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Religious Anthropology: Catalyst for Unravelling Discourses and Fostering Profound Understanding in Arab Society through Islamic Law

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ABSTRACT

The Arab-Islamic world remains afflicted by a lack of mutual acceptance, both within Islamic sects and among different religions. This study seeks to alleviate this issue by advocating for the advancement of religious anthropology, aiming to enable researchers to comprehend the religious and social dynamics of both them and others. This understanding is pivotal in promoting values of tolerance and peace, replacing the current undercurrents of violence and animosity. Employing anthropological epistemology, the researcher examines the origins of Arab-Islamic violence through deductive analysis. Notably, the study identifies the jurisprudence "Fiqh" as a one of sources the violence and hostility, in stark contrast to the values of tolerance and peace present in the Holy Qur'an – the primary legislative source. To firmly establish these principles, integrating anthropological studies into both educational and religious sciences curricula is essential. This proactive approach aims to reshape perceptions and foster mutual understanding, thereby guiding the Arab-Islamic world towards unity, empathy, and shared progress.

Keywords: Religious anthropology; School Curricula; Violence; Islamic Law; Monotheistic Religions.



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INTRODUCTION

The study of hatred, violence, and interfaith dialogue in Arab-Islamic society is still in its early stages, and a few studies are not sufficient, especially from an anthropological point of view. This topic has become a divergent social phenomenon that requires multiple studies and numerous researchers. Hatred in our society goes beyond religion, as culture plays a significant role, whether it is tribal, religious, or imported. Hatred and violence are linked to a fear of the other first and defense of belief or self-secondly.

The Arab-Islamic society still carries the memories of the Crusades, political domination, and colonialism from the Western world, just as the Western world does not forget the control of Islamic civilization during the dark ages and extremist Islamic movements ¹, while overlooking the common values between them. To overcome this issue, we must draw from the experience of the Western world in overcoming violence and societal hatred.

This can be achieved through the renaissance and renewal of their curricula and the incorporation of humanities, including cultural, social, and religious anthropology, into the academic programs of universities, forums, and scientific journals. Thus, the study in this paper will follow anthropological epistemology, which is concerned with the worldview of a particular culture or society (paradigm) and reflects the cultural and social behaviour stemming from this perspective. Using secondary data. Marianne de Laet says:

“What is emerging in these anthropological renderings is a shift in thinking about knowing. Increasingly, I think, we see knowing emerge as practice, and anthropological inquiry as an investigation of how knowing is done” ².

¹ Muhammad Khalid Masud, “Islamic Modernism,” *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, 2009, 237–60.

² Marianne de Laet, “Anthropology as Social Epistemology?,” *Social Epistemology* 26, no. 3–4 (2012): 419–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2012.727196>.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein's idea of reality, which was formed through language games, aligns with Horton's view that all belief systems, including religious and scientific, are attempts to explain reality, making them comparable in their truth value. Additionally, Lukes and MacIntyre argue that since "native beliefs make assertions about the world," they can "be evaluated as propositions and judged as to whether they correspond to a state of affairs in the world."³

Thus, when we understand the culture of indigenous people or the society under study, through their language, religion, beliefs, and behaviour, we pave the way for self-understanding. Consequently, anthropology's task is to comprehend the other as a means of understanding oneself. In this regard, G. Carter Bentley says:

"Modern theories of interpretation place self-understanding as the necessary complement of understanding the other. Paraphrasing Gadamer, Ulin describes "the fusion of horizons" as "the engaging of distinct traditions, which characterizes every act of understanding and through which meaning and truth are disclosed"⁴.

The Arab world continues to grapple with a deep-seated conflict in its intellectual research, evident both at the academic and religious levels. Academic knowledge originating from the West often faces mistrust in the Arab-Islamic context, leading to a noticeable tension between science and religion. Moreover, the outdated Islamic studies curriculum no longer aligns with the spirit of the present age, fuelling animosity and violence towards others, particularly in jurisprudential and ideological studies.

The impact of humanities, especially anthropology, remains limited in the Arab reality, largely due to scepticism from religious authorities who perceive these disciplines as potential threats, having witnessed their establishment and separation of religious and secular realms in the Western world. Additionally, the Arab-Islamic memory

³ G. Carter Bentley, "On Anthropological Epistemology: Praxis and Critique," *Reviews in Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1984): 170-84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00988157.1984.9977681>.

⁴ *Ibid*, Bentley.

carries the recollection of an anthropological approach employed in past colonization by the Western world.

