says the following: “The first directive is that since there is no god except God, only He should be worshipped. The essence of this worship (‘ibādah) is humility and servility, as explained in the second preamble of this book, The True Religion. The first manifestation of this essence is serving the Almighty. Since a person also has a practical life in this world, this servitude relates to this practical life as well and in this manner becomes inclusive of obedience.”[760] As a result, he unfolds ‘ibādah into three forms in a person’s day-to-day life: ritual worship (parāstīsh), obedience of God (itā’at), and support to and protection from God (nazā’rat).[761] These ultimately lead to the purification of the self and moral attainment in a believer’s life.

Ghāmidī’s explains that our religion has outlined divine instructions (*aḥkām*), obligations (farā’iẓ) and permissions and prohibitions (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt), in order to maintain our fidelity to God’s covenant within the challenging context of practical life in this world. These are:

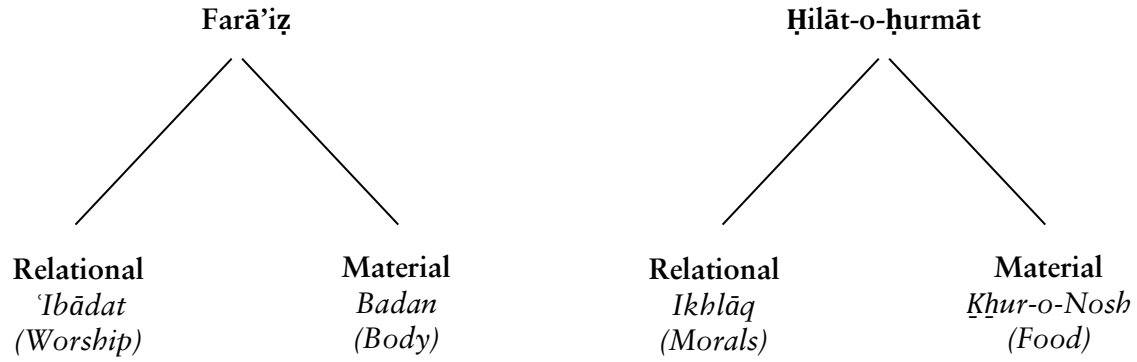
- Divine laws related to farā’iẓ, i.e., what is obligatory in Islam.
- Divine laws related to ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt, i.e., what is allowed and forbidden in Islam.

While Ghāmidī does not formally organise these laws further, these can be classified into relational and material components and arranged as follows:

[759] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 267.

[760] Ghāmidī, 214–15.

[761] Ghāmidī, 267.



Ghāmidī's conceptualization of taẕkiyah-e-nafs as relationally and materially constituted can also be considered an emerging priority within Islamic revival and reform in South Asia. It, for example, bears partial resemblance to the conceptualization of taẕkiyah-e-nafs put forward by the Dēōbandī scholar Abū Ḥasan al-Nadwī (d. 1999), who similarly argued that moral purification was the amalgamation of al-af'āl al-ḥayyah (the actions of life) and kaifīyat al-bāṭinīyah (the nature of esotericism). Al-af'āl wa al-ḥayyah are physical acts of worship, like prayer, fasting and zakat, while kaifīyat al-bāṭinīyah are values shaping our moral lives, such as patience, honesty, and love.[762]

Ghāmidī grounds his account of divine instructions (aḥkām) meant with the following three vital attributes of human nature (fiṭrat) that can be used to access these divine instructions (aḥkām):

- Bāṭin, which holds the knowledge (and covenant) given to humans by God at creation;
- Ikhlāqī ḥiss, which represents the moral capacity to discern right from wrong; and
- 'Aql, which represents the intellectual capacity to discern God's truth (ḥujjat).

So ritual worship (parāstīsh), obedience (itā'at), and support and protection (nazā'rat) are not only religious actions that involve our direct relationship with God but also our material and relational life across our everyday life, such as keeping our body clean, interacting with others while maintain goodness towards them, and eating food without harming our relationship with God. While Ghāmidī does not make a formal assessment, it can be stated that that ritual worship (parāstīsh) and significant aspects of obedience of God (itā'at), support and protection to God (nazā'rat) fall into the category of obligations (farā'iẓ). Moreover, obedience of God (itā'at), and support to and protection from God (nazā'rat) are subject to permissions and prohibitions (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt).

[762] See al-Nadwī, *Al-'Aqidah Wa al-'Ibadah Wa al-Suluk Fi Dau'i al-Kitāb Wa al- Sunnah Wa al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*.

Ghāmidī, therefore, argues that Islam sets what is obligatory, and what is allowed and forbidden in Islam not to stop us from participating in the world through renunciation or transcendence, but to help us utilise the moral benefits that exists in this world. In other words, living in the world contains both benefit-providing and cost-inflicting opportunities to our moral attainment, and the task of Islam is for us to utilise benefit-providing opportunities while avoiding cost-inflicting ones. This is dissimilar from for example the Sufi position, which insists that the world needs to be resisted because it is predominantly cost-inflicting to our moral attainment.

Ghāmidī's position is made most clear during his exegesis of verse 33 of Sūrah Al-A'raf. The verse states:

> "Ask them [O God's Messenger]: Who has forbidden you the adornments (*zīnat*) of the Almighty which He had created for His servants, and who has forbidden the wholesome among the edibles? Tell them: These [adornments] are for the believers also even in this world [but God has also given the disbelievers a share in them]; and on the Day of Judgement, they shall be theirs alone. [The disbelievers shall have no share in them.] Thus, do We explain Our revelations for those who want to know." (7:33)

The verse admonishes those people who forbid zīnat (translated above as "adornments"), and instead argues that zīnat is meant for everyone, both who believe in God and those who do not. In his exegesis of this verse, Ghāmidī's introduces the concept of zīnat as follows: "any object which a person uses to embellish something to satisfy his aesthetic taste."[763] Following on from this definition, his states that zīnat therefore includes objects "dress and jewellery are the zīnat of the body; curtains, sofas, carpets, rugs, sculptures, portraits and paintings are the zīnat of the house; orchards, gardens and buildings and other similar things are the zīnat of the city; music is the zīnat of the voice and poetry is the zīnat of words." Ghāmidī proceeds to argue that the Sufi interpretation of religion considers zīnat to be an "illusion", and "prohibited, undesirable, worthy of being forsaken and impediments to spiritual advancement."[764] However, as stated in the Sūrah Al-A'raf (7:33), the Qur'ān does not subscribe to this view. This "amazing declaration of the Qur'ān,"[765] Ghāmidī argues, refutes the Sufi position and insists that all these things are lawful:

> "Contrary to general religious concepts and teachings of Sufism, it presents a completely different aspect of religious life. Instead of urging people to forego the pleasures of this world in order to attain the nearness of God and union with Him, it urges the believers to benefit without any hesitation from all the objects of zīnat within the limits prescribed by God and to show gratitude for His favours."[766]

[763] Ghāmidī, *Al-Bayān*, 2021, 2:148.

[764] Ghāmidī, 2:148.

[765] Ghāmidī, 2:149.

[766] Ghāmidī, 2:149.

The declaration instead emphasises, according to Ghāmidī, that the zīnat is morally purposive:

> "In fact, in this verse, it chidingly inquires of the person who dares regard as unlawful what God has created for man? These last words are in fact a statement of argument that none of God's acts are meaningless. If He has created these things, then the purpose is that people use them while giving due regard to His limits. Their mere existence shows that there is no undue restriction on their use."[767]

Ghāmidī's reading of zīnat bring an ordinary realism to moral life, one which questions the renunciant, transcendent, and imitative measures of other Islamic traditions, and instead pays attention to the materiality of our everyday lives.

Ghāmidī's refutation of the transcendent account of worship in Sufism, as explored in the previous chapter in relation to wāḥdat-ul wujūd, represents his broader critique of the Sufi conception of farā'iẓ (obligations). Ghāmidī begins by specifically posing a challenge to practical steps and the essential states Sufism proposes for moral development, arguing that the Qur'ānic account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs makes no mention of these at all. In a recent series of durūs, *Islam aur Taṣawwuf* ['Islam and Sufism'] (2020), Ghāmidī says:

> "This form of worship is a much later invention, which in fact create a parallel system to our Dīn. The Sufis have systematically created designations of spiritual positions and how these positions are achieved. For this, they created their own sharī'at (path) which is called ṭarīqat. This has not been mentioned [in the Qur'ān] anywhere. There are no such positions at all stated in the Qur'ān. There is also no mention of meditation, seclusion, practice, or spiritual revelation. Nothing is there."[768]

In addition to highlighting the absence of textual evidence, Ghāmidī underscores another problem with Sufism's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs: it is concerned with the cultivation of certain kinds of uncommon, privileged experiences. This inevitably leads to the creation of spiritual hierarchies, just as an entire hierarchy has been established around prophets, rasūl and nabī, and as Sufism has created an entire world where there are awtād, nujabān, ghawth, quṭb, and quṭbul aktāb. Ghāmidī observes that "The Qur'ān is bereft of these as well as the fundamental idea of wilayat creating these different positions (manāsib)."[769] Ghāmidī concludes that the specialised spirituality of Sufism in fact makes the only real route to God and relationship with him inaccessible. On the one hand, it replaces the prayer defined in

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[767] Ghāmidī, 2:148.

[768] *ISLAM Aur TASAWWUF - Javed Ahmed Ghamidi*.

[769] *ISLAM Aur TASAWWUF - Javed Ahmed Ghamidi*.

Sharī'ah, and on the other, it claims that only a few people can morally enjoy a relationship with God. Arguably, and as Melchert notes, the Sufi interpretation of moral development was only able to accommodate those willing and able to spend most of their time on mystic devotions.[770] But the impracticality of these devotions, arguably, are not the only reason why only a small elite of Muslims were seen to commit themselves in reciprocal love between themselves and God. Sufism's devotional programmes, if seen the other way around, were notably developed to maintain exclusive spiritual hierarchies of a small number of metaphysical specialists.

This chapter will build upon Ghāmidī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs as covenantal monotheism by examining his reassessment of material and relational aspects of moral life that have been debated within both classical and contemporary Islamic discourses in the context of obligations (farā'iẓ), and permissions and prohibitions (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt). It will first analyse Ghāmidī's concept of ritual worship (parāstīsh), contrasting it with the transcendent worship found in the Sufi path (ṭarīqah). The chapter will then explore the significance of material and bodily rituals, as described in Ghāmidī's account of Sunnah. Contrary to the anthropocentric benefits (fawā'id) such as physical purification (e.g., hygiene), Ghāmidī contends that these rituals also hold covenantal meaning.

Next, the chapter will examine Ghāmidī's participatory perspective on human interaction between men and women (mard-o-zan kā ikhtilāṭ), which challenges the influential renunciant and imitative account of pardah (seclusion) proposed by Mawdūdī. Ghāmidī's critique emphasizes that covenantal monotheism in Islam is not possible if the absolute seclusion of women from men, as specified in Mawdūdī's account, occurs. Ghāmidī argues that demonstrations of our fidelity to our covenant with God are limited in cases of absolute seclusion; therefore, covenantal monotheism can only be achieved if men and women participate in the dividends (zīnat) of this world, including human interaction. Ghāmidī's relational perspective on covenantal monotheism is further complemented by the attention he gives to the realities ('ḥaqīqat') behind Islam's prohibition of consuming pork. Again, far from being the driven by anthropocentric benefits (fawā'id), it is also shown to be rooted in our covenantal commitments to God.

3. Debates About Moral Life

3.1 Relational Life (ʿibādat): Ritual Worship

Ghāmidī states that in the religion of the Prophets, rituals have been designated to remind us of this relationship, with prayer and almsgiving being forms of worship, fasting and i'tikāf as acts of obedience, and Ḥajj as a symbolic expression of support and protection for Allah Almighty.[771] He asserts that the essence of religion is 'ibādah (worship) of God, and that our worship is a natural result of our covenantal traits, which exist in our inner-self. Ghāmidī highlights the importance of worship in the Qur'ān[772], as evidenced by the verse: "And I

[770] Melchert, *Before Sufism*, 187–217.

[771] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 267.

[772] Ghāmidī, 68.

created jinn and mankind only to worship Me. (51:56)". This demonstrates that worship is the primary purpose of our creation, according to the Qur'ān. Ghāmidī derives these covenantal traits from Qur'ānic words, and refers to these as khushū' (humility or devotion), khudū' (submission), ikhbāt (reverence), inābah (turning to God), khāshyah (awe or fear), taḍarru' (supplication or earnest entreaty), and qunūt (perseverance or persistence in worship).[773] These traits depict various aspects of a person's worship and relationship with God, and encompass humility and servility, as opposed to arrogance and rebellion, which are represented in the Qur'ān.[774] Ghāmidī emphasizes that when humility and servility exist within a person, along with a true comprehension of the mercy, power, providence, and wisdom of the God, they result in a total submission to Him with both great love and great fear.[775]

Ghāmidī argues that the inner manifestations of our relationship with God, such as dhikr (remembering God), shukr (expressing gratitude to God), taqwā (fearing God's anger), ikhlās (devoting oneself to God), tawakkul (trusting God), and tafwīd (submitting oneself to God), are all rooted in our covenantal traits.[776] The Qur'ān, according to Ghāmidī,[777] describes the practical manifestation of this relationship:

> "None profess belief in Our revelations except those who, when reminded through them, prostrate themselves in adoration and give glory to their Lord while expressing their gratitude to Him and are not rebellious to their Lord. Their backs forsake their beds; they pray to their Lord in fear and in hope and who spend [in His way] from what We gave them." (32:15-16)

Ghāmidī further elaborates that since a person has a practical life in this world, worship extends to this life as well, and requires that a person's outer-self bow before the Creator as the inner-self has done.[778] This obedience to God should encompass every aspect of life, as stated in the Qur'ān (22:77): "Believers! Kneel and prostrate yourselves and become servants of your Lord and do good deeds that you may succeed."

Ritual worship is, therefore, embedded in our practical life, consisting of five daily prayers that consist of various rituals laid down in the Sharī'ah: beginning with raf' al-yadayn (raising high both hands), followed by qiyām (standing upright), rukū' (kneeling down), qawmah (standing up after the rukū'), two consecutive prostrations, and qa'dah (sitting with legs folded backwards) in the second and last rak'at of each prayer. The prayer is concluded by turning the face during the final qa'dah.[779] Ghāmidī asserts that rituals are substantiated by

[773] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 68.

[774] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 68.

[775] Ghāmidī, 68.

[776] Ghāmidī, 68.

[777] Ghāmidī, 69.

[778] Ghāmidī, 69.

[779] Ghāmidī, 292.

the consensus of the Companions and the perpetual adherence (tawātur) of the ummah to these rituals,[780] following the Prophet's instruction to "offer the prayer in the very manner you see me offering it." (Bukhārī: 104) It follows that ritual worship is the natural result of our covenantal traits. These traits drive us to submit to God with love and fear, manifesting in our inner relationship with God and extending to our practical lives through ritualistic obedience and servitude to the Creator.

Ghāmidī also raises the point that ritual worship is a representation of how we uphold our covenant with God. He asserts that every particle of the universe glorifies, praises, offers gratitude, and bows down before God.[781] This, for him, is evident in the following Qur'ānic verse: "The seven heavens, the earth, and all who dwell in them exalt Him. And there is not one thing that does not exalt Him while praising and thanking Him. Yet you cannot understand their exaltation. Benevolent is He and Forgiving." (17:44) This verse highlights that every object in the universe exalts God and maintains its covenant with Him. Ghāmidī Qur'ānically emphasizes[782] that all creatures on earth, including animals, birds, fish, and even celestial bodies like the sun, moon, and stars, bear testimony to their worship and submission to the Almighty: "Do you not see how God is exalted by those in the heavens and those on earth and the birds as they wing their way [across the sky]. Each knows his prayer and exaltation of the Almighty and God has knowledge of all that they do." (24:41)

Ghāmidī cites his teacher Islāhī to explains that every object in the universe has an "Abrahamic temperament" (Ibrāhīmī mizāj) [783] and follows the divine law on which they were created. They do not deviate from this law and maintain their covenant with God: "The sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains and the animals that tread the earth all follow the divine law on which they have been created"[784]. This further reinforces the idea that all creation, including human beings, should uphold their covenant with God. When a person performs ritual worship of God, they are aligning their nature with the rest of the universe and declaring that they will prostrate their body and soul before the Almighty.[785] Ghāmidī supports this with the following Qur'ānic verses: "And have they not seen that whatever the Almighty has created casts its shadow right and left, prostrating itself before God in all humility? And to God bow all the creatures of the heavens and the earth, and the angels too, and they are never rebellious." (16:48-49) This illustrates that worship is a means of maintaining our covenant with God and remaining in harmony with the rest of creation. [786]

[780] Ghāmidī, 292.

[781] Ghāmidī, 275.

[782] Ghāmidī, 276.

[783] Ghāmidī, 276.

[784] Ghāmidī, 276.

[785] Ghāmidī, 276.

[786] Ghāmidī, 271.

Ritual worship is also is central to staying on the right path of monotheism (dīn par qā'im rahne kā zariyah) in Islam, Ghāmidī argues.[787] He asserts that this worship serves as a means of remaining steadfast in the Islamic faith, as it helps protect believers from the devil and acts as a reminder of the divine connection.[788] Ghāmidī explains[789] that when a person becomes indifferent to remembering God, a devil is assigned to them: "We shall depute a devil on the person who evades the remembrance of the Merciful and he shall be his companion" (43:36). However, worship serves as a safeguard against this indifference, ensuring that a person remains committed to their Islamic faith. He further emphasizes the importance of prayer in maintaining a strong adherence to Islam, stating that "it is safeguarding the prayer which ensures a person's adherence to Islam". [790] Through prayer, individuals can protect their hearts and minds from the devil's influence, which in turn helps them stay on the right path. The Qur'ān highlights the importance of ritual worship in avoiding indulgence in lust and desires, Ghāmidī argues, stating that those who waste the prayer are likely to follow after lusts: "then, after them, there followed a posterity who wasted the prayer and followed after lusts." (19:59) Moreover, it emphasizes that this worship serves as a deterrent against moral depravity [791]: "And be steadfast in the prayer because it deters [a person] from lewdness and evil." (29:45) Ghāmidī's again cites his teacher Isḷāhī, who similarly notes that those who offer prayer while giving due regard to its etiquette and conditions are reminded of the realities necessary to keep them on the right path in life. [792] He compares a person who does not offer prayer to a reckless driver who may eventually lead themselves into danger. Through ritual worship, therefore, the believer can maintain their relationship with the divine, protect themselves from the devil's influence, and remain steadfast in their faith.

