Hashim el-Tawil 1991

SPECIAL ISSUE **BYU** STUDIES

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
LATTER-DAY SAINT
JOURNAL

TO OUR READERS:

BYU Studies is dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on LDS topics. It is committed to seeking truth "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It proceeds on the premise that faith and reason, revelation and scholarly learning, obedience and creativity are compatible; they are "many members, yet but one body" (1 Cor. 12:20).

Contributions from all fields of learning are invited. *BYU Studies* strives to publish articles that openly reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view and are obviously relevant to subjects of general interest to Latter-day Saints, while conforming to high scholarly standards. *BYU Studies* invites poetry and personal essays dealing with the life of the mind, reflections on personal and spiritual responses to academic experiences, intellectual choices, values, responsibilities, and methods. All personal essays received will be entered in our annual personal essay contest. Short studies and notes are also welcomed.

Opinions expressed in *BYU Studies* are the opinions of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University, the editors, the advisory board, or anyone else.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:

Guidelines for submitting manuscripts may be viewed on our website at
http://www.byustudies.edu

SUBSCRIBERS' NOTICE:

Subscription is $5.00 for one issue (you may subscribe at this rate for as many future issues as you like); $20.00 for one year (four issues); and $45.00 for ten issues (tenth issue is free). Foreign subscriptions for Canadian residents are 1 yr., $28.00; other non-USA residents, 1 yr., $40.00 (airmail) or $32.00 (surface). A price list for back issues is available upon request. All subscriptions begin with the forthcoming issue, or additional postage is charged. Address all correspondence to BYU Studies, 403 CB, PO Box 24098, Provo, Utah 84602-4098. You may also contact us by email: "BYU_Studies@byu.edu"; phone: (801) 378-6691; or fax: (801) 378-5386. If you move, please notify us in writing four weeks before changing your address; otherwise you must pay for replacement issues and mailing costs.

BYU Studies is abstracted in *Current Contents, Social and Behavioral Science*; indexed in *ATLA Religion Database* (published by the American Theological Library Association, Chicago, email: atla@atla.com, website: http://www.atla.com) and *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*; and listed in *Historical Abstracts; Arts and Humanities Citation Index; America, History, and Life*; and *MLA International Bibliography*.

BYU STUDIES

A Special Issue on Islam

Guest Editor, James A. Toronto

Contents

A view from the southwest of the Dome of the Rock Mosque, third holiest site in Islam, built in the seventh century C.E. to commemorate Muhammad's ascent to heaven. This picture was taken by *Church News* photographer J. Malan Heslop prior to 1967 when Jerusalem was still under Jordanian control. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

Foreword

A fortuitous confluence of talents and interests launched this special issue of *BYU Studies* over two years ago. No one sitting around the editorial conference table that day could have imagined the heightened interest in Islam that now fills the world. So at this time especially, we are pleased to present this unique volume of interfaith scholarship. Now more than ever, the peoples of the world need to understand and love one another. No lasting peace will be found in this world until there is peace among religions, that is, a peace built on religious grounds.

Although obvious nuances and important differences also exist, Latter-day Saints hold much in common with the values of religious people everywhere and openly recognize, as the First Presidency declared on February 15, 1978, that great religious leaders such as Muhammad, the Reformers, and others surely "received a portion of God's light." As the following studies by Latter-day Saint scholars readily demonstrate, notable intersections between the ideals of Mormons and Muslims include such anchors as an unequivocal faith in God, scripture, prophetic revelation, daily prayer, family solidarity, generous care for the poor, submissive fasting and repentance, worshiping in sacred places, and struggling to overcome the evils of this world. These and other dimensions of the broad and varied Islamic experience are explored here in many ways: historically, doctrinally, sociologically, comparatively, linguistically, artistically, critically, institutionally, and personally.

The interest of Latter-day Saints in all truth, wherever it may be found, has deep and enduring roots. Joseph Smith taught, "Friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of 'Mormonism'; [it is designed] to revolutionize and civilize the world, and cause wars and contentions to cease and men to become friends and brothers." Hence, he charged the Saints to "gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* 316). That spirit has guided the authors and editors in producing this extraordinary publication.

Animated by friendship, mutual appreciation, and the desire to treasure all the truths in the world pertaining to life, we are grateful for this valuable collection of sincere and serious studies. May they promote insight, respect, and understanding among readers everywhere.

<div style="text-align: right">

Merrill J. Bateman
President, Brigham Young University

John W. Welch
Editor-in-Chief, *BYU Studies*

</div>

The word "Allah," Arabic for "God." The principle of God's oneness, majesty, and mercy is central to Islamic worship, art, architecture, and daily life. This message of monotheism is the heart of the Qur'an, Islam's holy book.