Hence, this research endeavours to explore the role of educational curricula in combating religious hatred and violence towards others, promoting pluralism, diversity, tolerance, and peace. To achieve this, the following questions will be addressed: The methodology employed in this paper is anthropological, specifically relying on cognitive anthropology as a primary model for studying the content of thought or knowledge, as it is distributed across individual societies and observed in natural environments⁵. The data utilized in this research is derived from literary review and analysis of previous studies, especially concerning the culture of violence within Arab society.

This includes some jurisprudential laws related to violence, in addition to addressing Quranic texts that advocate tolerance and acceptance of others. Therefore, the methodology adopted a hermeneutic approach in its analysis, with pioneers in hermeneutical anthropology being Gadamer and Geertz. Gadamer emphasizes that human understanding arises from participation in social traditions, a concept applicable not only to science but also to other forms of human understanding. The central assumption for Gadamer is that understanding, or meaning construction, emerges as an interaction between pre-understanding (prejudice) and the impact of the entity (text, action, artistic work, rituals, oral communication, etc.). In this sense, meaning is regarded as an interactive effect, as it comes into existence in the interaction that occurs when pre-understanding, i.e., structures of meaning, are applied to incoming stimuli (text, action, artistic work, etc.).

Understanding is seen as an effect. Gadamer succinctly summarized this when he wrote, "Understanding is fundamentally an

⁵ David B. Kronenfeld et al., *A Companion to Cognitive Anthropology*, ed. David B. Kronenfeld et al., *Wiley-Blackwell* (Wiley, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444394931>.

effective historical relationship."⁶ Therefore, the research approach involves interpreting the data within the framework of this hermeneutical perspective, drawing on the insights of Gadamer.

VIOLENCE IN ARAB-ISLAMIC SOCIETY OVERVIEW

Many studies analyse Islam's connection to violence, and Ibn Khaldūn's theory linking state emergence to tribal violence is also well-studied⁷⁻⁸. This contribution contextualizes this theory with specific cases: Andalusian Taifas, Almoravid emirate, and Almohad caliphate. These cases show diverse forms of state violence and warfare in Islamic contexts. Mixing secular and religious elements to justify violence challenges the notion of Islam's inherent link to violence. Instead, these cases highlight the intricate ways violence is justified⁹.

The key role of educational reform in promoting pluralism and freedom within the region was highlighted by reports such as the UN Arab Development Reports and the 9/11 Commission. Recent U.S. foreign policy has prioritized educational system reform in the broader Middle East, including Saudi Arabia. The Saudi people themselves have expressed concern. Notably, a comprehensive study in 2003 by former Saudi judge Sheikh Abd Al-'Aziz Al-Qassem and Saudi author/journalist Ibrahim Al-Sakran analysed three curricula

⁶ Anthony Bradley, "HERMENEUTICS AND INTERPRETATION IN ANTHROPOLOGY," in *The Political Economy of Liberation* (Peter Lang, 2016), 304–22, <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-0554-8/4>.

⁷ Joseph Alagha, "Ibn Khaldun: A Sociology of History," *International Sociology* 32, no. 2 (2017): 180–88, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580916687460>.

⁸ Hamied G. M. Al-Hashimi, "Iraqi Personality in Light of Ali Al-Wardi's Works: A Critical Review," *Sociology Study* 7, no. 1 (January 28, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5526/2017.01.001>.

⁹ Pascal Buresi, "Violence and Warfare in Medieval Western Islam," *History and Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 39–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2022.2060214>.

for Saudi middle and high schools: Al-Hadith, Al-Fiqh, and Al-Tawhid. This study observed that the Kingdom's religious studies curriculum encourages violence and misguides pupils into believing they must violently repress and even physically eliminate others to protect their religion ¹⁰.

Additionally, Pew Research Centre (2013) ranks Middle East/North Africa highest in religion restrictions, social hostilities. Restrictions increased by 15% from 2010-2011. Fox's analysis (2013): 28 types of religious discrimination in Middle East. US State Department (2013): Christian presence declining. Social harassment surpasses government; mass-level religious intolerance rising ¹¹. According to James Piazza's research ¹², Muslims who do not support equal political rights for non-Muslims in societies with a Muslim majority are more prone to engaging in political violence compared to those who advocate for granting minorities political equality.

Author article delves into the link between warfare and religion in precolonial Africa, showcasing religion's pivotal role in justifying and commemorating violence, and its tie to anticolonial defiance. The author highlights religion's influence on war, including rituals for purification after combat and adherence to specific regulations. The article also notes how spiritual endorsement was crucial for waging war and how Muslim leaders formed religious movements in response to political and economic constraints.¹³.

¹⁰ Nina Shea and Ali Al-Ahmed, *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance with Excerpts from Saudi Ministry of Education Textbooks for Islamic Studies*, Center for Religious Freedom, 2006, www.freedomhouse.org/religion.%0Ahttp://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=published_articles_and_op-eds.