3.2 Material Life (Badan): Material and Bodily Rituals

In Ghāmidī's interpretation of the Sunnah, the emphasis of material and bodily rituals does not lie in anthropocentric benefits (fawā'id), such as physical purification (e.g., hygiene). Instead, it concentrates on the maintenance of the covenant with the Divine through material and bodily manifestations. In his account of Sunnah, Ghāmidī enumerates various worship rituals, social sphere practices, dietary regulations, customs, and etiquette as integral components of the Sunnah, which he deems as authentic as the Qur'ān. [793] These practices, encompassing not only prayer, but material and bodily commitments, such as fasting, marriage, dietary restrictions, and physical rituals of purification, [794] accentuate the quotidian nature of an individual's covenantal engagement with the Divine. Fasting, for instance, observed during the holy month of Ramadan, is a yearly ritual that fosters self-discipline, empathy, and spiritual reflection. [795] Dietary restrictions, such as the prohibition of

[787] Ghāmidī, 271.

[788] Ghāmidī, 271.

[789] Ghāmidī, 271.

[790] Ghāmidī, 271.

[791] Ghāmidī, 272.

[792] Ghāmidī, 273.

[793] Ghāmidī, 14.

[794] Ghāmidī, 14.

[795] Ghāmidī, 14.

consuming pork, blood, and improperly slaughtered animals, serve as a constant reminder of adherents' commitment to following divinely ordained guidelines. Physical rituals of purification, including the ceremonial ablution (wudū), underscore the importance of ritual purification as an act of devotion and submission to the Creator. [796]

By engaging in these diverse material and bodily practices, adherents manifest their commitment to the spiritual covenant in their everyday lives. These rituals serve as tangible expressions of faith, providing constant reminders of an individual's connection to the Divine and reinforcing the significance of the covenant within the context of daily life.

A salient example illustrating the covenant's precedence over human benefits is the practice of tayammum (dry ablution) in circumstances where water is unavailable for the ceremonial ablution (wudū) or the ceremonial bath. Ghāmidī's highlights that although tayammum does not contribute to actual physical hygiene, it underscores the ceremonial essence of ablution, as opposed to a focus on human cleanliness:

> "Undoubtedly, Tayammum does not cleanse an individual in the physical sense; nevertheless, upon thoughtful reflection, it becomes evident that it embodies a symbolic reminder of the authentic means of achieving purity, and as such, holds a distinct significance. The spirit of the Sharī'ah is imbued with the wisdom that in instances where a directive cannot be adhered to in its pristine form, or if it proves exceedingly challenging to do so, alternative measures should be embraced as emblematic reminders. A salient benefit of this approach is that once the circumstances regain their normalcy, there is a natural propensity to revert to observing the directive in its true and original form." [797]

This demonstrates, he argues, that mere cleanliness is insufficient for ritual worship; the act of subjecting one's body to the process of ablution remains necessary. Tayammum emphasizes the ceremonial nature of ablution through its role as a reminder of purification, and as means to adhering to Sharī'ah, ensuring continuity in religious practice, and preparing oneself for prayer.

Ghāmidī, therefore, proposes that the primary objective of the material and bodily rituals in the Sunnah is to sustain the covenant with the Creator, rather than concentrating on anthropocentric benefits, such as hygiene or health. Through engaging in these everyday practices, adherents cultivate a robust connection with the Divine via their material and bodily actions, thereby reinforcing the significance of the spiritual covenant within the context of daily life.

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[796] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 14.

[797] Ghāmidī, 291.

3.3 Relational Life (Ikhlāq): The Problem of Seclusion

As a key clarification of the role that relational life plays in our moral purification, Ghāmidī offers a participatory account of human interaction between men and women (mard-o-zan kā ikhtilāṭ) that deeply questions the increasingly renunciant and imitative accounts of this interaction in contemporary South Asia. As part of his overall account of moral development, normative theorists such as Mawdūdī have made the central claim that the non-participation of women—their *seclusion*—in public life can be used to remove sexual vices from society. As Ze'ev Maghen explains "Both sexuality and spirituality are largely exercises in unruliness; the Sharī'ah delimits them and makes them possible."[798]

This normative account of seclusion and moral development, as will be shown below, primarily exists in three forms, each of which is discussed individually below: (i) perfectible seclusion; (ii) absolute seclusion; and (iii) differentiated seclusion. Through an exercise in exegetical clarification, Ghāmidī deconstructs all of these to eventually argue that moral purification is not possible in Islam if any of these forms of seclusion of women from men is implemented. Moral purification, he instead emphasises, is only possible if men and women participate in the dividends offered by this world (zīnat), which irreplaceably includes human interaction.

In Islamic discourse, unrestrained sexual nature, with "its trial, testing [and] temptation, and by extension, treachery, persecution, seduction, enchantment [and] disorder,"[799] is seen to cause fiṭnah: the vast moral, social, and political destruction of the Muslim community. It is antithetical to moral purification. The beauty of women (zīnat) is convulsive and exclamatory for men—it disrupts their self, and is, therefore the greatest source of fiṭnah. The ḥadīth narrated by al-Bukhārī, 5096 and Muslim, 2740 is often highlighted within these discourses to make the case of the woman as the fātin—the seductress—for men and by extension, the fiṭnah—the disorder—for the Muslim community: "I have not left behind me any fiṭnah more harmful to men than women."

3.3.1 Perfectible Seclusion

Exegetically, the traditional account of seclusion starts with Sūrah al-Nur (24, 27-31). The verses maintain that when encountering unrelated men anywhere—*inside or outside* the house—women should conceal their beauty (zīnat) by covering their body, but not their hands and face. The traditional journey of seclusion does not end here, however: it acquires expectations of *moral perfectibility* as it moves through Sūrah al-Ahzab (starting with verse 59).

On the question of what women should do when they exit the house, and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir (d. 1813)—the third of Shāh Walīullāh's khānwādah ('household') and the first mutarajim of the Qur'ān to Urdu—recommends the use of jilbāb (outer garment) by them to cover their entire body, including hands and face: "so it is recognised that she is not a slave-woman

[798] Maghen, *Virtues of the Flesh: Passion and Purity in Early Islamic Jurisprudence*, 282.

[799] Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, 87.

(launḍī) but a wife… not of low character but high… so that malicious people (men) do not interfere with her (us se nā uljẖeṅ)… the veil (ghūngẖat) has been made the indication."[800]

After establishing the full practice of seclusion for women within and outside the house, his exegesis moves forward to also incorporate the 'practice of separation' into seclusion. His elliptical notes on verses 28 to 34 of Sūrah al-Ahzab represent how South Asian discourses have traditionally allocated this separation: "In this verse came the ruling on seclusion (pardē kā ḥukm), that visiting men should not appear in front of the Prophet's wives (ḥaẓrat ke azwāj). This ruling is not applicable to all the women of Muslims. If a woman is in the presence of a man and all her body (badan) is covered in clothing: then it is not a sin. *If she is not present at all, however: that is better*."[801] This last sentence is crucial.

While confirming the 'practice of veiling'—the required behaviour in Sūrah al-Nur (24, 27-31) and the recommended behaviour in Sūrah al-Ahzab (59)—Shāh 'Abdul Qādir positions the practice of separation as the highest ideal (namūnah) of seclusion: while not obligatory, it is "better" that Muslim women remove themselves from unrelated men entirely, as the Prophet Muḥammad's wives did, by confining themselves in the house or in separate female living quarters. Falling within the genre of moral perfectibility, separation represents the strongest, even if voluntary, form of female seclusion.

3.3.2 Absolute Seclusion

Reform within South Asia heightened the seclusion that was required or recommended traditionally. In his pre-partition anthology on seclusion, *Pardah* ['Seclusion'] (1939), and his commentary on the Qur'ān, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* that appeared later, Mawdūdī elevated both the ideal practice of veiling as well as the practice of separation to the category of obligation. Mawdūdī breaks away from the Ḥanafī framework to undertake tammīm ('to make common'), an exegetical strategy that has become increasingly significant to reformist thought in South Asia: "What Allah forbids women [from] is to leave their houses to display their beauty (zīnat). He commands them to stay in their houses, because the real place of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they must leave the house for an outdoor need, they should do so not as the women in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance… the ways … that Islam does not approve."[802]

While traditional methodology, when pushed, has conventionally achieved Mawdūdī's position through the abrogation (naskh) of relevant verses of Sūrah al-Nur—so that the statement on seclusion described in Sūrah al-Ahzab is valid for both inside and outside the house—Mawdūdī achieves it by integrating the seclusion described in Sūrah al-Nur with the seclusion described in Sūrah al-Ahzab: "If we are to read [the preceding guidance in Sūrah al-Nur] in combination with Sūrah al-Ahzab, then it is clear that the true intention of the command … is to conceal [women's] beauty from strangers…. Since people cannot identify

[800] Qādir, *Al-Qur'ān al-Karīm.*, 512.

[801] Qādir, 511.

[802] Mawdūdī, *Tafhīm Al-Qur'ān*, 1972, IV:91–92.

someone's true intention, the only intention that matters is the one interpreted (by others) from action…. [If a woman demonstrates her beauty], people seeking fiṭnah will associate with her the expectations that should be associated with a woman [who seeks lustful attention]. The Qur'ān says to women that they cannot be the 'light of the household' (charāgh-e-khānah) and the 'light of society' (shama-e-anjuman) at the same time. If women want to be [the former] then they should leave the ways suited to becoming [the latter]."[803]

Seen in its entirety, this position is distinct from the traditional one in two significant ways. The first concerns causality (asbāb). While the protection of society against destructive sexual forces is the confident purpose of seclusion for both Mawdūdī and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Mawdūdī sharpens the causality between beauty and destructive sexual forces. His move to integrate the verses of Sūrah al-Nur with the verses of Sūrah al-Ahzab introduces a 'positive' test of seclusion, whereby the slightest—even unintentional—disclosure of women and their beauty leads to sexual interference by men, and the only way to prevent this moral failure is the absolute confinement of women within the family.

The second concerns choice (iḵẖtiyār): while Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, like Mawdūdī does comprehend the verses in Sūrah al-Nur and Sūrah al-Ahzab as laws (nuṣūṣ) to be epistemically known, he defers the pursuit for the majority of these laws to individual choice. For any woman to satisfy the sharp conditions of Mawdūdī's positive test, however, her seclusion has to be entire and instantaneous, and one justified by the surveillance of others, rather than partial and gradual, and one managed by her authentic intention. Significantly, by making seclusion meaningful only as an empirical condition of the woman (and the family), in which individual ambiguity and intention are not valid, Mawdūdī deliberately achieves a structural result of great implication: law can implement absolute seclusion.

While leading Muslim scholars disputed it, such as Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d. 1999)[804], Mawdūdī's model of seclusion took hold in postcolonial South Asia, particularly with the Dēōbandī school of thought, who have proceeded to retroactively amend their traditional position in favour of Mawdūdī's conclusions. Abandoning the magisterium of Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir's distinction between required and recommended seclusion, the postcolonial Dēōbandīs started to invoke ṣad-e-zarya to argue for practices of full-body veiling and complete separation are obligatory. They see their situation to be similar to prophetic apocalypse. Muslims find themselves in a perpetual (ḥamawaqt) state of fiṭnah. For the sake of iqamat al-dīn ('establishment of religion'), this extreme contingency—fiṭnah kā daur—could also create an absolute opportunity for the law to confine women within the family. Seclusion, taken this way, becomes not a protective but restorative experience required by the Muslim community that had already faced moral catastrophe.

[803] Mawdūdī, IV:131–32.

[804] al-Albānī was the author of Albañī, *Ḥijāb Al-Marʾah al-Muslimah Fī al-Kitāb Wa-al-Sunnah*. He added a dire corrective at the end of Mawdūdī's first publication of *Pardah* in Arabic, Mawdūdī, *Al-Ḥijāb*.

3.3.3 Differentiated Seclusion

Initially, Ghāmidī's self-described *dabistān* (school) did not differ significantly from other South Asian discourses on the question of seclusion. Isḷāhī relates that when first asked his teacher Farāhī about seclusion, specifically on the relationship between Sūrah al-Nur and Sūrah al-Ahzab, Farāhī admitted only an inclination towards an understanding. His explanation was speculative and brief: "al-Nur explains seclusion inside the house and al-Ahzab explains seclusion outside."[805] Isḷāhī eventually developed and published the tradition's preliminary understanding of seclusion, first in *Qur'ān mein Parday kay Aḥkāmat* ['The rules of Pardah in the Qur'ān'] (1949) in response to growing public criticism of seclusion, and then in *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* the school's first *tafsīr*. Despite contextualising the events of Sūrah al-Ahzab (59) as specific to the Prophet Muḥammad's time, Isḷāhī did not recognise the sūrah's commands themselves as specific to the Prophet's time. His conclusion—inconsistent with the terms of his preceding analysis—was: "From this fragment ["that they will be known and not be abused"], no one should be mistaken that this was a temporary strategy (waqtī tadbīr) which was employed [at that time] to keep Muslim women protected from the malice of malicious men. [Evidently] now, this event is no longer relevant. Firstly this: all commands revealed are revealed according to their causes (mutaḥarrikāt), but it does not mean that if those causes do not exist anymore then the commands themselves become void as well. Secondly this: can someone of awareness make the claim that today's circumstances (ḥālāt) are not a thousand times worse as the circumstances in which these commands were revealed?"[806]

With this, Isḷāhī included Sūrah al-Ahzab and as in the case of Mawdūdī, declared all seclusion described across both sūrahs obligatory. But while Mawdūdī positioned the verses of Sūrah al-Ahzab as the primary commands for both inside and outside the house, with Sūrah al-Nur's sharp criteria on disclosure included in support of these Sūrah al-Ahzab's commands, Isḷāhī proceeded to give both sūrahs equal but different roles. Consolidating and elaborating Farāhī's inclination, Isḷāhī concluded that the seclusion described in Sūrah al-Nur was applicable within the house, while the seclusion described in Sūrah al-Ahzab was applicable without. Women should remain confined inside the house, and inside the house, they should cover their body but not their hands and face. But if in the case they have to leave the house, for an unavoidable or justified reason, they should cover their body entirely.

3.3.4 "There is No Seclusion".

Ghāmidī breaks away from all these three models of seclusion: the perfectible seclusion of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, the absolute seclusion of Mawdūdī, and the differentiated seclusion of Isḷāhī. Based on his school's exegetical methodology of coherence (naẓm), Ghāmidī argues that there is in fact no seclusion of women supported in the Qur'ān. Ghāmidī applies his tradition's defining test of pragmatics to both sūrahs: each verse of Sūrah al-Nur and Sūrah al-Ahzab is specific to its first referents and their times unless its universality is proven from the context within the Qur'ān. This solitarily challenges the diversity of pragmatics used by

[805] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2002.

[806] Isḷāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, 1988, VI:270.

South Asian discourses for both Sūrah al-Nur and Sūrah al-Ahzab in a fundamental way: the specificity of referent and context now places the burden of proof upon the universality of referent and context.[807]

Ghāmidī delivers a series of exegetical insights, including the following two. He clarifies from the asālīb of the instructions in Sūrah al-Ahzab were specifically meant for the protection of Muslim women during Muḥammad's prophethood, including his wives, from the people persecuting them at the time.[808] By excising Sūrah al-Ahzab entirely out of the exegesis on seclusion, Ghāmidī is able to dispense with the 'extraordinary' event of fiṭnah constructed from the heightened circumstances described in the sūrah. He then adds that the referents to the commands in Sūrah al-Nur are both men and women, and the physical landscape described by these commands encompasses all spaces—inside and outside. The commands of covering the body, therefore, apply to all people and anywhere.[809]

Ghāmidī accordingly defines the status of each of the three sets of verses as follows:[810]

1. The referents and context of the verses of Sūrah al-Nur (24, 27-31) are universal (Muslim women), and therefore, their commands are eternal (ābādī).
2. The referents and context of the verses of Sūrah al-Ahzab (59) are specific (Muslim women of Muḥammad's time), and therefore, their commands are temporary (waqtī).
3. The referents of the verses of Sūrah al-Ahzab (28-34) are specific but their context is eternal (Muḥammad's wives), and therefore, the commands of these verses are exclusive (k̲h̲āṣ).

By beginning and ending with Sūrah al-Nur, Ghāmidī fundamentally questions the model of feasibility and realism that any seclusion imagines for both law and sexual nature, and indeed the family.

Discounting the exclusive term of hijab or the temporary term of jilbāb or the traditional term of pardah, Ghāmidī straightforwardly introduces the model of mard-o-zan ka ikhtilat: "the etiquettes between men and women".[811] What emerges is not a transformative account that seeks to ensure maximum seclusion through either recommendation or requirement that is essentially bound to the space of the family, but an obligatory but minimal etiquette—an ordinary—between men and women bound to the choice of the individual. He critically adds that this etiquette aids in the goal guiding the behaviour of men and women: read directly and

[807] Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 55.

[808] Ghāmidī, 471.

[809] Ghāmidī, 462–64.

[810] Ghāmidī, 462–64.