Courtesy James A. Toronto

Islam

An Introduction and Bibliography

James A. Toronto and Cynthia Finlayson

Long before the events of September 11, 2001, *BYU Studies* began working on this special issue focusing on Islam. The authors and editors who worked on this issue have tried to capture the spirit of a religion that provides guidance to the lives of millions of people worldwide. The ever expanding influence of Islam extends to the prominent and often controversial role that Islam plays in contemporary politics. In addition, Muslim theology, scripture, art, science, and communal values have made significant contributions to world civilization. And in quiet yet significant ways, dialogue and contact between Latter-day Saints and Muslims have increased. Consequently, the editors of *BYU Studies* believe an issue devoted to Islam will increase understanding and allow for continued dialogue and friendship between members of the two faiths. But for such a journey to be successful, one must first understand the basic features of Islam.

Islam is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing religions. With more than one billion adherents (almost one-fifth of the world's population) and with high rates of birth and conversion to bolster its ranks, Islam could surpass Christianity in the first half of the twenty-first century as the most populous religion in the world.[1] The geographic expanse of the Islamic world, those areas in which Muslims are the majority population, is also vast, reaching from Morocco's western shores on the Atlantic to Indonesia's eastern archipelago in the Pacific, and from the northern borders of the Muslim republics of central Asia to the southern borders of Sudan and Nigeria in Sub-Saharan Africa (see map). It is a common misconception that most Muslims are Arabs who live in the Middle East. In fact, the vast majority of Muslims (about 75 percent) are non-Arabic speaking peoples living primarily in countries like Indonesia (the most populous Muslim country in the world), Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and China. Islam's vast number of adherents and geographical expanse invite all people to apply the admonition of Doctrine and Covenants 88:78–79 to a study of Islam: we should diligently seek knowledge of things at home and abroad, countries and kingdoms, and the wars and perplexities of nations.

The World of Islam

Based on "The Muslim World Today," *Religions of the World* (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1997), 215.

MUSLIM POPULATIONS

Muslims Predominate

Large Muslim Minority
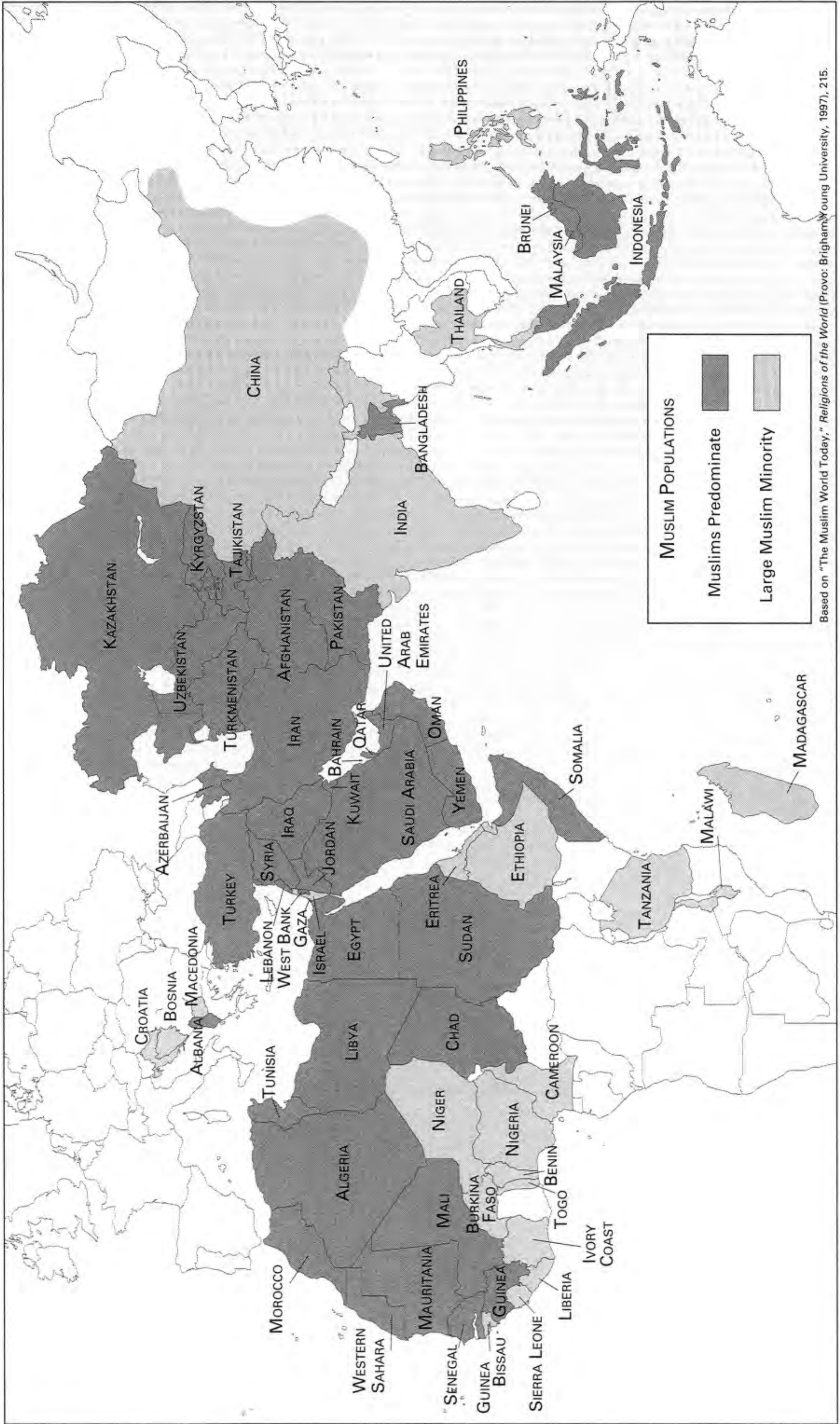
Role in International Politics