¹¹ Michael Hoffman, "Religion and Tolerance of Minority Sects in the Arab World," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 2-3 (2020): 432-58, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719864404>.

¹² James Piazza, "Intolerance of Non-Muslim Political Rights and Engagement in Political Violence: A Study of Public Opinion in 11 Arab Countries," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 0, no. 0 (2022): 1-15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2022.2061570>.

¹³ Richard Reid, "Sacred Violence and Spirited Resistance: On War and Religion in African History," *History and Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (2023): 20-38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2022.2060213>.

RELIGIOUS ANTHROPOLOGY

According to Charlotte Seymour-Smith's Dictionary, anthropology can be defined as the scientific study of diversity, where each culture pursues its own logic and explores internal integration, sophistication, and humanity. In the context of religious anthropology, it delves into what it terms "the dialectic of practical religion," which refers to the dynamic relationship between the written doctrines of major world religions and the actual local practices observed within those religions¹⁴.

An anthropologist, aiming to comprehend religion beyond idealistic textual prescriptions and theoretical definitions of what religion ought to be, focuses on how it is practically lived and experienced by "real people." This approach leans strongly towards inductive reasoning rather than deductive, and most anthropologists regard their methodology as morally impartial. It adopts a scientific perspective instead of favouring any particular religious culture. The primary interest lies in understanding people's genuine beliefs and perceptions of the world, their comprehension of the divine or supernatural, and their actual behaviours.

When writing ethnographies, the anthropologists generally do not consider it their duty to generate new concepts about how religion or society functions; such innovations are left to religious scholars and philosophers within the specific cultural context.¹⁵ Therefore, from an anthropological perspective, religion is significant in meeting the

¹⁴ Charlotte Seymour-Smith, *Palgrave Dictionary of Anthropology* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1987).

¹⁵ Fiona Bowie, "An Anthropology of Religious Experience: Spirituality, Gender and Cultural Transmission in the Focolare Movement," *International Journal of Phytoremediation* 68, no. 1 (2003): 49-72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0014184032000060362>; Fiona Bowie, "Anthropology of Religion," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism Theories and Methods* (University of California Press, 2010), 156-74, <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520266612.003.0009>.

normative requirements of human existence and is considered a sacred aspect of life ¹⁶.

In Arab and Islamic reality, anthropology has had limited influence due to the scarcity of research and teaching resources dedicated to it. However, the importance of this scientific discipline becomes evident in their context, given that Arabs live within an Islamic-tribal society characterized by conflicts, religious fervor, tribal systems, and intricate religious phenomena. Consequently, anthropology becomes indispensable for studying Arab society comprehensively, encompassing its culture, social structures, and humanity ¹⁷.

Renowned thinker Muhammad Arkoun ¹⁸ believes that cultural anthropology offers a potential solution to resolve conflicts and differences between sects, religions, and diverse groups within Islam. He views the religious phenomenon as an anthropological construct that not only pertains to Islam but extends beyond it, encompassing a broader human experience. Here, the term "religious phenomenon" denotes a universal human aspect, as every human society on Earth possesses a religion or a sacred belief system that they adhere to.

Hence, anthropology's mission involves conducting comparative studies of various heritages and religions ¹⁹. These studies yield outcomes that promote a better understanding and reconciliation between different religions and sects. They affirm that the diversity of cultures and religions is a crucial social requirement,

¹⁶ Warsono Warsono and Muhtadi Alabyadh, "Religion: Functional and Dysfunctional, From Daily Life To Become Media Coverage," *The Journal of Society and Media* 6, no. 1 (April 30, 2022): 257-71, <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v6n1.p257-271>.

¹⁷ Zaid Eyadat, Francesca M Corrao, and Mohammed Hashas, *Islam, State, and Modernity Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri and the Future of the Arab World*, ed. Zaid Eyadat, Francesca M. Corrao, and Mohammed Hashas (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59760-1>.

¹⁸ Mohammed Arkoun, "Liberation of Islamic Consciousness, towards Getting out of the Dogmatic Fences," *Dar Al-Tali'a for Printing and Publishing*, 2011, isbn: 9 789953 409313.

¹⁹ Bowie, "Anthropology of Religion."

arising from the variations in time and place experienced by humanity²⁰.

Consequently, educational institutions in Arab and Islamic societies should strongly endorse this field of study, facilitating students' opportunities to pursue specialized education abroad. By fostering a comprehensive and profound comprehension of anthropology, we can initiate research that fosters unity and mutual recognition between Islamic communities and humanity at large, fostering harmonious relations between the self and others²¹.