[811] Ghāmidī, 461.

entirely from Sūrah al-Nur, it is taẕkīyah-e-nafs kā hadaf—"the goal to maintain the purity of the self."[812]

The Qur'ān, Ghāmidī argues, does not problematise and seek to conceal the beauty of women itself, but instead the specific acquisitions that may affect the modesty in the interaction between men and women. Ghāmidī also deconstructs the causality between zīnat (beauty) and fiṭnah. Observing the style (asālīb) of this Qur'ānic language used in Sūrah al-Nur, he clarifies that zīnat does not refer to the innate beauty of women: zīnat instead refers to the sensory acquisitions that women make to their body, such as jewellery or perfume.[813] He further concurs with al-Zamakhsharī's assessment that covering the body does not apply to hands and the face: "[that] which a person does not cover generally and instinctively, and they are always left bare."[814] With this conclusion, Ghāmidī directly disagrees with Mawdūdī's exegesis, which integrates Sūrah al-Nur with the veiling of jilbāb described in Sūrah al-Ahzab (59) to claim that "ordinarily displayed" means "incidentally displayed."[815]

The goal of inner purification (taẕkiyah-e-nafs) is in fact the overarching theme of the Qur'ān that Ghāmidī argues—uniquely within his school—is shared by all sūrah groups. While taẕkiyah-e-nafs may, at first sight, suggest the moral perfectionism of Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Ghāmidī stands apart by offering a perfectionism this is not teleological. He argues that there is no final state or fixed telos to be reached immediately or in the future, where the central figure of the woman for example, "does not speak, she just is"[816] To claim such a final state, as Shāh 'Abdul Qādir did, is an arbitrary conclusion without foundational proof, Ghāmidī argues.[817]

For Ghāmidī, there is no final state of etiquette one should aspire to in order to become a more faithful believer. In point of fact, he argues, the final state of moral perfection—a person's body completely covered, and space completely confined—is morally unfeasible: to live a life of seclusion is not achievable for any person, particularly for a person who seeks to pursue taẕkiyah-e-nafs. It requires "the world"[818], he argues. What is required is an ordinary pursuit of everyday etiquettes described in Sūrah al-Nur. The acquisition of higher, newer—extraordinary—states of seclusion is not only not required but also not desirable: it is detrimental to moral purification.[819]

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[812] Ghāmidī, 433.

[813] Ghāmidī, 470.

[814] al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf'anhaqa ʾīqal-Tanzīlwa'uyuñ al-Aqaw̄ Īlfīwujuh̄ al-Ta'wīl*, 3:231.; and Ghāmidī, *Mīzān*, 467.

[815] *Mīzān Lectures*, 2002.

[816] Devji, 'Gender and the Politics of Space: The Movement for Women's Reform in Muslim India, 1857–1900', 153.

[817] *Qānūn-e Muʾāshrat*.

[818] *Qānūn-e Muʾāshrat*.

[819] *Qānūn-e Muʾāshrat*.

3.4 Material Life (Khur-o-Nosh): The Prohibition of Eating Pigs

Within the epic of ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt, the Islamic dietary law prohibiting the consumption of pork is a well-established tenet, with its roots in the Qur'ānic verses Al-Baqarah (2:173), Al-Ma'idah (5:3), Al-An'am (6:145), and Al-Nahl (16:115). These verses explicitly state the prohibition, with Al-Baqarah (2:173) stating, "He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah." This prohibition is reiterated in the other three sūrahs, emphasizing its importance in Islamic dietary laws. Notwithstanding this emphasis, the Qur'ān does not provide a specific reason for this prohibition, leading to various interpretations and positions within Islamic discourses. These interpretations often revolve around the concepts of purity and impurity, harm and benefit, and obedience to divine command. In other words, Islamic discourses on dietary laws, particularly the prohibition of eating pigs, have predominantly explained the underpinnings of this prohibition in Islam has largely been dominated by two main positions: legal essentialism, and legal nominalism. These interpretations, while differing in their approach, all aim to understand the divine wisdom behind the prohibition of consuming pigs, as stated in the Qur'ān. They provide a framework for Muslims to understand and adhere to this dietary law, contributing to their moral purification.

Legal essentialism posits that the dietary laws reveal a fact that is true regardless of whether the law was written. As al-Ghazālī, for example, argued that God prohibits a thing because it is impure and harmful.[820] This position is characterized by two versions, both of which have increasingly intersected over time. The first version of essentialism defines the pig as inherently impure, thus, to be avoided. This interpretation is rational in its substance, making no arbitrary claims and aligning with human nature. The question arises: why does Islam need to deliver a dietary law when the pig is already so naturally and evidently impure? The conventional answer is that the pig is a creature of particular impurity. The second version of essentialism defines the pig as a thing that is likely to physically harm us if consumed, thus, to be avoided. Consuming it can cause illness and even death. The prohibition, therefore, seeks to procure the maṣlaḥah (utility or benefit) of human beings, bringing safety and health to them and warding off harm. This interpretation, again, is rational in its substance, making no arbitrary claims and aligning with human nature. The question arises: why does Islam need to deliver a dietary law when the pig is already so naturally harmful? The conventional answer is that the harm of the pig is not evident to everyone, and that the law tries to physically protect us by using an intelligence about the material that is not accessible to us yet or fully. Both versions, therefore, argue that the law is rational in its substance, not making any arbitrary claims and remaining in agreement with human nature.

Legal nominalism, on the other hand, argues that the dietary laws reveal a wilful act by God that is true because the law was written or revealed. Ibn Taymīyyah, a proponent of this view, argues in his *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* ['Compilation of Fatāwā'] that what is ḥalāl and ḥarām is entirely based on God's command.[821] The pig is defined as a pure animal, just as all creation

[820] Ghazzālī and DeLorenzo, *Al-Ghazāli on the Lawful & the Unlawful : Book Xiv of the Revival of the Religious Sciences = Kitāb al Ḥalāl Wa'l-Ḥarām : Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-Dīn*.
[821] Taymīyah, *Majmu' Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad Ibn Taymiyah*. See especially Volume 35, where he discusses the rules for slaughtering livestock.

is pure, but one which God prohibits regardless. This law is irrational in its character, making an arbitrary claim and standing in opposition to human nature. The question arises: why does Islam need to deliver a dietary law that 'manufactures' this contingent and unnatural prohibition? The conventional answer is that the pig is prohibited to test our acknowledgement of God's rules. For example, the law is of a lifelong fast, in which we are called upon to renounce the consumption of the pig as well as other certain foods and pleasures in order to choose God's law as a meaningful and conscious mark of our faith and identity. There is, therefore, profound virtue and moral reward in abstaining from the very things that we naturally or rationally desire.

Ghāmidī's diverges from both the essentialist and nominalist positions in Islamic discourses on the prohibition of eating pigs. He critically argues that instead, the consumption of pigs and other flesh-eating animals impacts our relationship with God and our moral constitution. As will be shown shortly, Ghāmidī's unique perspective on this prohibition highlights what might be described as the problem of 'the vulnerability in moral life'. His account of the prohibition of consuming pigs and other flesh-eating animals reveals our spiritual vulnerability to material obstacles and the 'undecidability' of certain moral tasks.

His interpretation is based on the divine distinction of 'ṭayyebāt' and 'khābi'is', the impact of consuming flesh-eating animals on human morality, and the spiritual impact of physical consumption. In his works, *Mīzān* and *Al-Bayān*, Ghāmidī argues that the prohibition of consuming pigs arises from the divine distinction of 'ṭayyebāt' (good things) and 'khābi'is' (bad things). This distinction prohibits Muslims from consuming all flesh-eating animals, including pigs, which are technically omnivores.[822] Ghāmidī's interpretation is based on the nature of these animals to eat flesh and consume blood by tearing and ripping apart their prey, which he refers to as their 'darindagī'. Ghāmidī further argues that consuming pigs and other flesh-eating animals leads to 'bahīmiyat' (beastliness), which manifests in humans as 'sarkishī' (akin to a moral rebellion) against God.[823] This rebellion affects not only our relationships with other human beings but, more importantly, our relationship with God. In other words, consuming flesh-eating animals, including pigs, hinders our ability to worship God adequately and harms our moral purification.

Ghāmidī introduces the concept of a 'human composite', where our physical and spiritual existences constitute an integrated whole. In this view, anything that affects our physical self also affects our spiritual self. Therefore, the physical consumption of pig's flesh affects our spiritual condition. Ghāmidī does not offer a detailed explanation of the mechanism by which physical consumption affects our spiritual condition, treating it as an itlā' (a divine revelation) from God. However, he situates this dietary law within his broader account of moral purification, or taẕkiyah-e-nafs, which is the process by which we purify ourselves and, as a result, become better able to worship God.

[822] Ghāmidī, *Islam*, 590.
[823] Ghāmidī, 40.

In relation to the essentialist and nominalist positions, Ghāmidī agrees with the essentialists that dietary laws reveal a fact that is true regardless of whether the law was written. However, he does not define the pig as inherently impure or physically harmful. Instead, he views the pig as a pure animal that, by mechanisms unknown to us, harms us spiritually. He disagrees with the nominalists that dietary laws reveal God's wilful act which is true because the law was written or revealed. While he agrees that the pig is a pure animal, he argues that its prohibition is not arbitrary but is based on the spiritual harm it causes.

According to Ghāmidī, therefore, the prohibition of consuming pigs and other flesh-eating animals in Islam reveals certain vulnerabilities in the process of moral purification, or taz̲kiyah-e-nafs. These vulnerabilities are primarily related to the spiritual impact of material obstacles and the undecidability of certain moral tasks. The first vulnerability lies in the spiritual impact of material obstacles. Ghāmidī argues that our moral purification is spiritually vulnerable to these obstacles. As we participate in this world, we are bound to encounter obstacles that may have a commonplace material form but have an exceptionally negative spiritual impact. The prohibition of pigs, as a component of our taz̲kiyah-e-nafs, safeguards our spiritual relationship with God. However, the focus on material impact, such as in the case of maṣlaḥah, obscures this spiritual vulnerability. Similarly, the focus on practices of specialized spirituality that lead us to revelatory events of being, such as notions of lifelong fasts, obscures the non-arbitrary existence of certain material obstacles. The second vulnerability pertains to the undecidability of certain moral tasks. Ghāmidī argues that we are limited in our moral development in that we cannot undertake certain epistemic and moral tasks on our own. This 'undecidability' is particularly salient in the case of the pig. While we are generally able to decide whether something is morally detrimental to us or not, there are certain issues that frustrate even the adequacies of our fiṭrah. In the case of the pig, it is this 'undecidability' over its flesh-eating nature (and its spiritual impact) which acts as the occasion for God's entry into history through revelation, which discloses the morally essential Decision, the Sharī'ah[824]. This clarifies the second 'vulnerability' of moral purification.

Ghāmidī's interpretation critiques those that focus on either the notion of benefits to claim that this prohibition exists to physically protect us from certain worldly harms or the practice of specialized spirituality, such as lifelong fasts, that lead us to profound virtue and moral reward. Instead, he emphasizes that our moral purification depends upon and is vulnerable to how we use objects and live our lives with others. By establishing an uninterrupted bond between our material and relational lives and our spiritual wellbeing, Ghāmidī offers an overarching view where both what is obligatory ('farā'iz̤'), and what is allowed and forbidden ('ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt') in Islam are unified by the moral purpose of taz̲kiyah-e-nafs. This continuity, between our physical and spiritual selves, exposes our moral purification to certain vulnerabilities.

[824] Gh̲āmidī, 40.

4. Conclusion: Covenant and Monotheism Revisited

This chapter explored Ghāmidī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, which emphasizes the ordinariness of moral life in Islam. By analysing the relationship between the servant and the God, Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism presents a distinctive view on the moral life of a believer. The chapter contends that moral life is not defined by moral perfection or development, but by an unbreakable cycle of tests (imtiḥān) of moral character that assess an individual's fidelity to the covenant between God and humans. This test is grounded in everyday obligations (farā'iẓ) and regulations (ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt) rather than extraordinary events or apocalyptic settings.

Ghāmidī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs highlights the significance of establishing a strong relationship with God through everyday practices such as ritual worship, obedience, and support and protection. By emphasizing the importance of obligations and permissions and prohibitions in everyday life, Ghāmidī argues that Islam seeks to guide its followers to utilize the moral benefits available in the world while avoiding cost-inflicting opportunities.

This chapter also explored Ghāmidī's critique Mawdūdī's account of pardah, offering alternative perspectives on ritual worship and gender relations that align with his covenantal monotheism. Ghāmidī's relational account of the prohibition of consuming pork further reinforces the centrality of covenantal commitments in everyday moral life. By tracing the ordinariness of moral life in Islam through Ghāmidī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, it also highlighted the importance of everyday practices and interactions in maintaining fidelity to the covenant between God and humans.

Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism, emphasizing the importance of engaging with the world and its opportunities while remaining committed to the divine covenant, can be cross analysed with two varied authors but who have worked on covenants and monotheism.

Alison Fisch Katz[825] emphasised that the late-Victorian novelist and poet and important pioneer of literary modernism, Thomas Hardy, was a profoundly Christian writer. She highlights his covenantal hermeneutics, which for instance produced a novel that is Hebraic rather than Hellenic in character. Hardy's 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' bears a covenantal discourse, as an interpretive activity is closely connected to the themes of ethics, moral responsibility, and the choices characters make within the story. This approach to interpretation, which involves a continuous dialogue with the source text and an emphasis on moral engagement, is rooted in the covenant between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai and the rabbinical commentary of the Bible, Katz argues. By applying covenantal discourse to the novel, the author underscores the importance of ethical considerations in contrast to the more transactional nature of contracts.

[825] Fisch Katz, 'Biblical Exegesis in Thomas Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge'.

The novel's numerous instances of 'contract,' which often involve material exchange, present a world focused on immediate gratification and lacking spiritual content. This contrasts with the concept of covenantal discourse, which encourages moral engagement and a sense of obligation to a higher authority. The characters in The Mayor of Casterbridge must navigate their moral obligations and the consequences of their actions in this complex world, reflecting broader societal issues of Hardy's time, such as the shift from an ordered to a mobile society.

In drawing parallels between Hardy's covenantal discourse in The Mayor of Casterbridge and Ghāmidī's account of taz̲kiyah-e-nafs in Islam, it is possible to see a shared emphasis on the moral responsibility of individuals as they navigate life's challenges. Both works focus on maintaining fidelity to the covenant between God and humans, achieved through everyday practices and moral obligations. The concept of covenantal hermeneutics, which is characterized by ongoing interpretation and the formation of a dialogue between the reader and the text, can be applied to Ghāmidī's account of life. Themes of observing the letter of the Law and one's responsibility to it are prevalent in The Mayor of Casterbridge. By engaging with these themes through the lens of covenantal hermeneutics, readers can better understand the importance of ethics, moral engagement, and individual choice in the novel, as well as in the broader context of religious and moral life.

The other author is Mohsen Goudarzi[826], whose discussion has focused on reinterpreting the terms dīn, Islam, and ḥanīf to better understand religious identity, polemics, and practices during the Qur'ānic milieu. His work shares the common thread of exploring the intricacies of religious practices, beliefs, and identity within Islam, especially within the context of monotheism.

Goudarzi's reinterpretation of dīn, Islam, and ḥanīf provides a comprehensive understanding of religious identity and the significance of exclusive and physical worship to God in the Qur'ānic worldview. It can be argued that Ghāmidī's account of taz̲kiyah-e-nafs both these aspects. The difference of course is that he gives importance to everyday obligations and practices in shaping moral life in Islam rather than cultic life, which is Goudarzi defines as the commitment to a sacred space. The focus of the Ghāmidī is on how the ordinary, rather than the extraordinary- here the sacred space-plays a central role in an individual's relationship with God and adherence to the covenant. Both Goudarzi and Ghāmidī of course contribute to highlights the significance of actions and decisions in maintaining an exclusive servitude to God. Ghāmidī is, of course, closer to Katz in that the exclusive servitude to God unfolds in the covenantal discourse of life rather than cultic practices of worship.

[826] Goudarzi, 'Unearthing Abraham's Altar'.

CONCLUSION

Abstract

This concluding chapter of the thesis presents its key contributions, summarizing how Islamic traditions resist the ordinariness of Islam and how the ordinary can be considered central to Islam through Ghāmidī's perspective. The chapter also introduces a new analytical framework that classifies and explains Islamic traditions into three categories, based on their representations of prophethood: the warner-prophet discourse, the reckoner-community discourse, and the post-prophet discourse. The first two emphasize "the extraordinary," while the post-prophet discourse, closer to the subject of this thesis, highlights "the ordinary" and aims to make prophethood relevant in everyday life, critiquing the other two discourses. The chapter also highlights the "discourses of characterization" between these various prophetic discourses, where the warner-prophet and reckoner-community discourses misrepresent Ghāmidī's post-prophetic discourse through narrow categorizations. Ghāmidī, on the other hand, seeks critical reasoning and argumentation with the other discourses.

1. Thesis Summary

This thesis has argued for the prominence of the ordinary in Islam, challenging the reliance on the extraordinary in traditional Islamic discourses. The primary argument is that moral life in Islam is largely constituted by our everyday thoughts, feelings, and actions, contrasting with key Islamic traditions that emphasize the role of "the extraordinary" in shaping moral life. By examining different representations of prophethood and utilizing Javēd Aḥmad Ghāmidī's work as a point of departure, the thesis demonstrates that moral life in Islam is grounded in everyday reality rather than extraordinary events.

While analysing the intellectual differences over the ordinariness of moral life in Islam, the thesis showed that these differences were driven by alternative representations of prophethood in Islamic traditions. While Ghāmidī maintained that the representation of prophethood is the principal literary aspect of the Qur'ān, other traditions were shown to have discursive representations of prophethood. These discursive representations of prophethood were verisimilar to the Qur'ān's representation of prophethood, inferentially incorporating one or more aspects—"shards"[827]—of this prophethood. The thesis built upon Ghāmidī's view to argue that this verisimilar representational capture of prophethood was diverse, with each claim involving the "taking" of specific stages of prophethood by a specific tradition for its own use. Based on the specific use of one or more stages of prophethood, it essentially meant that any tradition utilised a specific type of prophethood. Sufism's warner-prophet could perform the first stage of prophethood: Indhār (warning to those near you), while the Dēōbandī and Barelvi movements featured the warner prophet who could perform the first and second stages of prophethood: Indhār (warning to those near you) and Indhār-e-Ām (warning the public). Islamism's reckoner-community specifically started with the third stage of prophethood, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (making God's truth self-evident), and then moving forward in time to perform the fourth and fifth stages of prophethood towards other communities:

[827] Catlos, *Muslims of Medieval Latin Christendom, c*, 519.

Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (the preparation for divine punishment), and Jazā-o-Sazā (the implementation of divine punishment). The Sunnī eschatological account—of the messianic appearance of the Mahdī and the non-prophetic reappearance of Jesus—also focused on Itmām-e-Ḥujjat (making God's truth self-evident) and once achieved, they perform the fourth and fifth stages of prophethood towards other communities: Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat (the preparation for divine punishment), and Jazā-o-Sazā (the implementation of divine punishment).

Crucially, these traditions claimed that verisimilar representations of prophethood were to be and are actively enacted in this world. Drawing on literary modernism, especially as elucidated by Liesl Olson[828], the thesis has shown that the prophetic apocalypses of these traditions were varied, embodied in unique representations of prophethood that had their own characterized use of the genre of prophetic events, transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. Sufism's overarching focus was on transcendence to create the representation of the warner-prophet, while Islamism and Sunnī eschatology focused on shock and apocalypse to create a reckoner-community, a perpetual one in the case of the former and a terminal one in the case of the latter. Through these representations and through genres and mechanisms to support these representations, Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology can be feasibly brought back to and sustained in our moral lives. The key basis for this feasibility was found to either interpret or transfigure the autonomous context or milieu of our moral lives into one that was not the everyday but the apocalyptic. As a result, Sufism and Islamism were found to tie their prophetic individual or community to a cyclical apocalypse, while Sunnī eschatology tied their prophetic individual or community to the inauguration of the eschaton with a singular apocalypse.

In contrast, it was shown, Ghāmidī argues that the Qur'ān's narrative of Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse only survives as the representational largess for moral guidance in our everyday life. This was initially elaborated as the result of the "stereoscopic" perspective and the performativity of the Qur'ān that creates a result of the literary structure. Later, it was further elaborated with the assessment that Ghāmidī seeks to use the representational largesse of prophethood in the Qur'ān, and also the Sunnah, to advance a monotheism that was covenantal. Conceptually drawing upon the use of biblical exegesis in the numerous works of Thomas Hardy, a pioneer of literary modernism, and the interpretations of these works by Harold Fisch[829] and Alison Fisch Katz[830], the thesis showed that the milieu of moral life in Ghāmidī's case is a covenant between God and humans. It was, accordingly, argued that Ghāmidī's account of taẕkiyah-e-nafs is not of moral perfection or even development but of an unbreakably circular and monotheistic adherence to this covenant between God and humans.

The four core chapters that followed focused on different aspects of prophethood: transcendence and the creation of warner-prophets; shock and the perpetual reckoner-

[828] Olson, *Modernism and the Ordinary*.

[829] Fisch, *Poetry with a Purpose*.

[830] Fisch Katz, 'Biblical Exegesis in Thomas Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge'.

community; apocalypse and the terminal reckoner-community without a prophet; and the ordinariness and everyday realism of moral life. Each chapter began with an introduction and literature review, examined traditional Islamic discourse, analysed Ghāmidī's critique and re-evaluation of these discourses, and concluded by arguing for the significance of the ordinary in Islam.

In all four chapters, Ghāmidī's work served as a point of departure for challenging traditional Islamic discourses on prophethood and the extraordinary. His critique and reinterpretation of these discourses provided the basis for the thesis's arguments in favour of the ordinariness of moral life in Islam. Each chapter examined a specific aspect of prophethood, shedding light on different facets of Islamic thought and tradition.

In Chapter 1, the thesis explored the concept of transcendence and the creation of 'warner-prophets', uncovering how Ghāmidī's reinterpretation of traditional Islamic discourses highlights the importance of human labour in the process of becoming a prophet. Chapter 2 focused on the idea of shock and the perpetual reckoner-community, demonstrating how Ghāmidī's critique of Islamism offers an alternative understanding of the role of politics in moral life. Chapter 3 analysed Sunnī eschatology and its anticipation of a final prophetic apocalypse, delving into Ghāmidī's refutation of the belief in the appearance of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus. It argued that Ghāmidī's understanding of these events eliminates the need to believe in them, thereby emphasizing the importance of the everyday of Muslims in their moral lives. Finally, Chapter 4 addressed the ordinariness of moral life and everyday realism in Islam, exploring Ghāmidī's account of monotheistic fidelity to our covenant with God through the concepts of taẕkiyah-e-nafs, obligations, permissions, and prohibitions.

The chapters were interconnected in their shared focus on the role of the ordinary and the extraordinary in Islamic moral life and their reliance on Ghāmidī's work. Together, they demonstrated that traditional Islamic discourses often rely on the extraordinary in moral life. However, Ghāmidī's reinterpretations and critiques of these discourses highlighted the significance of the ordinary in shaping moral life in Islam. By examining Ghāmidī's work in conjunction with other Islamic texts, especially scholarly genres, and relevant secondary literature, the thesis also provided a broader intellectual context for understanding the significance of the ordinary in Islam. This context allowed for a clearer understanding of Ghāmidī's critique and reinterpretation of these Islamic traditions.

2. Representations of Prophethood: Through the Lens of Complex Systems

Based on the summary above, it is evident that various representations of prophethood in Islamic traditions involve processes and events across different metaphysical levels, including epistemological and ontological ones. These result in changes that vary in depth, speed, impact, and temporality.

For instance, the process of self-transcendence in Sufism entails individuals directly and literally accessing God and Divine Law, especially prophethood. This transforms the disciple

into a warner-prophet and fosters a cyclical apocalypse within the individual's temporal lifetime. Arguably, this change occurs rapidly within one's lifetime. However, due to the cosmogenic superiority of the Sufi apocalypse over the prophetic apocalypse, the impact of this change on the individual is considered incomparably profound.

In contrast, Islamism's processes of shock and apocalypse involve communities directly accessing Divine Law, especially prophethood, and prophetic guidance, but not God Himself. This also fosters a cyclical apocalypse, beginning with one community transforming itself and reaching out to transform others. Like Sufism, this happens quickly, occurring within the temporal lifetimes of the original and future cycles of the reckoner-community. However, given that the impact of change brought forth by the reckoner-community is comparable to Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse—where one is judged and selected by God rather than united with Him—this impact is not as profound as the Sufi's final union (wusūl) with God.

Similar to Islamism, Sunnī eschatology also accesses Divine Law, including prophethood. However, it features a non-cyclical change, not involving an individual or community, which spontaneously emerges as a reckoner-community only once before the eschaton. Despite being deferred arguably across lifetimes and centuries, when this change does occur, it is swift and extensive on a world scale, even more so than what Islamism suggests. Islamism speculatively envisions world-scale changes, such as Mawdūdī's depiction of the Mahdī and Jesus' arrival as a continuation of, and also an exceptionally high point for, his perpetual reckoner-community. Nevertheless, Mawdūdī states this primarily to conform his theory of history with the traditional eschatology of Islam. It does not, in other words, appear as an essential corollary of his thought. Sunnī eschatology is unique from Islamism and Sufism in that its apocalypse and impact span this world and the Hereafter. In other words, it is both temporal and post-temporal; the latter refers to a realm that exists after the end of time or beyond the limits of our temporal reality.

Ghāmidī does not accept that representations of prophethood can happen in history. Instead, he exegetically argues that Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse serves only as literary representation, whose moral largesse guides our covenantal life. Without such a representation of prophethood that can be enacted or implemented in this world, Ghāmidī focuses solely on the monotheistic process of taẕkiyah-e-nafs. Consequently, the individual has limited access to different metaphysical levels, accessing only their vital self (fiṭrah), their everyday world—their anfus and āfāq—and Muḥammad's prophetic guidance. The resulting change is slow, iterative, and everyday, relying significantly on the individual. Moreover, the impact of this change on the individual is distinctly not as profound (or directly rewarding) as those of the Sufi apocalypse, Islamism's constructive apocalypse, or Sunnīsm's eschaton apocalypse. Like Sunnī eschatology, however, Ghāmidī's covenantal representation of moral life involves changes across realms, with impact spanning both temporal and post-temporal realms.

There are some critical analytical observations here that can be made as a result of this rapid comparison between these different traditions.

Firstly, the traditions that foresee impacts spanning both temporal and post-temporal realms do not perceive the world as inherently apocalyptic. Sunnī eschatology remains quiet about the possibility of any apocalyptic event, let alone a prophetic event, after the death of Muḥammad, except when tracing events that signify or anticipate the Final Day of Judgment. So, in many ways, Sunnī eschatology is apocalyptically quietist, content with terminal apocalyptic interventions that descend to this world directly from God rather than emerge from within the reality of this world. Similarly, Ghāmidī, who has argued not only claims the abolition of the prophetic apocalypse but all apocalypse, awaits the final apocalyptic intervention to descend into this world directly from God, the Day of Judgment. So, both Sunnī eschatology and Ghāmidī's covenantal representation of moral life is unapocalyptic, albeit with degrees of variation. This is unlike both Sufism, which it has been argued conceptualizes waḥdat al-wujūd as an apocalyptic plane that can be scaled by the Sufi but where also other apocalyptic events occur, and Islamism, which it has been argued conceptualizes the world as inherently apocalyptic, a two-faceted property that can be either destructively exploited to unravel jāhilīyah or constructively harnessed to establish ḥākimīyah.

The second analytical observation pertains to the radical nature of the change envisioned by each tradition, which involves considering the change's speed, depth, scale, and impact. As we saw above, Sufism's scale is the individual, Islamism's scale is the community, and Sunnī eschatology's is the world. Despite this variation in scale, the change in Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology is characteristically fast, deep, and significant in its impact on the subject—whether the individual, the community, or the world. In contrast, Ghāmidī's tradition does not possess this radicality of change, seeking to change the individual. The change is slow, shallow, and insignificant in its impact on its immediate subject and, accidentally, the community or the world. If a subject competes with the individual in Ghāmidī's tradition, it is the family. That too, of course, is entirely predicated on the love between individuals, and the fragility of the most exceptional individual, the child. The radicality of Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology is such that their change involves a significant, perceptually drastic departure from the ordinary forms of life. As has been argued in the cases of Sufism, but most significantly Islamism, a case can be made that the ordinary does not exist in life due to its apocalyptic nature. Everything is apocalyptic, and it is up to the individual or the community to respond to the apocalyptic constructively or destructively. Sufism and Islamism both offer constructive responses. The steadiness of the change that Ghāmidī's tradition proposes involves a significant constancy with the ordinary forms of life.

It can be argued that 'the extraordinary', that which occurs beyond the reach of our everyday actions and causes to shape our moral lives, might be conceptualized as the 'emergent outcome' of the changes that Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology seek. It is the spontaneous result of the dynamic interplay of various elements of these changes: radical speed, depth, scale, and impact. Conversely, it can be argued that 'the ordinary', consisting of our everyday thoughts, feelings, or actions that shape our moral lives, might be conceptualized as the 'emergent outcome' of the changes Ghāmidī's tradition seeks. It is the

spontaneous result of the dynamic interplay of various elements of its changes: steady speed, depth, scale, and impact.

These emergent outcomes are distinct from the prophetic outcomes since these refer to results or consequences that arise spontaneously and unexpectedly from complex interactions within a representation of prophethood. In contrast, prophetic outcomes are intended—albeit discursively—directly linked to specific changes that Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology seek. In fact, the discursive intentionality of its prophetic outcomes explains the discursivity of their representations of prophethood. People, genres, institutions, cultures, and traditions—Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī—have been able to develop ideas, arguments, and beliefs over time precisely but in a way that has conveyed and created distinct modes of prophetic representation and understanding.

The variations in metaphysical levels, resulting changes, and differences in depth, speed, impact, temporality, and outcomes across these representations of prophethood can be effectively summarized in Table 6.1. Its organization simplifies and standardizes the information, allowing for a clear and straightforward comparison of the various traditions. The table methodically categorises these representations, namely Sufism, Islamism, Sunnī eschatology, and Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism, and analyses them through multiple facets including levels[831], process[832], change[833]—depth[834], speed[835], scale[836], impact[837],

[831] Refers to different metaphysical layers involved in the representation of prophethood, like epistemological and ontological ones. This could include access to God, Divine Law, spiritual guidance, etc.

[832] The method or operation through which representations of prophethood occur, e.g., self-transcendence in Sufism or shock in Islamism.

[833] The transformation resulting from the process. This can range from personal transformation in the case of Sufism to community and world-scale changes in other traditions.

[834] Indicates the profundity of the change. High depth means the change is very significant at a core or fundamental level. Low depth indicates a more surface-level change.

[835] The rate at which the change occurs. Fast speed means the change happens quickly, while slow speed indicates a more gradual transformation.

[836] The scope or extent of change. It can be on an individual level, community level, or world-scale.

[837] The effect or consequence of the change on the subject (individual, community, or world). High impact means it has a significant effect, whereas low impact is less substantial.

radicality[838], temporality[839], frequency[840], milieu[841], and prophetic outcomes[842]— and emergent outcomes[843]. This tabular representation, therefore, enables a structured and coherent comparison between these traditions, thereby shedding light on the multifarious interactions with which each tradition engages with prophethood.

Sufism, characterized by its access to God, Divine Law, and the individual, exhibits high depth, fast speed, very high impact, and high radicality in its approach to change. Its cyclical nature and apocalyptic worldview lead to the emergence of the extraordinary as its spontaneous outcome. In contrast, Islamism and Sunnī eschatology both emphasize Divine Law and the community. They share moderate depth, fast speed, high impact, and high radicality, but differ in their temporalities, frequencies, and realities of the world. Islamism demonstrates a cyclical pattern with an apocalyptic worldview, while Sunnī eschatology is singular and initially unapocalyptic. Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism, which focuses on prophetic guidance, the everyday, and the individual, exhibits low depth, slow speed, low impact, and low radicality. Its iterative temporality and unapocalyptic worldview lead to the ordinary as the emergent outcome.

Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology's representations of prophethood, along with Ghāmidī's covenantal representation of moral life, feature multiple layers. The relationships and interactions between these layers produce distinct changes and emergent outcomes that cannot be solely attributed to any individual aspect. These representations, with their various levels and elements interacting, are more intricate than simple systems that possess only a few components operating under well-understood laws. Instead, they can be considered complex systems.

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[838] Indicates the degree to which the change is drastic and represents a significant departure from the ordinary or status quo.

[839] Refers to the time aspect of the change, including whether it occurs within a lifetime, is cyclical (repeating), singular (one-time), or spans beyond our temporal reality into post-temporal realms (like the afterlife).

[840] Indicates how often the change occurs - whether it's a one-time event, cyclical, or continual.

[841] The environment or setting in which the change takes place. This can be apocalyptic (referring to a worldview that includes dramatic and destructive changes) or everyday (ordinary, non-apocalyptic).

[842] The intended results or consequences that are directly linked to specific changes sought in the representations of prophethood. This is about what the tradition aims to achieve through its representation of prophethood.

[843] The spontaneous results that arise unexpectedly from complex interactions within a representation of prophethood. It can be either extraordinary (beyond the reach of everyday actions and causes) or ordinary (consisting of everyday thoughts, feelings, or actions).

Table 6.1: Complex Characteristics of Representations of Prophethood

Traditions	Levels	Process	Change									Emergent Outcome
			Depth	Speed	Scale	Impact	Radicality	Temporality	Frequency	Milieu	Prophetic Outcome	
Sufism	• God, • Divine Law, esp. Prophethood • Spiritual Guidance • Individual	Transcendence	High	Fast	Individual	Very High	High	Lifetime	Cyclical	The Apocalyptic	Warner-Prophet	The Extraordinary
Islamism	• Divine Law, esp. Prophethood • Revealed Prophetic Guidance • Community and Individual	Shock	Moderate	Fast	Community	High	High	Lifetime	Cyclical	The Apocalyptic	Perpetual Reckoner-Community	The Extraordinary
Sunnī Eschatology	• Divine Law, esp. Prophethood • Revealed Prophetic Guidance • Community and Individual	Apocalypse	Moderate	Fast	World	High	High	Lifetime, Afterlife	Singular	The Everyday/The Apocalyptic	Terminal Reckoner-Community	The Extraordinary
Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism	• Divine Law, incl. Prophethood • Revealed Prophetic Guidance • Individual and Community	Covenantal Self-Purification	Low	Slow	Individual	Low	Low	Lifetime, Afterlife	Iterative	The Everyday	Crystallized Self	The Ordinary

By adapting Melanie Mitchell's widely-accepted conceptualisation of complex systems [844], complex systems in this context can be described as follows:

> "A complex system is a system composed of numerous interacting levels and elements, whose overall effect cannot be easily attributed to one of its individual levels or elements. These systems often exhibit self-organisation, non-linearity, and emergent properties."

A preliminary cross-analysis of this definition and the above tabulation illustrates that these representations are complex systems. Each representation uses a selection of levels with varying depth. The interactions within these levels result in various changes and outcomes, unique to each tradition. For example, Sufism involves the interaction of God and Divine Law to create warner prophets, while Islamism involves the interactions of Divine Law and prophetic guidance to transform people into reckoner communities. It follows that the overall effect of each representation is the result of complex interactions between different levels and cannot be solely attributed to one or any other level or aspect. For instance, the extraordinary change in Sufism cannot be reduced to just an individual's relationship with God, but also involves the interaction with Divine Law and prophethood.