Beyond its impressive demography and geography, Islam is a religion that deserves study because of its prominent role in contemporary international politics. The Arabic word *islam* means, literally, submission or surrender, and the related word *muslim* means a person who submits or surrenders. The etymological root of *islam* (s-l-m) is associated with the idea of peace *(salaam)*, and the implication in a religious context is that a person who submits his or her will completely to the worship of the one God *(Allah)* finds peace, safety, and salvation. For both etymological and theological reasons, then, Muslims commonly speak of Islam as "the religion of peace."

It is a source of great concern to Muslims, therefore, that Islam has come to represent in the minds of many people throughout the world the antithesis of peace. A complex interplay of historical, political, and social factors gave rise to highly publicized events that heightened our consciousness and shaped—often negatively—our opinions of Islam. The clash of Jewish and Arab nationalisms in the Middle East led to wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. For many Latter-day Saints and other Christians, this renewal of conflict in the Holy Land was of intense interest because it also carried theological and eschatological overtones. Social ferment in the Islamic world, aroused by political repression, military defeats, and economic hardship, led to the rise of political and religious movements that heavily influenced relations between Islamic and Western nations. For many people in the world, vivid memories and strong feelings still linger from the Camp David peace accords between Egypt and Israel; from the Iranian revolution and holding the U.S. embassy hostage; from the Gulf War with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or the Palestinian grass roots rebellion, called the *intifada*; the death sentence issued by the Iranian mullahs against British Muslim author Salman Rushdie; in addition to acts of violence carried out by Muslim, Jewish, Kurdish, and Armenian extremists.

In the United States, Islam has had a long history dating back to the arrival of the first slave ships from Africa. Beginning with the social unrest of the civil rights and anti-war movements in the '60s and '70s, Muslim ideology has attracted increasing attention as an alternative to the social and religious status quo (fig. 1). The Muslim community acquired a higher profile as the cultural spotlight focused on the activities of well-known converts like Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali), Cat Stevens (Yusuf al-Islam), and Lew Alcindor (Kareem Abdul Jabbar). The events of September 11, 2001, riveted the attention of the world on Islam, eliciting outrage but also questions as Americans sought to understand the roots of this tragedy, the reasons for the animosity in the Islamic world toward the United States, and the means to prevent such catastrophes in the future.

In short, while Islam is one of the world's most dynamic religions in terms of its geographic coverage and rapid growth, it is also one of the most misunderstood and maligned. This paradox must be dealt with carefully if we are to gain an accurate understanding of Islam. The challenge for students and observers of Islam is to open-mindedly address questions such as these: Which picture of Islam is accurate—the religion of hatred and conflict, or the religion of peace and harmony? If Islam is a malicious religious ideology that promotes violence, why does it continue to be so dynamic and popular throughout the world, even in Europe and the United States? If Muhammad was in fact a deceitful, corrupt impostor, as he is often portrayed in Western scholarship, why has the religious movement he initiated continued to prosper and expand so successfully? What are we to think of his visions, miracles, and teachings, and in particular the sacred text, the Qur'an, revealed to him? What about social and family life in Islam? Is Islam essentially tolerant or intolerant in its relations with other religious groups?

Courtesy William S. Dant

FIG. 1. At the Masjid Al Noor Mosque in Salt Lake City, 2002. Osman, Ali, and Eugene sit together in the library area after midday prayer. A cross-section of U.S. society is increasingly reflected in the American Muslim community. Approximately 15,000 Muslims live in Utah's urban areas.