Anthropology, encompassing cultural, social, and religious aspects, has faced unparalleled rejection, denial, opposition, and criticism in the Arab world. The relationship between the Arab and Third World societies and this branch of knowledge has consistently been fraught with tension, spanning cultural, social, and political dimensions. Several conditions and considerations intertwine, blending the epistemological, political, and ideological aspects²².

At the ideological and political level, there exists a prevalent notion that anthropology is inherently a colonial science²³, with its

²⁰ Malory Nye, "Religion Is Religion? Anthropology and the Cultural Study of Religion," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no. 2 (1999): 193–243.

²¹ Arkoun, "Liberation of Islamic Consciousness, towards Getting out of the Dogmatic Fences."

²² Ebrahim Moosa, "Colonialism and Islamic Law," *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates*, 2009, 158–81.

²³ Significantly, anthropology arose from the concerns of compassionate activists who were associated with a distinct circle of British society: the circle of Nonconformists, especially the Quaker philanthropists. Political figures from Nonconformists and Quakers led the campaign against the African slave trade and the legitimacy of the institution of slavery in the British colonies. When slavery was abolished in 1833, this same group addressed the situation of the indigenous people in South Africa by leading the establishment of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Aborigines and then the formation of the Aborigines Protection Society, with the slogan "ab uno sanguine - 'all men are of one blood'." The Society's aims arose from the stark disparity which its founders saw between the conduct of Britons at home and their conduct abroad, that is, between the devotion to civil liberty and moral and intellectual improvement in England, and the "injuries we have inflicted, and the outrages we have committed abroad," the vices which we have fostered, and the utter ruin and devastation which we have caused" in the colonial territories (Natives Protection Society 1837). Fredrik Barth et al., *One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology*, NBER Working Papers (The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London, 2005), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16019>.

roots traced back to the pre-colonial explorations, continuing through the Orientalist era, colonial period, and extending into the post-colonial era. Meanwhile, at the epistemological level, the Arab mindset seems to struggle in understanding that anthropology has evolved beyond its historical focus on so-called "primitive," "traditional," and "rural" societies and cultures ²⁴.

It is important to recognize that this specialization has been instrumental in helping the Western world emerge from its dark ages and reject narrow-mindedness. Anthropologists have revealed the diversity of religions worldwide, highlighting that no single group is exclusively chosen by God. Such discoveries have led to the realization that religious ideas share similarities across different faiths ²⁵. Consequently, Christianity, for instance, is one of many religions, prompting questions about why hatred and violence exist against those who follow other beliefs.

Through this specialization, a shift in perspective has occurred, where the focus is on understanding humanity itself, rather than defining individuals based solely on their religious affiliations or other characteristics.

Hence, it is imperative to promote and integrate this discipline into the fabric of universities, colleges, and academic platforms within the Arab and Islamic world, with substantial support from governments. The present-day anthropology, often referred to as contemporary anthropology of the worlds, differs significantly from its earlier form due to several factors. The political independence of colonial societies following World War II, alongside profound societal changes witnessed by Western and non-Western nations, including

²⁴ Othman Lakashmi, "For a New Anthropology for a New World," *AlFaisal*, 2019, <https://www.alfaisalmag.com/?p=15189>; Leila Abu-Lughod, "Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World Author," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18, no. 1989 (2008): 267-306, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2155894>%0AREFERENCES.

²⁵ Naomi Schiller, "Liberalism, Anthropology Of," *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* 14 (2015): 11-17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.12206-8>.

globalization, the rise of new urban lifestyles, and advancements in communication technology, have reshaped the field ²⁶.

Today, anthropology examines the social contract by delving into its consequences across different contexts. This idea, loaded with assumptions about human nature, politics, governance, and concepts like freedom and legitimacy, is ethnographically studied to understand its influence on state-society relations. This shifts the focus towards investigating the social contract itself, including its cultural interpretations and political outcomes ²⁷.

These transformative events have led to the characterization of anthropology, along with other colonial social sciences, as facing a crisis and being subject to scrutiny. Consequently, anthropology has been compelled to reassess its focus and methodology, adapting to the evolving dynamics of the world it seeks to study ²⁸.

To truly comprehend contemporary humanity, which has emerged from history and is currently navigating the aftermath of modernity, anthropology must delve beyond merely understanding the origins of harsh social conditions or the processes through which societies and states were established. It must address the fundamental question of how humanity arrived at its present state. Therefore, anthropology must seek knowledge from real spaces and historical timeframes, avoiding the reliance on super-reality or abstract constructs.