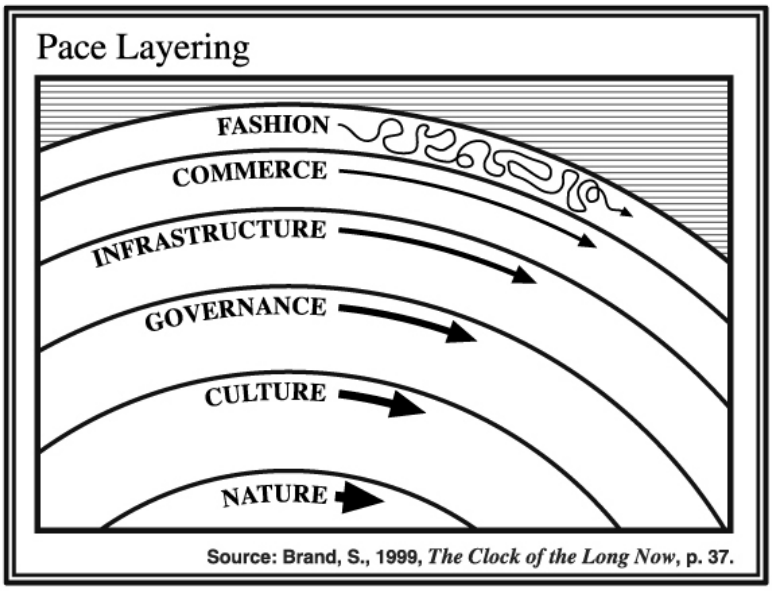
These representations also exhibit self-organization, with changes and outcomes emerging from the dynamic interplay of various levels and elements. For example, Sunnī eschatology demonstrates self-organization through the spontaneous emergence of a reckoner-community just once before the eschaton, resulting from the interplay of various levels and elements. Depending on the radicality of the dynamic interplay between various levels and elements, these representations can also exhibit emergent properties. This can be observed in the

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[844] See: Mitchell, *Complexity*. Mitchell conceptualises a complex system is a system composed of numerous interacting components, called agents, whose collective behaviour cannot be easily predicted or reduced to the behaviour of its individual components. These systems often exhibit emergent properties, self-organization, and adaptation in response to changes in their environment. In addition to Mitchell, a number of useful conceptualisation of complex systems can be found in: Kauffman, *The Origins of Order: Self-Organization and Selection in Evolution*., Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity*., John H. Holland, *Adaptation in Natural and Artificial Systems: An Introductory Analysis with Applications to Biology, Control, and Artificial Intelligence*., Arthur, *Complexity and the Economy*., and Arthur, *The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves*. These works provide definitions recognising the various aspects of complex systems, including self-organization, adaptation, evolution, and the nature of technology. Complex systems are characterized by heterogeneity, hierarchy, self-organization, openness, adaptation, memory, non-linearity, and uncertainty. They comprise a multitude of interacting parts, resulting in emergent behaviours. A system is essentially a large collection of functional units interacting to fulfil a specific purpose. Contrasting with this, reductionism, as described by Hofstadter, *Godel, Escher, Bach*., postulates that "a whole can be understood completely if you understand its parts, and the nature of their 'sum'". Hofstadter highlights how intuitively appealing reductionism is by saying "No one in her left brain could reject reductionism". However, complex systems often defy reductionism. The dynamic nature of interactions and the emergent behaviours within complex systems are not easily reducible or decipherable merely by analysing the individual components and their summation. This implies that complex systems necessitate a more encompassing approach that takes into account the rich interplay and resultant emergent phenomena that are absent in a reductionist viewpoint.

emergent outcomes of the traditions, such as the extraordinary in the case of Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology, or the ordinary in Ghāmidī's covenantal representation. These emergent outcomes, whether the extraordinary or the ordinary, are unique to each tradition and cannot be reduced to the properties of individual levels or elements.

Non-linearity is, of course, a central reflection of the radical nature of change. In Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī eschatology, high levels of speed, depth, and impact demonstrate that small changes can lead to significant impacts, ultimately transforming the entire subject they envision, whether it is the individual, the community, or the world. For instance, the individual's journey in Sufism can lead to an extraordinary transformation, the unification with God Himself, despite the seemingly small-scale input of the individual. This illustrates not only the non-linear nature of the process, where small changes can result in disproportionately large effects, but also its exponential character in certain instances. For example, the rapid speed of change inspires and accelerates the individual in Sufism or the community in Islamism experiences can be viewed as exponential transformations.



A complex system framework that is especially suited to represent and examine each representation is Stewart Brand's 'Pace Layers' framework, which he introduced his 1999 book *The Clock of the Long Now*.[845] It describes how different layers of a complex system evolve at different speeds, providing stability, resilience, and adaptability to the overall system. Brand applied his framework for understanding how various aspects of a complex system, the healthy civilization, interact and change at different speeds. He identified six layers (See Figure 6.1 above):

1. Fashion/art—Quick, always changing, and creative.
2. Commerce—Fast and focused on making money.
3. Infrastructure—Steady and supportive.
4. Governance—Slow and responsible for rules.
5. Culture—Deeply rooted and enduring.
6. Nature—The slowest and most powerful.

[845] Brand, *The Clock of the Long Now*.

Brand emphasized that each layer plays a role in making a healthy civilization. He explained that in a healthy civilization, "each level is allowed to operate at its own pace, safely sustained by the slower levels below and kept invigorated by the livelier levels above."[846] Each layer, therefore, contributes to its stability and adaptability. Fast layers, like fashion and art, bring new ideas, while slow layers, like culture and nature, keep things stable. Together, these layers create a civilization that can adapt to change while staying strong. Brand highlights that "it is precisely in the apparent contradictions between the pace layers that civilization finds its surest health."[847]

Since its introduction, Brand's 'Pace Layers' framework has been applied to complex systems in various domains, such as architecture, urban planning, organizations, and ecosystems.[848] This thesis proposes to apply it to Islamic traditions, namely Sufism, Islamism, Sunnī Eschatology, and Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism. Each tradition can be analysed in terms of its emergent outcome, prophetic outcome, change process, and how it is manifested across the five pace layers, which are as follows:

1. Pace Layer 1 (Fastest): Individual and Community
2. Pace Layer 2 (Fast): The Apocalyptic or The Everyday
3. Pace Layer 3 (Steady): Spiritual Guidance or Revealed Prophetic Guidance
4. Pace Layer 4 (Slow): Divine Law, Especially or Including Prophethood
5. Pace Layer 5 (Slowest): God

The application of the Pace Layer framework is both tabulated (see Table 6.2), allowing for a clear and straightforward comparison of the various traditions.

Sufism focuses on spiritual transcendence at the fastest pace layer, with individuals striving for spiritual growth and offering guidance to their communities (Pace Layer 1). They access spiritual guidance from prophets and masters while navigating the apocalyptic plane (Pace Layer 2). God's law of prophetic apocalypse supports individuals' efforts to attain spiritual transcendence (Pace Layer 4), with God as the ultimate source of spiritual transcendence and unification (Pace Layer 5).

Islamism seeks to establish a perpetual reckoner-community within the Islamic State, morally transforming individuals and communities (Pace Layer 1). The apocalyptic plays a constructive role in expanding ḥākimīyah and contracting jāhilīyah (Pace Layer 2). The Islamic State and its system provide prophetic guidance (Pace Layer 3), with God's law of prophetic apocalypse shaping the actions and goals of the reckoner-community (Pace Layer

[846] Brand.

[847] Brand, 'Pace Layering'.

[848] Brand.

4). God serves as the ultimate source of authority for this reckoner-community (Pace Layer 5).

Sunnī Eschatology focuses on the anticipation and eventual experience of the Mahdī's arrival and Jesus' return, with individuals and communities becoming part of a terminal reckoner-community (Pace Layer 1). The everyday milieu transforms into an apocalyptic one (Pace Layer 2) upon the appearance of the Mahdī and Jesus, and prophetic guidance is offered by the Mahdī and Jesus (Pace Layer 3). God's law of prophetic apocalypse shapes the actions and goals of the terminal reckoner-community (Pace Layer 4), with God as the ultimate source of authority and orchestrator of this prophetic apocalypse (Pace Layer 5).

Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism promotes living morally to fulfil the covenant with God for both individuals and communities (Pace Layer 1). This tradition emphasizes revealed prophetic guidance for everyday life (Pace Layer 3), shaping moral choices and actions. God's law of prophetic apocalypse, which is now available only as prophetic guidance, reminds individuals of their covenant and the consequences of fulfilling it or not (Pace Layer 4). God is the ultimate source and object of the covenant, with worship emerging through prayer, obedience, and sacrifice (Pace Layer 5).

The key interest in using the Pace Layers framework is to emphasize how the representations of prophethood in Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī Eschatology are special cases of 'inversion' in the context of pace layers, where slower layers sometimes move faster than upper layers, causing dramatic changes.

In the case of Sufism, for example, the slowest pace layer of God (Pace Layer 5) suddenly influences the fastest layers, the Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1), to cause transcendent moments, shock, and ultimately apocalypse. The interaction of these two pace layers can also be understood to create a continuous state of productive turbulence—a standing vortex—where the two come together and mix to create an innovative environment for the warner-prophet's cyclical apocalypse.

In Islamism, inversion occurs when the influence of slower pace layers, Divine Law (Pace Layer 4), is felt more intensely and rapidly within the fastest layers, such as Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1). This happens when the community seeks to morally transform itself into a perpetual reckoner-community by establishing the Islamic State. Similar to Sufism, the interaction between Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1) and the Apocalyptic (Pace Layer 2) can also be understood to create a standing vortex, where the two layers come together and mix to create an innovative environment for the prophet's cyclical apocalypse of the perpetual reckoner-community, persistently expanding the constructive apocalypse of ḥākimīyah (God's sovereignty) while contracting the destructive apocalypse of jāhilīyah (ignorance or the pre-Islamic state). The perpetual reckoner-community is stabilized by the slower pace layer of Revealed Prophetic Guidance (Pace Layer 3), which provides structure and limits to the reckoner-community's beliefs and actions.

In the context of Sunnī Eschatology, inversion occurs when the slower pace layer of Divine Law (Pace Layer 4) has a direct and sudden impact on the faster layers, such as Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1) and the Everyday (Pace Layer 2). This eschatological arrival of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus mobilizes individuals into a terminal reckoner-community. The interaction between Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1) and the Everyday (Pace Layer 2) can also be understood to cause productive turbulence, by which everyday lives and practices are transformed into apocalyptic ones when the Everyday (Pace Layer 2) is radically rendered an apocalyptic milieu in order to establish the terminal continuity between this world, the Day of Judgment, and ultimately the Hereafter.

There is no direct indication of inversion or turbulence in Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism. The slower layers of God (Pace Layer 5) and Divine Law (Pace Layer 4) are not entirely absent, still play a role in more subtle ways, such as through trials (imtiḥān) and conclusive proofs of God's truth (Itmām-e-Ḥujjat). Even Revealed Prophetic Guidance (Pace Layer 3) might be seen to invert some of an individual's beliefs, practices, or ways of thinking to align with the revealed prophetic guidance. This inversion might not be dramatic or disruptive, but it could still represent a shift in perspective or behaviour. So, any turbulence might be relatively limited or temporary compared to other traditions. As individuals and communities navigate their everyday lives while striving to live in accordance with the covenant with God, they might encounter challenges, conflicts, or moments of uncertainty that create turbulence. This turbulence could be internal (e.g., struggling with personal beliefs, values, or desires) or external (e.g., facing opposition from other groups or societal norms).

However, the focus of Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism is on the everyday life and moral choices rather than radical or disruptive changes. The norm, therefore, is standard order of the fastest layer of Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1) being sustained by the adaptable layer of the Everyday (Pace Layer 2) and stabilised by the slower pace layer of Revealed Prophetic Guidance (Pace Layer 3), which provides structure and limits to the reckoner-community's beliefs and actions. Moreover, the fastest layer of Individual and Community (Pace Layer 1) itself has a stabilising feature, the vital self (fiṭrah), which exists as the covenantal creature within each individual, guiding them to abide by it. The focus of this sustenance and stability is living a monotheistic life in order to fulfil a covenant with God. This involves both individual and community efforts towards self-purification and moral living. As shown in Chapter 4, this is based on revealed prophetic guidance that provides guidance for everyday moral choices and actions. The context in which this monotheistic life is lived is the everyday life of individuals and communities, without any major disruptions, such as transcendence, shock, or apocalypse.

Table 6.2: Pace Layer Components of Representations of Prophethood

Traditions	Emergent Outcome	Prophetic Outcome	Change Process	Pace Layer 1 (Fastest)	Pace Layer 2 (Fast)	Pace Layer 3 (Steady)	Pace Layer 4 (Slow)	Pace Layer 5 (Slowest)
Sufism	*The Extraordinary*	*Warner-Prophet*	*Transcendence*	**Individual and Community** *Individual striving for spiritual transcendence, and offering spiritual guidance to spiritual communities.*	**The Apocalyptic** *Individuals spiritually scale the apocalyptic plane, cosmogenically part of wahad-ul-wujud.*	**Spiritual Guidance** *Individual accessing spiritual guidance of prophets as well as spiritual masters, while bypassing revealed prophetic guidance.*	**Divine Law, Especially Prophethood** *God's law of prophetic apocalypse offering individuals' efforts to attain spiritual transcendence.*	**God** *The ultimate source of spiritual transcendence and ultimate object of unification.*
Islamism	*The Extraordinary*	*Perpetual Reckoner-Community*	*Shock*	**Individual and Community** *Community seeking to morally transform into a reckoner-community with the Islamic State.*	**The Apocalyptic** *Reckoner-community constructively harnesses the apocalyptic to initiate and grow the perpetual reckoner-community, ultimately expanding ḥākimīyah and contracting jāhilīyah.*	**Revealed Prophetic Guidance** *Prophetic guidance established through the Islamic State and the Islamic System it implements.*	**Divine Law, Especially Prophethood** *God's law of prophetic apocalypse shaping the actions and goals of the reckoner-community.*	**God** *The ultimate source of authority of prophetic apocalypse caused by the perpetual reckoner-community.*

Sunnī Eschatology	*The Extraordinary*	*Terminal Reckoner-Community*	*Apocalypse*	**Individual and Community** *Community anticipating and eventually experiencing the eschatological arrival of the Mahdī and the return of Jesus, to become a reckoner-community.*	**The Everyday** *The milieu in which the community anticipates eschatological events, and that ultimately transforms into an apocalyptic one with the terminal reckoner-community.*	**Revealed Prophetic Guidance** *Prophetic guidance, offered by the Mahdī and Jesus to the terminal reckoner-community to undertake eschatological actions.*	**Divine Law, Especially Prophethood** *God's law of prophetic apocalypse shaping the actions and goals of the terminal reckoner-community.*	**God** *The ultimate source of authority and orchestrator of prophetic apocalypse caused by the terminal reckoner-community.*
Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism	*The Ordinary*	*Crystallized Self*	*Covenantal Self-Purification*	**Individual and Community** *Individual and community living monotheistically to fulfil covenant with God.*	**The Everyday** *The context within in which individuals and communities experience and navigate their monotheistic lives.*	**Revealed Prophetic Guidance** *Prophetic guidance about everyday individual and collective life, informing moral choices and actions.*	**Divine Law, Including Prophethood** *God's law of prophetic apocalypse, which now remains as prophetic guidance to reminding the individual of their covenant and the consequences of fulfilling it or not.*	**God** *The ultimate source and object of the individual's covenant, and the worship that emerges from it: prayer, obedience, and sacrifice.*

It can be argued that the scholarly genres (e.g., tafsīr) and mechanisms (e.g., ṭarīqah, Islāmī Riyāsat) used by Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī Eschatology serve as tools of 'inversion,' utilized to establish and preserve their distinct representations of prophethood. In contrast, for Ghāmidī, these scholarly genres and mechanisms are fundamentally embedded within the everyday practices and guidance associated with prophethood. Instead of aiming for a reversal or upending of the standard order, Ghāmidī's approach seeks to uphold the structure, routine, and consistency of that order. This perspective adds depth to the understanding of 'ordinary' in Islam within the context of Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism. The ordinary sustains; it is the quiet affirmation, rather than upheaval, of everyday moral life.

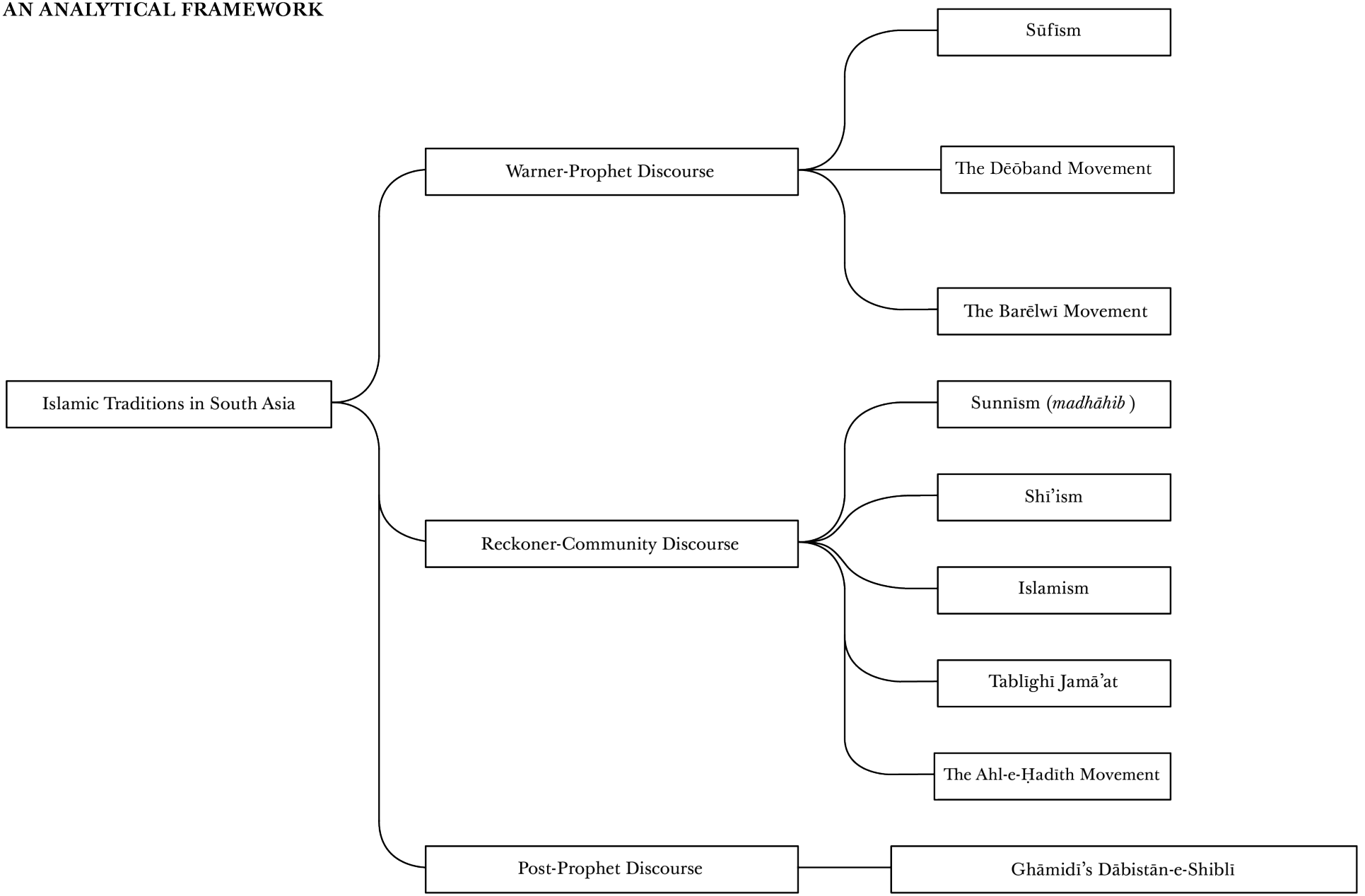
3. Representations of Prophethood: An Analytical Framework

On the back of its analysis, this thesis introduces an analytical framework that systematically classifies Islamic traditions based on their representations of prophethood. This framework divides Islamic traditions into three main discourses: the Warner-Prophet discourse, the Reckoner-Community discourse, and the Post-Prophet discourse. (See figure below) The classification is determined by at least two characteristics: the ultimate metaphysical source and the prophetic outcome of each discourse.