The essence of anthropology often lies within the minds of ordinary individuals who engage with its study. It manifests itself through their perceptions of life, their attitudes towards the world, and even in the nuances of their emotions, such as smiles, sadness, pride, and defeat. Understanding the true nature of contemporary

²⁶ Sergei Gavrov and Igor Klyukanov, "Modernization, Sociological Theories Of," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Second Edi, vol. 15 (Elsevier, 2015), 707-13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.32094-3>.

²⁷ Gwen Burnyeat and Miranda Sheild Johansson, "An Anthropology of the Social Contract: The Political Power of an Idea," *Critique of Anthropology* 42, no. 3 (2022): 221-37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X221120168>.

²⁸ Lakashmi, "For a New Anthropology for a New World."

man requires exploring the depths of human experiences, thoughts, and emotions as they have unfolded in tangible reality throughout history²⁹.

Thus, hatred and violence are anthropological data that are inseparable from other factors generating the history of human societies that affect them. And when I say that violence is an anthropological phenomenon, this means that it is a human phenomenon that no human society is free from, and when we say about any phenomenon that it is anthropology, it means that it is universal. Note that violence in its various functions and manifestations is still not well studied. It is still one of the unthinkable phenomena of modern thought. This is intolerable, because violence destroys the lives of people and families³⁰.

FQIH AND THE PRINCIPLES OF VIOLENCE

It is possible for anthropology to engage with and study Fiqh comprehensively, as Fiqh comprises religious rulings related to the law, making it a subject relevant to legal anthropology. Legal anthropology involves studying and comparing legal provisions across diverse societies, including primitive and civilized ones, among others³¹. Darryl Li has submitted an anthropology article examining ethnographic legal practice, which highlights the contextual nature of legal systems. Using the example of conspiracy in early US court cases related to Al Qaeda, the article draws on the

²⁹ Alaa Jawad Kazem, "The Picture Is an Anthropology Story," *Dar Altanwir*, 2013, isbn:139789953582115.

³⁰ Arkoun, "Liberation of Islamic Consciousness, towards Getting out of the Dogmatic Fences."

³¹ Russell Smith and Bronislaw Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (Routledge, 2018).

author's experience as both a lawyer and anthropologist in War on Terror litigation³².

Consequently, Fiqh serves as fertile ground for anthropological research. It continues to shape the mindset of Arab and Islamic societies, while also intersecting with positive law, modern values, and technological advancements. Thus, Fiqh offers a promising realm for anthropological studies, shedding light on the intricacies of these societies and their legal, cultural, and socio-technological dimensions.

Islamic history has gone through three setbacks that changed his concept and closed his mind and made him stagnant. The first is the great sedition, according to Dr. Taha Hussein's vision, the political-ideological struggle over the Islamic caliphate³³, and the second is the ordeal of the Qur'an, the struggle between the Mu'tazila and the Hanbalis in the time of the Abbasid Caliphate (Is the Qur'an eternal or created)? Through this conflict, the mind of the Muslim was closed and Islamic civilization declined, according to the vision of the Orientalist Robert R. Riley³⁴, and the third, according to the researcher's vision, is the dilemma of jurisprudence (Fiqh), which is expanding at the expense of the Islamic religion.

"The total number of verses in the Holy Quran exceeds 6000. Out of these, only about 250 verses in Fiqh deal with prohibitions, commands, Halal, and Haram. The remaining verses focus on matters of faith, morals, and various branches of knowledge. Unfortunately, we have chosen to emphasize only the 250 jurisprudential verses, disregarding the majority of the Quran in our daily lives. Consequently, we have overlooked the broader context and teachings of the Quran³⁵.

³² Darryl Li, "How to Read a Case: Ethnographic Lawyering, Conspiracy, and the Origins of Al Qaeda," *American Anthropologist* 125, no. 3 (September 13, 2023): 559-69, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.13873>.

³³ Taha Hussien, "The Great Sedition (Othman)," *Hindawi Foundation*, 2013.

³⁴ Robert R. Riley, "The Closing of The Muslim Mind," *Manshurat Aljamal*, 2018, ISBN 9789933353926.

³⁵ Adel Raouf, *Mind Formation Between the Jurisprudential Emulation and the Culture of Emulation/ Arabic Book*, Iraqi Center for Media and Studies, 2007.

This has led to a situation where individuals aspiring to be Muftis, Ayatollahs, or Mujtahids often study only the Fiqh verses, granting them authority over the Quran and the religion. On the other hand, those who specialize in the other verses may face marginalization in society. If they attempt to offer new interpretations of these verses, they might be accused of heresy or blasphemy.

The root of this issue lies in the cultural norms of society, where religion is seen mainly as a means to seek God's favour and avoid punishment. Such a perspective is reminiscent of the religion practiced in primitive societies. With the religious mind limited to this level, it becomes easier for external forces to exert control by establishing rigid beliefs of what is permissible and forbidden ³⁶.

Historically, similar patterns of control were observed in the Christian community, and today, the Islamic community faces similar challenges. This situation underscores the importance of comprehensively understanding the Quran and its teachings to avoid an incomplete and narrow view of the religion."

As for the Qur'an and Islam of ethics and knowledge are the domain of free selves discovering themselves. And these are few in the world and scattered. They know God through action, science and morals. They practice their religion simply and freely and view God as love, mercy and beauty.

Consequently, Fqih expanded due to repeating itself, sticking its nose into all the details of life, and failing to solve reality. Dr. Abdul-Jabbar Al-Rifa'i says: The principles of Fqih that Al-Shafi'i formulated since the second century of Hajrah and Al-Ash'ari and others laid for it theological ground became entrenched with the passage of days and calcified. It has been established according to a dialectical relationship between the principles of Fqih and theology, each of which reproduces the other, in the molds of the pattern of the Muslim mind, in which the understanding of the text is determined,

³⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo, Nature*, the Taylor (Routledge, 2004).

and it is subject to a repetitive cycle, which begins where it ends, and ends where it begins ³⁷.

This bloated and calcified Fqih is the one who issues hatred, blasphemy and impurity on the other, and although the blasphemy of the other is an ideological issue, it is controlled by Fqih and jurists. Dr. Asaad Abd al-Razzaq says in his book (*The Fqih of Atonement*) that he says “that atonement is a legal ruling like purification, and there must be premises or reasons to be overcome” and in another place he said, “It is almost agreed that Atonement is a legal ruling”³⁸. Hence, in the corridors of Fqih, the rulings of the People of the Book, the tribute, the unbeliever, the slave woman, and the slave are still studying, and this in itself is an intellectual problem that urges hatred and the impurity of the other. And when it is possible for religious groups to oppress the other, as ISIS terrorism in Iraq did against Christians and Yazidis in the city of Mosul ³⁹.

But if we look at Islamic history, we will find that Judaism and Christianity preceded us with hatred and violence against the other. The Crusades are very visible, and Europe's dark history is full of hatred and violence. But in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment philosophers were able to bring European society out of its dark ages by re-understanding religion, leaving the classical method (Platonic and Aristotelian) and establishing a new method based on relative and not absolute truth as in the past, and spreading the thought of tolerance and peace, and then the results of anthropological studies of religions Primitive values entrenched cultural diversity and pluralism. While the Islamic community remained in the era of decadence and decline, it continued to believe that absolute truth with it and falsehood with the other. Through anthropological studies of

³⁷ Abdul-Jabbar Al-Rifai, “Religion and the Ontological Thirst,” *Dar Al-Tanweer*, 2016.

³⁸ Asaad Abdul Razzaq, “The Fiqh of Atonement,” *Dar Suttur, Baghdad*, 2018.

³⁹ Saad Salloum, “Minorities in Iraq: National Legal Framework, Political Participation, and the Future of Citizenship Given the Current Changes,” in *Beyond ISIS: History and Future of Religious Minorities in Iraq* (Transnational Press London, 2019), 11–32.

orientalists and the media, Islam became known as slaughter, terrorism, rituals and superstitions.

Therefore, Fqih and its foundations must be subject to development, as life, time and place are always evolving and developing, and Fqih must take, at the present time, the urban and civic approach in its details. Social life today is dominated by the spirit of civilization and technology, just as Fqih must reconcile with the constitution or state law. By this we judge that Fqih is alive and evolving with life and in line with the spirit of the age. Otherwise, if it remains in this style, it will end and extinction, and with this we establish a modern Fqih, for modernity in Habermas view is not linked to a specific historical stage such as the stage of renaissance or enlightenment or the contemporary stage, but rather occurs whenever it is renewed relationship with the old and awareness of the new stage⁴⁰.

This is what Fqih must renew the relationship with the old and its awareness of the new and upcoming stage as well. Dr. Abdul-Jabbar Al-Rifai says that the renewal of jurisprudence is based on the renewal of theology, because the backgrounds of Fqih are postulates and statements determined by the vision of the world, and its field is theology⁴¹.

For example, Indonesian Islam strives to develop a jurisprudence "Fiqh" that is compatible with Indonesian culture, the civil law of the state, and globalization. This is evident in Rüdiger Lohlker's study, which examines the revitalization of the objectives of Islamic law "Maqāsid al-Sharī'a" in Indonesia, aiming to harmonize with modernity and cultural diversity⁴².