1. Warner-Prophet Discourse: This category includes traditions that emphasize direct access to God and the prophetic outcome of the Warner-Prophet. Chapter 1 demonstrated that these traditions consist of Sufism as well as the South Asian Sunnī movements such as the Deobandī and Barēlwī movements. The Aḥmadiyyah movement can also be viewed as an attempt by its followers to recognize their founder as a Warner-Prophet.
2. Reckoner-Community Discourse: This category features traditions that highlight direct access to Divine Law and the prophetic outcome of a Reckoner-Community. Chapters 2 and 3 detail these traditions, which include Islamism, Sunnīsm, Shī'ism, and the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth movement. While Sunnīsm anticipates a terminal reckoner-community before the end of time, Islamism, and also comparable, the Tablīghī Jamā'at, pursue a perpetual reckoner-community. Shī'ism and the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth movement share the belief in an eschatological reckoner-community led by the Māhdī and Jesus. Although Shī'ism's belief in Imāmate is akin to a Warner-Prophet, it is not classified as such because it does not emphasize direct access to God.

   In fact, all four traditions in the Reckoner-Community Discourse utilize Divine Law uniquely. They imagine an infallible community that embodies the Prophet Muḥammad's prophetic apocalypse. This community serves as a model of emulation known as minjāh. Subsequent visions of a reckoner-community are deeply connected to this infallible community, which can be either inter-generational, such as Shī'ism's Imāmate, or the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth's Muḥaddithīn, or intra-generational, as in Sunnīsm's Sahābah.
3. Post-Prophet Discourse: Represented by Ghāmidī's covenantal monotheism, this category rejects any prophetic outcome after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. Instead of representing prophethood, it relies on revealed prophetic guidance from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The prophetic apocalypse is represented as guidance (hidāyah) rather than a future event in history.

REPRESENTATIONS OF PROPHETHOOD:
AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



Based on the discussion throughout the thesis, it can be argued that both the Warner-Prophet and the Reckoner-Community discourses challenge the prominence of the ordinary. Instead, they assert that the extraordinary, which is beyond the scope of our daily actions and causes, shapes our moral lives. In contrast, the Post-Prophet discourse highlights the importance of the ordinary within Islam, asserting that moral life primarily consists of our everyday thoughts, feelings, and actions. As such, while the Warner-Prophet and Reckoner-Community discourses are characterized by prophetic events—transcendence, shock, and apocalypse—the Post-Prophet discourse maintains the significance of prophethood strictly within the context of everyday life.

Significantly, Ghāmidī also proposes a classification of Islamic traditions, which directly corresponds with the three discourses suggested here. He categorizes Sufism, Deobandī, Barēlwī, and Aḥmadiyyah movements as part of the taṣawwuf or 'mysticism' tradition, relying on supererogatory spiritual experiences with God. Sunnīsm, Shī'ism, the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth movement, and Islamism are grouped as part of the Salaf or 'Predecessor' tradition, emphasizing an infallible and emulatable community, such as Sunnīsm's Sahābah, Tābi'ūn, and Tābi' at-Tābi'īn. Ghāmidī's own school, the Dābistān-e-Shiblī or 'School of Shiblī', is the third and late tradition, characteristically focusing on the discovery (tahqīq) of authentic prophetic guidance.[849]

This three-discourse analytical framework is further corroborated when Sufism, Islamism, Sunnī Eschatology, and Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism are analysed for similarities and differences through the lens of complex systems. As shown in Table 6.1, despite both unique and overlapping characteristics, Sufism emerges as a distinct tradition, as does Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism.

However, Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology share the majority of their distinct characteristics, so they are considered similar enough to be classified together. Both Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology utilize the same combination of metaphysical levels: Divine Law (Layer 4), Revealed Prophetic Guidance (Layer 3), and Individual and Community (Layer 1). The changes occurring in Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology also share the same high radicality, with fast speed, moderate depth, non-individual scale, and high impact. The resulting emergent and prophetic outcomes are also the same. The interplay of their radical speed, depth, scale, and impact spontaneously results in the extraordinary and gives rise to a reckoner-community.

It should be noted that Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology differ in terms of their temporality and frequency; Islamism's change is cyclical and occurs within the community's lifetime, whereas Sunnī Eschatology's change is singular, spanning both the lifetime and the afterlife of the community. However, this does not impact the milieu in which the change occurs, as Sunnī Eschatology transfigures the everyday into the apocalyptic.

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[849] *Dabistan-e-Shibli Ki Wall of Fame*. See also: Ghāmidī, *Maqāmāt*, 62–70.

Although Sufism also has high radicality like Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology, it differs in all aspects except fast speed. It has high depth, individual scale, and very high impact. Similarly, while its emergent outcome is also the extraordinary, its prophetic outcome is different: the warner-prophet. Much like its prophetic outcome, Sufism's utilization of metaphysical levels is distinct in its combination: God (Layer 5), Divine Law (Layer 4), Spiritual Guidance (Layer 3), and Individual and Community (Layer 1). It is important to note that Sufism and Islamism share the same temporality (lifetime) and frequency (cyclical). However, as mentioned above, the resulting apocalyptic milieu does not distinguish it from Sunnī Eschatology.

Despite its minor overlaps with Sufism on individual scale and with Sunnī Eschatology in temporality, spanning both the individual's lifetime and afterlife, Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism is distinct from all three traditions. Unlike Sufism, Islamism, and Sunnī Eschatology, it exhibits low radicality: low speed, low depth, individual scale, and low impact. The resulting emergent and prophetic outcomes are also different. The interplay of its speed, depth, scale, and impact spontaneously results in the ordinary and does not give rise to any prophetic outcome. Instead, Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism employs the metaphysical levels of Revealed Prophetic Guidance (Layer 3), The Everyday (Layer 2), and Individual and Community (Layer 1) to support the individual's process of covenantal self-purification. The result of the individual's process, the crystallized self—a self that can no longer change and, therefore, alter its eligibility for reward or punishment—is only revealed in the afterlife.

In conclusion, a complex system analysis distinguishes the traditions to precisely correspond to the three-discourse analytical framework based on the representations of prophethood. Sufism corresponds to the Warner-Prophet discourse, Islamism and Sunnī Eschatology correspond to the Reckoner-Community discourse, and Ghāmidī's Covenantal Monotheism corresponds to the Post-Prophet discourse.

A key motivation for my proposing the three-discourse analytical framework is addressing the dissatisfaction with existing classifications and explanations used to analyse Islam, its traditions, and foundational sources, including the Qur'ān and prophethood. As discussed in the introduction chapter, Euro-American scholarship often resists using Islamic exegesis for heuristic purposes, particularly contemporary, non-Arabic exegesis. Instead, it places high value on historical-critical study of the Qur'ān, anchored in the late-antique biblical context. The alternative, classical tafsīr scholarship, is also limited, by its strong focus on medieval and Arabic literature. To address this issue, this thesis has conceptualized and heuristically implemented representations of prophethood from a third Qur'ān, represented in the indigenous exegesis of contemporary South Asian scholars, particularly Ghāmidī. The three-discourse analytical framework, which is directly derived from this third reading of the Qur'ān, serves as a crucial step in this process.

Another reason for developing this analytical framework was to address the difficulty in categorizing Ghāmidī due to the complexity and nuance of his thought, which complicates

widely-accepted labels such as traditional, modern, Islamist, or liberal. Some scholarship, like Amin's,[850] has tried to reconcile these labels by characterizing Ghāmidī as post-Islamist in a diachronic manner. However, Aziz underscored that Ghāmidī's openness to liberalism is driven not by a post-Islamist embrace but by reformist concerns about Islam's normativity.[851] Iqtidar similarly demonstrated that Ghāmidī's focus on achieving a balance between 'method' and 'sensibility' casts doubt on the binary opposition between traditionalists and modernists.[852] These papers reveal that existing labels oversimplify the intricate debates within the Islamic tradition. Arguably even more significantly, Iqtidar pointed out how Ghāmidī's Sharī'ah-inspired account of individual responsibility and state minimalism challenges the broader classifications of liberalism and tolerance beyond the Islamic tradition.[853] The new analytical framework aims to develop alternative conceptual distinctions that can more adequately categorize not only Ghāmidī. For example, Ghāmidī's self-classification as muḥaqqiq falls into place when the framework emphasizes that his primary concern is to authentically utilize revealed prophetic guidance instead of making ontological commitments, such as with God or Divine Law, that exceed the scope of Islam's epistemological resources.

This new framework also helps better conceptualize and understand the wider Islamic traditions in South Asia. Stipulating that representations of prophethood are a primary feature of these Islamic traditions creates an account of traditions involved in long-term developments that cannot be neatly split between classical or contemporary. The 'warner-prophet' through-line drawn between the classical Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Ghazālī, the later Sufism of Shāh Walīullāh, and the Dēōbandī, Barelvi, and Aḥmadiyyah movements showcases long-term developments that cross over classical and contemporary Islam. This long-term development is somewhat indicated in existing scholarship, such as Qasim Zaman[854] and SherAli Tareen's[855] recent works, which have showed that divine sovereignty, even if not yet explicitly political, had emerged in the Islamic traditions in South Asia far before Mawdūdī: Shāh 'Abdul Qādir and later, the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Dēōbandī and Barelvi movements, were clearly concerned with situating divine sovereignty.

Zaman[856] and Tareen[857] justifiably locate their explanations within the context of social and political transformations, such as modernity and colonialism. However, an emphasis on representations of prophethood, whereby Islamic traditions are resiliently seeking to invert the standard order that comes with the end of prophethood, leads us to understand concepts such as divine sovereignty as at least in part independent of or not reactive to exogenous

[850] Amin, *Post-Islamism*.

[851] Aziz, 'Making a Sovereign State'.

[852] Iqtidar, 'Is Tolerance Liberal?'

[853] Iqtidar.

[854] Zaman, 'The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought'.

[855] Tareen, *Defending Muḥammad in Modernity*.

[856] Zaman, 'The Sovereignty of God in Modern Islamic Thought'; Zaman, 'Divine Sovereignty—Some Reflections'., and Zaman.

[857] Tareen, *Defending Muḥammad in Modernity*.

factors. As argued in Chapter 2, the debate about divine sovereignty was less about contextualizing Sharī'ah within a colonial cosmos and more about accessing and implementing the Divine Laws that the Prophet enacts during his apocalypse. The emphasis on prophethood also highlights that these and other developments were not essentially of one nature or another, e.g., political, conservative, or modernist. Prophethood is a comprehensive enough category that can encompass a wide range of developments' nature while manifesting itself in the development of a specific nature.

One additional observation about the analytical framework is that it more effectively captures the nature and basis of change in Islamic traditions in South Asia. Zaman, for instance, has famously argued that the 'ulamā, a scholarly elite, not only created change in tradition during the premodern period but also contributed to this change in modernity, on par with modernists and Islamists.[858] Focusing primarily on Dēōbandīs, Zaman emphasizes the 'ulamā's discursive responsiveness to the impacts of colonial and postcolonial conditions. Importantly, he contends that this responsiveness arises and is rationalized by the Dēōbandīs' foundational sources. Although these sources are not as systematic as modernists or Islamists might prefer, they remain well-defined despite their discursive nature.

As the 'ulamā adopted the new European concept of "religion," these sources and the resulting private and public religious life became less discursive and more fixed in content. Despite Zaman's observation of the subsequent reification of religion, he maintains that Islamic traditions engaged with change in a foundationally-driven manner, providing stability, opportunity, and context for dynamism, whether more or less finite. The analytical framework significantly challenges this notion of foundationally-driven dynamism. By emphasizing that the basis for developments in Islamic traditions is not merely epistemological but also ontological, such as accessing Divine Law and even God, the changes these traditions generate are not strictly foundational in the traditional sense.

Unlike Metcalf[859], Zaman[860] overlooks Sufism's impact on the Dēōbandī movement, which arguably results in an overemphasis on the legal-juristic aspects of this and other traditions. The key point is that the non-foundational aspects of these traditions lead to a type of change that is unmoored, creating, and adopting possible and impossible elements without consistently distinguishing between them. The representations of prophethood serve as a prime example of this type of change. Although complex, these representations are not enacted in the same way as other aspects of religious life. Nevertheless, these 'impossible' representations of prophethood maintain their legitimacy and position in the extensive theological catalogue that Islamic traditions, including the Dēōbandīs, uphold.

[858] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*.

[859] Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India*.

[860] Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*.

4. Discourses of Characterization

In addition to classifying and explaining traditions as part of discourses that generate certain representations of prophethood, this thesis has also sought to at least indicate how these traditions interact with each other, by proposed a model to explain an important an important bulk of their interaction. This model proposes that the different Islamic traditions are engaged in what can be called "discourses of characterization", in which the traditions are focused on defining and categorizing each other in a particular way, rather than engaging in theological comprehension and critical examination based on arguments and evidence.

In the context of the current discussion, it is contended that there is considerable intellectual tension over the ordinariness of moral life in Islam. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, nearly all Islamic traditions consider prophethood as their extraordinary par excellence. Islamic traditions view post-prophetic moral life as characterised by the genre of prophetic events, namely transcendence, shock, and apocalypse. Ghāmidī instead asserts that the event of prophethood cannot be experienced again, but nevertheless, it remains morally significant to everyday life.

Hence, traditions within the warner-prophet and reckoner-community discourses emphasize "the extraordinary," while Ghāmidī's school, representing the post-prophet discourse, critiques the other two discourses to underscore "the ordinary" and accentuate the significance of prophethood in daily life. Generally speaking, the "discourses of characterization" involve traditions from the warner-prophet and reckoner-community discourses referring to Ghāmidī's school using narrow categorizations. In contrast, Ghāmidī advocates for critical reasoning and argumentation when engaging with other discourses, and is particularly wary of employing narrow categorizations.

The analysis of Ghāmidī's objects of critique is notably difficult to conduct through existing research methodologies, as his entire body of work seldom names the individuals or traditions he critiques. Instead, Ghāmidī concentrates on criticizing the position or argument itself. He only refers to a specific tradition or representative person when attributing them as the actual originator of the position or argument under examination. This nomination can carry either a positive or negative connotation, contingent upon the position or argument in question. Within his body of work, the text with the most intensive reference to a tradition or a person is his two-part essay on Sufism, in which he critiques it for its interpretation and use of prophethood. Beyond this text, across the rest of his body of work, the most frequent references observed include the predecessors of his own school, Farāhī and Islāhī, as well as classical exegetes like Zamakhsharī and contemporary muḥaqqiqs such as Mawdūdī. Often, Ghāmidī's intention is to build upon, modify, or outright correct these named individuals rather than characterize them.

Ghāmidī, therefore, exercises considerable caution when referring to a person or tradition. This caution is not arbitrary; it is based on a set of rules within his larger method of criticism.[861] Broadly, these rules are as follows:[862]

1) The person being criticized should acknowledge and own the ideas in question, preventing misrepresentation of the ideas being critiqued. Ghāmidī's series of lectures in Australia, which covered all major religious traditions of Islam, is a significant example of the application of this rule.
2) Criticism should focus on the foundation of the person's argument, such as the theological sources they used (e.g., the Qur'ān or a generic text of that tradition), rather than critiquing ideas based on their implications.
3) Criticism should be based on tanqīd (criticism), not tanqīẓ (ad hominem reference), meaning the focus should be on the thought (fikr) of the person rather than the person themselves. Ghāmidī's insistence on identifying someone only when they are the originator of that thought is a necessary corollary of this rule.

Ghāmidī has been the subject of significant characterization from various traditions identified within the previously mentioned analytical framework. This includes Dēōbandī scholars and, increasingly, scholars of the Ahl-e-Hadīth. Characterizations range from labels such as "Fiṭnah-e-Ghāmidī" ('The Discord of Ghāmidī')[863] and "Ghāmidī ki Gumrahi" ('The Misguidance of Ghāmidī')[864] to "Munkarī-e-Hadīth" ('Rejector of Hadīth')[865]. Although some publications and discussions address Ghāmidī in a more organised way, such as Ahl-e-Hadīth scholar Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Zubair's 2008 work *Fikr-e-Ghāmidī: Aik Tehqīqī wa Tajzīyātī Mutālia* ['The Thought of Ghāmidī: A Research and Analytical Study'][866] and his 2021 online discussion series *Fikr-e-Ghāmidī* ['The Thought of Ghāmidī'],[867] these discussions remain deeply polemical in nature.

The Ahl-e-Hadīth movement is particularly noteworthy for dedicating entire journals to polemically characterizing Ghāmidī. Other instances of polemical characterizations include those by Dēōbandī scholar Muftī Ṭāriq Masʿūd, Sufi spiritual figure Professor Rafīq Akhtar,

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[861] A compelling example of Ghāmidī's application of these rules can be found in his discussion on Ashraf ʿAlī Thānvī during a specific dars. In this session, Ghāmidī applied all three rules of criticism to elaborate on the prophetic attribution or transitivity Thānvī establishes between the Prophet and the Sheikh. Ghāmidī argues that, as far as his fikr is concerned, Thānvī is correct in his argumentation. However, he qualifies that the basis of Thānvī's argumentation is incorrect and locates this flaw within his larger criticism of Sufism. See: *Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi Per Kia Gaya Aitraaz - Part 1 - Javed Ahmed Ghamidi*., and *Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi Per Kia Gaya Aitraaz - Part 2 - Javed Ahmed Ghamidi*.