Regarding interpreting the Qur'anic texts in the light of hatred, tolerance and dialogue of religions must be subject to the approach of

⁴⁰ Abu Al-Nour Hamdi Abu Al-Nour Hassan, "Jürgen Habermas Ethics and Communication," *Dar Al-Tanweer, Beirut*, 2009, isbn: 9789953730851%0A.

⁴¹ Al-Rifai, "Religion and the Ontological Thirst."

⁴² Rüdiger Lohlker, "Fiqh Reconsidered: Indigenization and Universalization of Islamic Law in Indonesia," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 7, no. 1 (2021): 188-208, <https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-bja10011>.

interpretive anthropology. This branch was the instrument of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), where he founded the school of interpretive anthropology in his book (*The Interpretation of Cultures*)⁴³. Through it, he studied the symbol in culture and the idea that symbols give meaning and order to people's lives. Here, the Qur'an is a religious symbol for the Islamic world through which their visions about the world are determined.

If we look at the Qur'an, we will find that it sometimes distinguishes between the self and the other, calling for fighting the other if necessary. At other times, it emphasizes plurality, diversity, and the acceptance of difference as a natural aspect of human nature. An anthropological interpretation of these texts reveals their relevance to the socio-political aspects of modern Islamic society.

Other monotheistic religions have historically harboured animosity towards Islam because of its emergence and perceived threat to their existence, similar to the animosity faced by Christianity and Judaism in the past. This issue can be understood as a political-religious struggle for governance, and the Qur'an addresses this conflict by allocating verses that deal with the other in a political context, aimed at control and influence.

Additionally, the issue of the People of the Book, the tribute, and the slave girls involves religious-military rulings that were prevalent in many religions of that time. However, due to the breadth and complexity of these verses, we will not delve into them further in this discussion.

Regarding the other verses, Islam promotes a social religion where people are encouraged to live in peace and accept one another, recognizing that differences and coexistence are essential aspects of human society. The foundation of such differences in human society lies in the distinction between male and female genders, as they possess unique characteristics.

⁴³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (Macat Library, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781912128310>.

However, their union fosters social existence and facilitates interaction among nations, as the Qur'an said (O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another) (Al-Hujurāt :13). When this verse is considered purely anthropological, the first difference, between male and female, represents a structural and theological-natural distinction that led to the formation of diverse peoples and tribes for mutual understanding, not for conflict. Other differences, whether religious or otherwise, are mental divergences arising from the social upbringing and mental development of human beings, Ali Harb says:

“The Islamic city, even if it started from the peculiarity of the Arab race and gave a distinct role to the Arabic language, had an open view of others, regardless of color, gender, and even belief. In other words, I looked at the difference as a tool for acquaintance, as stated in the above verse. And acquaintance is to the extent that it is recognize with others, so it is acquaintance with the self and the way to awareness of it, because looking at the other is looking at the self through the mirror of others”⁴⁴.

The Qur'an confirms in another verse that God created people with differences and not as one nation, as the principle of difference leads to complementarity and development, the verse says (And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one nation, but they will not cease to disagree * Except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy, and for that did He create them) (Hud 118-119), the people were in the beginning of one race and one nation as stated in some verses of the Qur'an in this regard, then God decided to make them into families, tribes and peoples so that they would know each other and understand each other.

The only criterion for sublimity lies in the fear of God, that is, in submitting to His will. No human being is excluded in advance

⁴⁴ Ali Harb, “Interpretation and Truth (Interpretive Readings in Arab Culture),” *Dar Al-Tanweer for Printing and Publishing, Beirut*, 1985, isbn-10: 9786589099376.

from eternity in eternal bliss. On the contrary, God wants the salvation of man. According to the Islamic vision, at the social level at least, pluralism emphasizes unity and diversity as a principle of harmony, not a principle of confusion ⁴⁵. Verse says (but they will not cease to disagree * Except him on whom your Lord has bestowed His Mercy) here is an affirmation that difference is a continuous principle in life and it is the purpose for which God created them.

Hence, from accepting the principle of difference, God forbids the rule of atonement or hatred between the self and the other religiously and restricting this rule to him alone. Where the verse says (Indeed, those who have believed and those who were Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians and the Magians and those who associated with Allāh - Allāh will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allāh is, over all things, Witness) (Hajj 17).

Therefore, through this verse, human beings have no right to judge between all the heavenly and non-heavenly religions, or to blaspheme some of them. This judgment is exclusively for God, as the Qur'an affirmed in another verse (Allāh will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which you used to differ) (69). While the main criterion to enter Paradise is the faith and good deeds, where the verse says (Verily! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does righteous good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve) (Al-Baqarah 62).

So, everyone enters heaven according to his religious and moral beliefs that he received from his religion and his environment. A condition that he believes in God and on the Day of Resurrection and does righteous deeds. Al-Jahiz has preceded us in that and emphasized that God holds the individual accountable for morals and good deeds according to what he is established in the family and

⁴⁵ Marcel Boisard, *Humanism in Islam* (American Trust Publications, 1987).

society⁴⁶. While God forbids religious animosity between religions, the Qur'an mentions the Jewish-Christian conflict as an example. (The Jews said that the Christians follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion); and the Christians said that the Jews follow nothing (i.e. are not on the right religion); though they both recite the Scripture. Like unto their word, said (the pagans) who know not. Allāh will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they have been differing) (Al-Baqarah 113). This is an explicit call for the unity of religions in the original and the non-blasphemy of the other religiously or doctrinally, as God confirms once again the ruling in this matter for him only on the Day of Resurrection. Whereas what we see today is that society abandons bad behavior and decides to atone the other.

Additionally, the Quran has been called to the common denominator between the monotheistic religions for peace and tolerance among themselves, the verse says (Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allāh and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allāh) Surah Al-Imran 64. After thoroughly studying the Bible, I discovered that we share more similarities than differences, indicating a common source for monotheistic religions, as stated in the verse above. The first fundamental commonality is the belief in the oneness of God, which is why these religions are termed monotheistic. While the concept of God may vary between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the belief in the singular divine entity remains unifying. The second shared factor among these religions is Prophet Ibrahim, revered as the father of these faiths, as he laid the foundational principles for each of them.

Aron Hughes says (The employment of the term "Abrahamic" to account for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is a modern attempt to dismantle boundaries among the three religions for the sake of

⁴⁶ Abi Othman bin Amr Al-Bahr Al-Jahiz, "Kitab Alhayawan/ Animal Book: Aljahiz d 255 H," 1965.

some ecumenical coexistence in the modern period)⁴⁷. Where Abraham has two sons Isaac and Ishmael, who are also prophets. Prophet Isaac is the grandfather of the children of Israel, among whom is Jesus Christ, a descendant of his mother, Mary. This is what is stated in the Bible and the Qur'an. Matthew (1:1) (This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham) (*). Compared to the Qur'an was mentioned in Surat Al-An'ām (84-86) (And We gave to him [i.e., Abraham] Isaac and Jacob - all [of them] We guided. And Noah, ... and among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus, do We reward the doers of good * And Zechariah and John and Jesus and Elias - and all were of the righteous * And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot - and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds).

Therefore, according to the Bible and the Qur'an, all the children of Israel are descendants of Isaac. At the same time, Ismail is the grandfather of the Arabs. Some historians believe that the Arabized Arabs are the third layer of the Arab classes after the extinct Arabs and the original Arabs. The Arabized Arabs are also called "Adnanites" in relation to Adnan, or "Ma'aden" from Ma'ad, or "Nizaris" from Nizar, and historians refer to their lineage to the Prophet of God, Ismail, son of Ibrahim, and they called the Arabized Arabs. Because they merged with the Arabs after they joined them in the Hijaz and took the Arabic language from them, and the Prophet Ismail learned the Arabic language from them. Thus, the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad goes back to the Prophet Ishmael⁴⁸. From here we can say that all of Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are cousins, and that all the ancestors of Abraham are Semites.

⁴⁷ Aaron W. Hughes, *Abrahamic Religions, Abrahamic Religions: On the Uses and Abuses of History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199934645.001.0001>.

For more: see the Gospel of Matthew (1:1-17), and also the Gospel of Luke (3:23-38).

⁴⁸ Jawad Ali, "The Detailed History of the Arabs Before Islam," in *Baghdad University Helped Spread It. I*, 1993.

CONCLUSION

Anthropology, in general, and religious anthropology, in particular, play a crucial role in studying the religious and social culture of society while promoting values of tolerance, acceptance of others, and peace, particularly in the post-global colonial era. Hence, Arab and Islamic societies require anthropological studies to foster the values of tolerance and acceptance among Islamic sects, especially between Sunnis and Shiites, as well as promoting tolerance and peace between monotheistic and non-monotheistic religions. To achieve this, educational institutions must incorporate humanities and religious anthropology into their curricula, receiving adequate support to demonstrate the practical impact of these sciences by rejecting hatred, violence, and fostering tolerance among religions. Additionally, religious institutions should review their religious curricula, updating them to align with modern human development and include humanities and anthropology to view various religions and sects as relative rather than absolute truths.

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