[862] *Tanqeed Karany Aur Sunnay Kay Usool*.

[863] Razavi, *Fitna e Ghamidia*.

[864] 'Javed Ghāmidī Ki Gumrahi ! Maulana Sheikh Makki Al Hijazi جاوید غامدی کی گمراہی - YouTube'.

[865] 'Javed Ghamdi Munkir e Hadees'.

[866] Zubair, 'Fikr E Ghamdi Aik Tehqiqi Wa Tajziyati Mutalia'.

[867] 'Fikr-e-Ghamdi - YouTube'.

and Tablīghī Jamā'at leader Maulānā Tāriq Jamīl. More ambivalent or less polemical characterizations include those by Barelvi outcast Injīnyar Muḥammad ʿAlī Mīrzā, and the late Maulānā Muḥammad Isḥāq (d. 2013).

Non-polemical publications on Ghāmidī encompass *Ghāmidī Ṣāḥib: 'Ulamā Kī Naẓar Mein* ['Ghāmidī: In the Eyes of the Religious Scholars'] (2008)[868] by the Dēōbandī-trained scholar Muftī Faīsal Khurshīd Jāpanwālā, Muḥammad Mushāq Aḥmad's critical papers on Ghāmidī, such as "Revelation and Compilation of the Torah: Critical Analysis of the Views of Some Prominent Muslim Scholars,"[869] and the perennialist mystic Aḥmad Javēd. All these authors endeavour to offer a considerably more accurate, and critical, exposition of Ghāmidī's thought.

As alluded to briefly in the introduction chapter, Ghāmidī has encountered even more severe opposition. The Tālibān, specifically the Tehrīk-e-Tālibān Pakistan faction, issued a takfīr against him, in an attempt to excommunicate him from Islam. This sparked assassination attempts targeting both Ghāmidī and the editor of his journal, Manẓūr ul-Ḥasan. Tragically, some of Ghāmidī's followers were not as fortunate, including his close friend and colleague, Dr Fārūq Khān, who was among those successfully assassinated.

Several years after his self-exile, in 2020, Ghāmidī initiated a critical response series titled *Response to 23 Questions on the Religious Opinion of Javēd Ahmed Ghāmidī*.[870] This ongoing series of discussions, which began on April 5, 2020, has so far covered 14 questions through 109 recorded discussions. The series is hosted by his son-in-law and student, Muḥammad Ḥasan Īlyās, who is the grandson of the amīr of the Dēōbandī Bīnorī Town in Karachi, and was outcast once he began following Ghāmidī.

In 2023, Ghāmidī's institution, Al-Mawrid, initiated the publication of works based on "Response to 23 Questions," with each publication addressing a single question. To date, three publications have been developed but not yet released. It is noteworthy that these publications, developed by the now-recovered Manẓūr ul-Ḥasan, are extensive, ranging from 400 to 800 pages each.[871] Upon completion, these publications will likely represent the largest documentation of Ghāmidī's thought in terms of volume, thus serving as a significant resource for future research.[872]

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[868] Japanwala, 'Ghāmidī Sāhib: Ulema Ki Nzr Me'.

[869] Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmad, 'The Revelation and Compilation of Torah'.

[870] *23 Questions on Religious Opinion of Javed Ahmed Ghāmidī.*

[871] These so far cover topics related to the First Revelation, The Second Coming of Jesus, and The Miracle of the Splitting of the Moon.

[872] This initiative adds to the growing body of secondary literature on Ghāmidī's thought, which includes works such as Shehzad Saleem's "History of The Qur'an: A Concise Study" and "History of the Quran: A Critical Study," Abu Yahya's "Fikr-E-Fraahi: Shakhsiyat Aur Khidmat," Irfan Shehzad's "Qanoon-e-Itmaam-ul-Hujjah" and "Khātam-e-Nabūwat aur Ahmadi Istidaal," Amir Gazdar's "Qurbani Se Pehle Baal Aur Nakhun Nah Kaatna" and "Al Ulama-min-aḥkām-al-hijab-wal-ikhtilat," and Ammar Khan Nasir's "Jihad: Aik Mutali'ia" and "Hudood-o-Taziraat." The expanding secondary literature presents both

Characterization, therefore, serves as a critical component in shaping Islamic traditions and their interactions with one another. By characterizing themselves and other traditions, these groups safeguard the metaphysical basis of their representations. Essentially, through their rhetorical utility, the discourses of characterization play a crucial role in maintaining and developing representations of prophethood.

It is significantly argued here that these discourses of characterization can be partially explained by the representations of prophethood themselves. As mentioned earlier, there is not only a significant tension over the ordinariness of Islam but also over the nature of the extraordinary that Islam represents. In Chapter 1, this was demonstrated with the case of the polemical over the Dēōbandīs' doctrine of Imkān-e-Kizb [God's ability to lie],[873] which Shāh Ismāʿīl Shāhīd advanced with his 'caveat'[874] on Muḥammad's final prophethood (imtinā-e-khatam-un nabiyyīn), especially to defend the appearance of 'common' prophets despite the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood. Khayrābādī attempted to refute this doctrine, with the assistance of Ghālib's masnavī, by arguing that God is infallible and that lying would be a flaw, and that it is impossible for God to have a flaw. SherAli *Tareen's Defending Muhammad in Modernity* (2020) has highlighted that these seemingly arcane theological debates within major Sunnī religious orientations in South Asian Islam are in fact "animated" by larger forces. While Tareen focuses on "profound questions of sovereignty, politics, and social order,"[875] this thesis emphasizes that it was animated by internal contest between differing representations of prophethood. But the earlier discourses were utilized theological arguments and literary discourse to present their positions and refute the positions of their opponents.

Over time, especially with specific shifts that will be shortly elaborated, these discourses become more focused on characterization, intended to rhetorically create a particular image of an opposing tradition without engaging in dialogue or reasoning. The Khātam-e-Nabūwat and Tauhīn-e-Risālat controversies serve as another relevant examples of this phenomenon. Arguably, the Aḥmadiyyah movement took the non-rhetorical step of disclosing and defending its representation of prophethood without concealing it publicly. This disclosure escalated the characterization of the Aḥmadiyyah movement to the point of not only being excommunicated from Islam by various traditions, including the Dēōbandīs and Islamists, but also eventually being excommunicated by the State of Pakistan.

Ghāmidī's critique, with its focus on foundational sources, dismantles the rhetorical feature of this discourse, and has resulted in more severe characterizations, encompassing ad

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opportunities and challenges for future research on Ghāmidī. While it allows for a broader exploration of his thought, researchers must also exercise greater scrutiny when navigating literature from within Ghāmidī's discourses, as these sources may not necessarily reflect the accuracy or fidelity of his idea.

[873] Gangohi, *Fatawa-Yi Rashidiyya*, 113.

[874] Shahid, *Taqwiyyat Al-Iman Ma' Tazkir al-Ikhwan*.

[875] Tareen, *Defending Muḥammad in Modernity*.

hominem attacks, public systematic polemics, violence, and state censorship. Ghāmidī's critique effectively highlights the epistemological fragility of these theological positions while underscoring their ontological aspirations. As such, the discourses of characterization can be seen as inherently metaphysical in their interests and nature. As previously mentioned, Ghāmidī's introduction of his thought contends that the theological catalogue of other discourses is filled with both possible and impossible elements indiscriminately, offering limited value in foundationally understanding and reforming Islam. In contrast, Ghāmidī's more definitive view of the theological catalogue challenges the seemingly infinite and illusory theological catalogue of these other discourses, which is often connected to the perpetual access to prophethood as stated in their representations.

This tension recalls the American philosopher and theologian Carse's concept of finite and infinite games. In his 1986 book, *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility*,[876] American philosopher and theologian James P. Carse differentiates between finite games, which have defined beginnings, endings, and sets of rules aimed at achieving victory, and infinite games, which are more abstract, lacking fixed rules or time limits, and focused on playing indefinitely. According to Carse, the primary goal of infinite games is not to win but to maintain and expand the game, fostering an ongoing process of interaction and engagement.

The concept of finite and infinite games provides a useful framework for understanding the dynamics of characterization are deeply tied to the existence of various representations of prophethood. In the context of Islamic traditions and Ghāmidī's approach, it can be argued that the traditions endeavour to engage in the infinite game of religion, where discussions and interpretations are open-ended, and the focus is on an ongoing process of exchange and adaptation. Their aim is to maintain the boundless theological catalogue needed to maintain their representations of prophethood. On the other hand, Ghāmidī's approach involves playing a finite game or transforming the infinite game into a finite one, by asserting that a definitive understanding of Islamic theology is possible and necessary. The aim is to structure the role of prophethood in everyday life, and to also sustain the covenantal monotheism he proposes.

Ghāmidī's finite game, therefore, undermines the traditions' perception of an infinite theological landscape, because of which 'inversions' of the original prophetic apocalypse are possible. The narrow and polemical nature of characterizations towards can, therefore, be understood as reactions to the traditions being made to feel 'cheated' by Ghāmidī's perspective, which changes the rules of an infinite game into a finite game. Not only does it challenge their long-standing methods and assumptions but also potentially threatens the very foundation upon which their ongoing representations of prophethood are built.

The reliance on polemical labels for Ghāmidī in discourses of characterization can further be understood as indicative of the prevalence of 'names' over theology. While Ghāmidī seeks to

[876] Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games*.

engage in theological discussions, traditions appear to treat Islam more as a subject with a name. This phenomenon can be better comprehended by examining the transformation of Islam as a proper name and a historical subject. In 1882, Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *The Future of Islam*[877] argued that Islam had been transformed into a proper name and a subject in its own right. Although Blunt's book envisions an Islam instrumentalized by the British for certain geopolitical aims, the current discussion looks at Islam as being instrumentalized by its own traditions.

The agency of these traditions, which was alluded to by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in the late 1950s[878], observed the transformation of Islam from a verbal noun to a proper name, making it an agent in its own right.[879] In other words, Islam as a proper name now serves as a placeholder for theological subjects, including God and the Prophet. As Faisal Devji has argued, the use of the proper name reduced Muḥammad's theological role in Islam, raising questions about whether he should be considered Islam's subject or object, and whether he has should be stripped of his agency.[880] This modern phenomenon of the shift away from theological concerns toward semantic ones, therefore, reflects the rhetorical and discursive maintenance of representations of prophethood, even at the theological expense of prophethood itself.

The significance of treating one's tradition or another's, as essentially a proper name rather than a religion, therefore, highlights the problem of the survival of the theological. The importance of religion as a proper name, rather than a theological existence, explains why the characterization of one's own tradition or the tradition of others, rather than critical discourse with them, is so vital. By recognizing the role that proper names play in these discourses, we can better understand the underlying motivations and dynamics that shape the interactions and development of various Islamic traditions. It can be concluded that Islamic traditions, driven by the ontological commitments of their representation of prophethood, are engaging in an infinite game of ongoing 'theological' discourse and interpretation, while Ghāmidī's approach seeks to provide a definitive theological understanding. The prevalence of names serves as a placeholder for these traditions' hesitation to make substantial theological examination and resulting commitments which may, potentially, undermine their representation of prophethood.

[877] Blunt and Nourallah, *The Future of Islam*. and *Keynote The Proper Name*.

[878] Smith, *Islam in Modern History*. and *Keynote The Proper Name*.

[879] *Keynote The Proper Name*.

[880] See for example: 'Salman Rushdie and the Neoliberal Culture Wars - Boston Review'. and *Keynote The Proper Name*.

SELECT GLOSSARY

(words are written as they appear in the text)

ʻaqīdah: Creed, with creedal elements considered essential in Islam, including belief in God, His prophets, His books, His angels, the Day of Judgment, and divine decree.

āfāq: An Arabic term meaning 'horizon'. In the context of this thesis, it refers to the world around us or the universe.

aḥkām: Divine instructions or laws in Islam.

aḥwāl: An Arabic term that refers to the spiritual states in the Sufi journey towards self-transcendence and union with God.

akābir: In a Sufi context, masters are often spiritual guides or leaders, who may also be called shaykh or pir.

ikhlāqī ḥiss: Moral sense, the ability to discern right from wrong.

al-jamʼ: An Arabic term meaning "unity" or "unification". In the context of Sufism, it refers to the spiritual state of unity with the divine.

ālim-e-ghayb: In Islamic theology, it refers to the knowledge of the unseen or unknown, which only Allah possesses.

anfus: An Arabic term meaning 'selves' or 'souls'. In Islamic spirituality, it often refers to the inner self or soul.

Apocalypse: A term that traditionally refers to a catastrophic event leading to the sudden end or revelation of the world or a significant historical period. In the context of this thesis, it also refers to an individual's profound moment of revelation or reckoning, including destruction.

ʻaql: An Arabic term meaning intellect or mind. In the context of this thesis, it is used to denote the faculty of reason or rational thinking in humans.

asāghir: Arabic term for "the small ones" or "the young ones," often used to refer to novices or beginners on the Sufi path.

asbāb al-nuzūl: Arabic term that translates to "occasions/circumstances of revelation", a field of Qur'ānic studies dedicated to identifying the circumstances and context in which specific verses of the Qur'ān were revealed.

aṣl: Arabic term for origin or root, used here to denote substance or essence.

awām: Arabic term for the common people, in contrast to the elite or elect (khawāṣ).

bahīmiyat: An Urdu term meaning beastliness or animal-like behaviour.

baqāʾ: Translates to "subsistence"; In the Sufi context, it refers to the stage where human selfhood, post-annihilation, subsists differently, maintaining self-awareness while being fully aware of divine presence.

bar'at-o-ḥijrat: An Arabic term which translates to "abandonment and migration". It refers to the fourth stage of prophethood when the Prophet and his followers abandon those who reject the warning and emigrate to a new place.

bāṭin: Arabic term referring to the esoteric or inner aspects of something, often used in contrast with ẓāhir (exoteric or outer aspects).

Covenantal Hermeneutics: A term referring to an approach to interpretation that emphasizes the covenant between God and humans, and is characterized by ongoing interpretation and dialogue with God, often focusing on moral engagement and ethical considerations.

Covenantal Monotheism: A term referring to a theological perspective where a covenant, or agreement, is made between God and humans, and monotheism refers to the belief in one God. In Ghāmidī's account, it emphasizes the moral responsibilities and commitments in the relationship between God and individuals.

Dābistān-e-Shiblī: School of Shiblī; a school or category of Islamic tradition proposed by Ghāmidī that focuses on the discovery (tahqīq) of authentic prophetic guidance. Shiblī Nomānī was an Islamic scholar from the Indian subcontinent.

al-Dajjāl: An evil figure in Islamic eschatology comparable to the Antichrist in Christian belief, who will appear before the Day of Judgment.

darindagī: An Urdu term meaning ferocity or the nature of a beast.

deynūniyat: An Urdu term used to active state of divine warning about the truth of God and the final day of judgement.

dhannī: Speculative or probabilistic; used to describe sources of Islamic law or rulings that are considered uncertain or open to interpretation.

dīn al-fiṭrah: An Arabic term that translates to "natural religion". It is a doctrine that posits the inherent suitability of divine law to human nature.

dīn-e-ḥanīf: An Arabic phrase referring to the religion or way of life of a ḥanīf, particularly in the context of monotheistic worship.

Discourses of Characterization: Refers to the ways in which different Islamic traditions represent and characterize each other, often through narrow categorizations.

Discursive Intentionality: The process through which meanings and understandings are produced and reproduced within a culture or tradition through language and communication.

Divine Laws: Laws based on religious beliefs and principles. They have their basis in the divine will, which can either be accessible to humans due to their rationality or be inaccessible due to their origin in divine will like revelations.

Divine Sovereignty: The belief in the supreme authority and power of God in governing the universe.

Everyday: The term ‘everyday’ in this thesis is used to describe the autonomous and unchanging context in which the ordinary happens. It encompasses the routine and mundane aspects of daily life, including the thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences that occur on a regular basis.

Extraordinary: The ‘extraordinary’, according to the thesis, refers to events or experiences that are beyond the scope of ordinary, everyday actions and causes. These are events that interrupt the everyday routine and cannot be easily explained by human actions or natural causes. In the religious context, this term is used to describe events that have a profound significance, such as prophethood in Islamic traditions, and are considered beyond ordinary human experiences.

Extreme Intentionalism (EI): A philosophical stance that contends that the fictional content of a text is solely equivalent to what the author intended the reader to imagine. It is characterised as a maximalist account of intentionalism.

fanāʾ: An Arabic term that translates to “annihilation” in English. In the Sufi context, it refers to the stage where human selfhood is completely annihilated in the divine presence of God.

farāʾiẓ: The obligations prescribed by Islamic law that a Muslim is required to perform.

fawāʾid: Anthropocentric or human-centred benefits or gains. In this context, it refers to material, worldly and even spiritual benefits.

ḥākimīyah: An Arabic term meaning ‘sovereignty’. In political Islam, it refers to the principle that sovereignty belongs only to God’s laws, and that this sovereignty is for the implementation of divine law (Shari’ah) in the state.

ḥāl: In Sufism, it refers to a temporary state of consciousness, often a spiritual feeling or state induced by God, which adorns the present moment or waqt.

ḥanīf: An Arabic term used in the Qur’ān to refer to those who, during the Pre-Islamic Period, rejected idolatry and worshipped only one God (often associated with Abraham). The term is understood differently in various Islamic discourses, sometimes being translated as ‘monotheist’ or ‘hermit’.

ḥanafīyat: An Arabic term referring to the monotheistic religion or way of life followed by Abraham and Prophet Muhammad.

ḥaqīqat: An Urdu term meaning reality or truth.

hidāyah: An Arabic term meaning guidance. In this context, it refers to the moral guidance delivered through the Qur’ān.

ḥilāt-o-ḥurmāt: An Urdu term where “ḥilāt” means permissible and “ḥurmāt” means forbidden. It refers to the Islamic legal distinction between what is allowed and what is forbidden.

‘imānīyāt: A term used for ‘articles of faith’ in Islam. It encompasses the core beliefs that a Muslim holds regarding God, angels, prophets, books, and the Day of Judgment.

ʻibādah: Worship or acts of devotion performed for God.

ibn al-waqt: Literally translates to "son of the moment" in English. It refers to a Sufi individual who is solely concerned with the present moment upon which the ḥāl descends.

ikhtisās: An Arabic term referring to selection or specialization, used here in the context of God's selection of Muhammad as a prophet.

iḵẖtiyār: An Arabic term meaning choice or selection. In the text, it is used to denote the exercise of free will by individuals.

iktisāb: An Arabic term meaning acquisition or earning, used here in the context of human effort or labour.

ilhām: A term referring to divine inspiration in Islam, often used to denote lesser forms of revelation compared to waḥy.

imtiḥān: An Arabic term meaning test or examination. In the context of the thesis, it refers to the tests of moral character that assess an individual's fidelity to the covenant with God.

indhār-e-ām: An Arabic term which translates to "public warning". It refers to the warning issued publicly by the Prophet Muhammad as part of the second stage of prophethood.

indhār: An Arabic term which translates to "warning". In the context of this thesis, it refers to the private warning issued by the Prophet Muhammad as part of the first stage of prophethood.

Intentionalism: The doctrine that the meaning of a work of art, literature, or other cultural artefact is (or should be) determined by the author's intent.

Inversion: A concept in the Pace Layers Framework where slower layers of the system sometimes influence or move faster than the upper layers, resulting in significant changes within the system.

iqāmat al-dīn: The establishment of the religion, used in the context of creating an Islamic State or system of governance based on Islamic principles.

Ishmaelites: A term referring to the descendants of Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham. In Islamic tradition, the Arabs, and particularly the Quraysh tribe to which Muhammad belonged, are considered Ishmaelites.

Israelites: The descendants of Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, who are believed to be the ancestors of the Jewish people.

istidlāl: Term for argument or inference, often used in the context of legal or theological reasoning.

istimbāṭī istidlāl, and *naṣ ka istidlāl*: Inferential argumentation and textual argumentation, respectively. These are two methodological approaches to

understanding and explaining Qur'ānic verses. The former relies on external context while the latter focuses solely on the text of the Qur'ān itself.

istiqrā': An Arabic term meaning inductive inference. It's a methodological approach in Islamic jurisprudence and exegesis involving drawing conclusions through induction.

itā'at: Obedience, particularly to God's commands as outlined in Islamic law.

itmām-e-ḥujjat: An Arabic term which translates to "manifestation of God's Truth". It refers to the third stage of prophethood when the warning of God is made absolute.

jāhīliyah: An Arabic term referring to the time of "ignorance" that predates the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet Muhammad. It is generally used to refer to a state of moral corruption and barbarity.

jazā-o-sazā: An Arabic term which translates to "reward and punishment". It refers to the fifth stage of prophethood when the Prophet delivers God's reckoning.

jilbāb: An outer garment worn by Muslim women, covering the entire body except the hands and face.

kamālāt: Excellences, which in this context, it refers to the high spiritual status and virtues of a prophet.

khabāis: An Arabic term meaning impure or bad things. In Islamic context, it refers to unlawful or forbidden food.

khānwādah: Urdu term that refers to a family or household. In this context, it is used to refer to the lineage or scholarly household of Shah Waliullah.

k̲h̲āṣ: Specific or particular. In the context of divine laws, this term refers to laws that are valid at any time but only for someone specific.

khātam al-nabīyīn: An Arabic term meaning "Seal of the Prophets." In Islamic theology, it signifies that Muhammad is the last of the prophets sent by God.

khātam-e-nabūwat: An Arabic-Urdu term meaning "Finality of Prophethood". It's a core Islamic belief that Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet.

khawāṣ aur akhṣ al-khawāṣ: An Urdu phrase translating to "the special ones and the most special of the special ones". It is used here to refer to those individuals who have reached a high level of spiritual attainment in Sufism.

khawāṣ: Arabic term for the elite or elect, as opposed to the common people (awām).

khurūj: An Arabic term that means "exit" or "rebellion".

khushū' (humility or devotion), *khudū'* (submission), *ikhbāt* (reverence), *ināb*ah (turning to God), *khāshyah* (awe or fear), *taḍarru'* (supplication or earnest entreaty), *qunūt* (perseverance or persistence in worship): Various Arabic terms describing different states or attributes related to worship and devotion to God.

madhāhib (Arabic): Plural of Madhhab, referring to the schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

mahdī: In Islamic eschatology, a messianic figure who, it is believed, will appear on Earth before the Day of Judgment and, with Jesus, will rid the world of wrongdoing, injustice, and tyranny.

ma'rūf: Known or recognized, used here in the context of established Arabic language and grammar.

mansab-e-tashrīḥī: Office of receiving revealed law, referring to the role of a prophet as a lawgiver in religious matters.

manzil: An Arabic term meaning "station" or "stage". In the context of Sufism, it refers to the spiritual stages in the ascension of Prophet Muhammad.

maqām: Refers to a spiritual station in Sufism, often more stable and permanent than the temporary state of ḥāl.

marāḥil: An Arabic term meaning "stages". In the context of this thesis, it refers to the stages of prophethood.

mard-o-zan kā ikhtilāṭ: An Urdu term for the social interaction between males and females. The thesis refers to the role that interactions between men and women play in moral purification according to Ghāmidī.

marfū': A type of ḥadīth which is traced back directly to the Prophet Muhammad.

matn: The actual content or text of a ḥadīth.

minhāj: An Arabic term that generally means 'method' or 'way'. In this context, it refers to the original Muslim community of Muhammad as a model for subsequent generations of Muslims to follow.

mu'alim (traditional-intellectual): Referring to a type of intellectual actor who focuses on interpreting religion to revive traditional doctrines.

mu'abat-e-rabbānī: A phrase referring to God's act of choosing someone for prophethood.

muāhidā-e-imrānī: An Urdu term translating to "social contract", the agreement among individuals by which society is formed.

muḥaddithīn: Scholars within Islam who specialize in the study of ḥadīth, the sayings, and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

muḥaqqiq (critical-intellectual): A term referring to a type of intellectual actor who engages with the Qur'ān to interpret religion while suspending judgement on the veracity of traditional religious doctrines.

muḥaqqiqnah: Investigative, an approach in Islamic scholarship.

mu'allimnah: Instructional or pedagogical, an approach in Islamic scholarship.

muqadamā: An Urdu term used in the text to refer to a 'case to consider' or a preface. In this context, it is used to refer to the depiction of Muhammad's prophethood as a case to consider for both Muslim and non-Muslims.

murīd: A Sufi term referring to a person who commits to a spiritual guide on the path of Sufism.

mursal: A type of ḥadīth where the chain of narrators is missing one or more reporters, often the link to the companion of the Prophet.

mushāhidah-e-ghayb: A term that translates to "witness of the Unseen" in English. It refers to having a direct experience or vision of the divine or supernatural realities beyond the ordinary senses.

muslim-e-ḥanīf: An Arabic term which translates to 'the most devoted Muslim', used to describe Abraham in the Qur'ān.

mutawātir: A term used in ḥadīth methodology that refers to ḥadīth transmitted by a large number of narrators at every level of the chain, providing a high level of authenticity.

nubūwat al-ʿamā (common prophethood): A type of prophethood that doesn't involve receiving new divine laws but continues the religious tradition.

nubūwat al-tashrīḥī (law-giving prophethood): This type of prophethood involves a prophet receiving a new set of laws from God.

naql al-kaffah 'an al-kaffah: The transfer of knowledge from one group to another, used in the context of transmitting religious knowledge across generations.

naṣṣ: An Arabic term for a clear and specific verse in the Qur'ān or a statement of the Prophet Muhammad.

nazā'rat: Care or protection, often used to refer to God's protection of human beings.

naẓm: The deep literary coherence of the Qur'ān.

niẓām: In the context of this thesis, this Urdu term refers to 'system' or 'order'. In the argument of Mawdūdī, it is used to denote the establishment of an Islamic system or order by an Islamic State.

Ordinary: The term 'ordinary', in the context of the thesis, refers to things that individuals think, feel, do, experience, or interact with in their daily lives. This includes commonplace thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences that are a routine part of life. In literary modernism, as highlighted in the text, it is about the representation of mundane aspects of life, as opposed to transforming them into something more heightened or special. In a specifically religious context, the 'ordinary' refers to the moral significance of day-to-day life.

Ostranenie: A Russian term coined by Viktor Shklovsky in his principles of Russian Formalism, meaning to make something familiar appear strange or unfamiliar to enhance perception of the familiar.

parāstīsh: Worship, often used to refer to ritual acts of worship like prayer.

peghambar kī sargazashat-e-indhār: An Urdu phrase that translates to "the story of the Prophet's warning". It refers to Muhammad's revelation and delivery of God's reckoning to Abraham's two communities, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites.

Popular sovereignty: A doctrine in political theory that government is created by and subject to the will of the people.

Post-prophet discourse: A category in Islamic traditions associated with Ghāmidī's perspective, which focuses on the ordinariness of Islam and aims to make prophethood relevant in everyday life.

Prophethood: The condition or office of being a prophet. In Islam, it refers to the institution through which God communicates His guidance. According to Ghāmidī, prophethood may consists of upto five stages of prophethood, with a nabī only accomplish the initial revelatory stages (Indhār and Indhār-e-Ām), while the rasūl progress from revelatory stages to stages of reckoning (Indhār, Indhār-e-Ām, Itmām-e-Ḥujjat, Bar'at-o-Ḥijrat, and Jazā-o-Sazā).

Prophetic Apocalypse: A term used to describe the various stages of prophethood, including revelation and reckoning, as expounded by Ghāmidī.

Prophetic sovereignty: A term indicating the supreme authority of the prophet, in this context it refers to the authority held by a community striving to emulate the prophetic community.

pardah: An Urdu term that refers to 'seclusion', the Islamic practice among women of covering the face and body to ensure modesty.

qārīnah: An indication or a clue used to deduce or infer the meaning of ambiguous language.

qatī'at: An Arabic term meaning "finality" or "certainty". Ghāmidī suggests that certain fundamental issues exist that human intellect cannot decide upon with finality.

qiyāmah: Arabic term for the Day of Judgment, a major belief in Islam referring to the day when all humans will be judged by God for their actions during their lifetime.

qiyāmat-e-ṣughrā: An Urdu term which translates to "small judgment day". It signifies a situation where divine justice is meted out on earth, often in reference to the actions of a prophetic figure or his followers.

Reckoner-Communities: A term proposed in the thesis to denote communities that deliver all five stages of prophethood to other communities.

Reckoner-community discourse: A category of Islamic traditions which emphasizes the extraordinary nature of prophethood and the role of the community in keeping accountability and preparing for the final judgment.

Reckoner-Prophets: A term proposed in the thesis to denote prophets who deliver all five stages of prophethood, also referred to as rasūl.

Representational intentionality: The notion that a text, such as the Qur'ān, is designed to represent certain ideas or convey specific meanings as intended by the author.

Representations of Prophethood: The various ways in which the concept of prophethood is understood, interpreted, and manifested in Islamic traditions.

Reverse ostranenie or familiarization: As opposed to the original term ostranenie, reverse ostranenie or familiarization is a literary technique that makes strange or unfamiliar objects and events seem ordinary or familiar.

'ulamā: Muslim scholars recognized for their knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology.

ṣaḥīḥ: "Authentic"; a term used to classify a ḥadīth as being reliable and genuine.

sanad: The chain of narrators through which a ḥadīth is transmitted.

sarkishī: An Urdu term akin to moral rebellion, defying authority especially in the spiritual sense.

Seclusion: In the primary context of the thesis, it refers to the practice in Islamic culture where women limit their interaction with unrelated men, often by staying at home or within separate female living quarters.

Self-transcendence: A process, often associated with spiritual or religious experiences, where an individual goes beyond their ordinary self, often by accessing a higher reality or state of consciousness.

shahādah: Arabic term meaning "witnessing" or "testimony". It's also the Islamic creed declaring belief in the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet.

Shards: As used in this thesis, refers to aspects or fragments of the representation of prophethood as depicted in the Qur'ān.

shāykh: A spiritual master in Sufism, often tasked with guiding disciples on their spiritual journey. The Shaykh can also play a role in interceding for the disciple.

Shock-modernity: A term used to describe the disorientation and imbalance experienced in modern society due to rapid changes, continuous stimuli, and conflicting elements.

Shock: This term refers to sudden and unexpected events that cause a strong reaction. In this context, it also refers to Walter Benjamin's concept of "shock experience" which broadly suggests that life events, such as prophetic revelation or spiritual experiences, constantly subject individuals to shocks that disrupt their consciousness.

sh̲ūrā: A term that denotes mutual consultation, often used to refer to decision-making processes in a political or governmental context.

silsilat al-dhahab: "The Golden Chain", refers to the most authentic chain of ḥadīth transmission according to Sunni tradition, involving Nāfi', 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar, and the Prophet Muhammad.

sunnatullāh: An Arabic term that translates to "law of God" or "way of God", often used to describe divine rules or laws in nature or society.

Sunnī Eschatology: The study of end times as understood by Sunni Muslims, including beliefs about the Day of Judgment, the afterlife, and the figures associated with end times.

sunnī maḏhab: A school of Islamic law. The term maḏhab is generally used to describe the four major schools of law within Sunni Islam: Hanafi, Māliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.

tābi'ūn and *tābi' at-tābi'īn*: The generations of Muslims who were successors to the Sahābah (companions of the Prophet Muhammad) and their successors respectively.

tablīghī jamā'at: A Sunni Islamic missionary movement that focuses on urging Muslims to return to practicing their faith as it was practiced during the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

tahannuṯ: An Arabic term possibly referring to religious devotion or worship, mentioned in a ḥadīth about Prophet Muhammad's pre-prophetic life.

tahqīq: A term which, in this context, refers to the process of discovering or discerning authentic prophetic guidance.

ta'līm-o-ta'allum: Literally "education and learning". It signifies the importance of gaining and imparting knowledge in the process of spiritual and moral development.

tamkīn: An Arabic term that translates to "stability" in English. In the Sufi context, it refers to the final stage of the Sufi's spiritual journey where they attain inner stability, freeing themselves from all forms of duality and hesitation and grounding themselves firmly in Divine Reality.

tamsīl: Symbolic representation or allegory.

tanqīd: An Arabic term referring to the critical analysis of arguments and positions.

tanqīẓ: A term referring to criticism that is directed towards an individual's character rather than the argument or position they are presenting.

ṭarīqah: In Sufism, this term refers to the spiritual path or the mystical ascent towards God through successive levels.

tarjumah and *tawīl*: Translation and interpretation, respectively. Used here to highlight two distinct approaches to understanding and explaining religious texts.

taṣawwuf: Another term for Sufism, referring to Islamic mysticism and the inner, esoteric dimension of Islam.

tauhīn-e-risālat: An Urdu term meaning "blasphemy against prophethood". This term is used to refer to actions or statements that are considered disrespectful to the Prophet Muhammad.

tauzīh: Arabic term for explanation or clarification, used here to denote the act of making public or disclosing something.

tawaffā: Generally translated as ‘to cause to die,’ the term is subject to various interpretations in Islamic theology, especially in the context of the life and death of Jesus.

tawḥīd: The Islamic concept of monotheism, acknowledging the oneness of God.

tayyebāt: An Arabic term meaning pure or good things. In Islamic context, it often refers to lawful or permissible food.

taẕkīyah-e-nafs: An Arabic phrase meaning “purification of the self”. This concept is used across many Islamic traditions for self-improvement and spiritual growth.

Terminal Reckoner-Community: A term used in this context to refer to a reckoner community of people in the end times.

Transcendence: A term originated from literary modernism, it refers to surpassing ordinary worldly limits and experiencing something beyond the physical realm, often in a quest for meaning or purpose.

ṭuruq: Plural form of “tariq”, it signifies the different paths or ways, used here to refer to the variations on a single ḥadīth.

urūj: An Arabic term meaning ‘ascension’ or ‘rising’. It often refers to the spiritual ascension or journey towards divine knowledge and unity with God.

uṣlūb: An Arabic term meaning ‘style’, often used in the context of literary or rhetorical style. In this context, it refers to the distinctive literary style of the Qur’ān.

Verisimilar: In the context of the text, this term means closely resembling or simulating the representation of prophethood as depicted in the Qur’ān.

waḥdat ul-wujūd: An Arabic term meaning ‘Unity of Being’. In Sufism, it refers to the concept that there is no separation between the Creator and creation, rather they are a single existence.

waḥy: Prophetic revelation, by which God’s messages are communicated to prophets. In Islam, these messages were transmitted through the angel Gabriel.

waqt, *aḥwāl*, and *maqāmāt*: In Sufism, waqt refers to the “present moments,” aḥwāl to “fleeting states” of spiritual ecstasy or insight, and maqāmāt to “stable spiritual stations” of development.

Warner-Communities: A term proposed in the thesis to denote communities that deliver the first two stages of prophethood to other communities.

Warner-prophet discourse: A category of Islamic traditions which emphasizes the extraordinary nature of prophethood, particularly focusing on the role of the prophet as a warner to people about divine judgment.

Warner-Prophets: A term proposed in the thesis to denote prophets who deliver the first two stages of prophethood, also referred to as nabī.

wusūl: An Arabic term that translates to “arrival” or “union” in English. In the Sufi context, it refers to the ultimate union with God, achieved after successfully traversing the spiritual states and stages.

ẓāhir: Arabic term referring to the exoteric or outward, manifest aspects of something, often contrasted with bāṭin (esoteric or inner aspects).

ẓa'īf (Arabic): Weak, used here to describe a ḥadīth with a weak chain of transmission.

zīnat: Adornments, embellishments, or decorations. In Islamic discourse, it is often associated with physical beauty and worldly adornments. In the context of this thesis, it refers to the physical beauty of women that should be concealed from unrelated men. Ghāmidī presents zīnat as aspects of life that beautify our existence and are not inherently immoral or impediments to spiritual advancement.

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