Brief History of Islam's Beginnings and Contributions

Any attempt to describe the impact of Islamic thought and life on world history must begin with the story of a young man from Arabia and his quest for spiritual understanding. Muhammad was born in about 570 C.E. to the Banu Hashim clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe in the city of Mecca.[2] Orphaned at an early age, Muhammad experienced firsthand the sting of poverty and ignorance and the prejudices of the materialistic society of sixth-century Mecca, then an important center of pilgrimage and commerce. After he became a caravan leader, Muhammad's unique talents of wise arbitration and industriousness caught the eye of his employer, a wealthy widow named Khadijah. It was she who proposed marriage, becoming Muhammad's greatest champion and his most loyal spiritual and emotional supporter until her untimely death. During their marriage, Muhammad never took another wife.

Muhammad was born into a world rife with both political and religious tensions. The Near East was torn between the corrupt and abusive Christian Byzantine Empire, centered in Constantinople, and the decadent Zoroastrian Sassanian Empire of Persia. Much of the population of Arabia was still pagan with admixtures of both Christian and Jewish sects. Religious adherence was tied closely to tribal affiliation and/or place of residence within village and urban contexts, a phenomenon that divided society into contentious factions. The Christian sects in particular were characterized by bloody arguments over the nature of the Godhead and were threatened spiritually and doctrinally by the adoption of pagan customs into the liturgy of the church. Zoroastrianism, the official religion of Persia since Cyrus the Great, had been weakened by splinter groups such as the Manichaeists, whose prophet, Mani, attempted to meld Eastern thought with paganism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity, thus attempting to create a universalist whole. It was indeed a time of religious and social turmoil, a time when a sincere and spiritual man like Muhammad was driven to find critical answers concerning life, death, and the role of humankind within the cosmos. Retreating to the caves in the harsh mountains above Mecca to contemplate these great universal questions, Muhammad was visited by the Angel Gabriel, and the revelations that would become the holy book of Islam, the Qur'an, began to come forth.[3]

The beauty of the Qur'an's unique style of prose (especially given the rustic origins of the orphaned Muhammad) is considered a powerful proof by Muslims of its divine origins as the final word of God to humankind and of God's choice of Muhammad as his Messenger. The message was simple and yet profound for a world plagued by religious conflicts, tribal confrontations, and developing urban materialism. It consisted of an uncompromising belief in the oneness of God, a reestablishment of the Abrahamic covenant, and a system of five major principles of faith and action (called the Five Pillars) to bring the individual in direct submission to the will of Allah.

The revelations of the Qur'an emphasize the holy missions of all prophets since Adam, proclaim the virgin birth of Jesus but deny his divinity, and provide a basis for conducting all aspects of life and human relationships. Thus, in the theoretically perfect Islamic society there is no separation of religion and government. Ideally they are one, promoting God's causes and the ability of devoted believers to bring the fruits of spiritual and intellectual paradise to the human community through the implementation of God's word. For Muslims, God's word is found both in the Qur'an and in the *Sunna* (his model words and deeds recorded in the *hadith* literature) and is codified in the comprehensive system of law called *shari'a*. The teachings of the Qur'an and Sunna advocate the establishment of a just, peaceful, and prosperous society by banishing social classes,

Understanding Islam's Rapid Growth

After Muhammad's death, Islam continued to expand rapidly beyond the borders of the Arabian Peninsula. The Persian Empire, weakened by a long war with Constantinople, fell quickly to the Muslim armies. The Byzantines also offered little resistance. Within a hundred years, the Muslim advance reached west across North Africa and into Spain and France and east as far as Pakistan and India. Over the next few centuries, Islam gradually but steadily extended its influence until it became the dominant religion and culture in much of the Subcontinent and Southeast Asia. How does one account for this phenomenal success? A balanced assessment must take into account a complex interplay of historical, economic, and sociopolitical factors.

First, Islam's military expansion was not incongruous with the prevailing historical norms. International laws governing relations between nations and stipulating respect for human rights were not widely codified and observed until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Principles such as separation of church and state and respect for national or imperial boundaries (which were, in any case, ill-defined) were virtually unknown. Nearly every sociopolitical community in history has resorted to warfare, whether defensive or aggressive, in order to protect and promote its interests. To the assertion that Islam was propagated and enforced by force, Ameer Ali provides a candid response: "Every religion, in some stage of its career, has, from the tendencies of its professors, been aggressive. Such also has been the case with Islam; but that it ever aims at proselytism by force, or that it has been more aggressive than other religions, must be entirely denied."[1] In a similar vein, Elder Dallin Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve has called for caution in passing judgment on individuals who lived long ago: "We should judge the actions of our predecessors on the basis of the laws and commandments and circumstances of their day, not ours."[2]

Second, the scholarly consensus today is that the primary motive of the Muslim conquests was not to win converts to Islam per se but to extend and consolidate Islam's new political, economic, and social order. An eminent Western historian of Islam has noted that the conquering of surrounding nations arose naturally from the Qur'anic mandate that Islam encompass both spiritual and temporal matters. The conquerors believed that "the superiority of Islam . . . in providing for social order, would justify Muslim rule: would justify the simple, fair-dealing Muslims in replacing the privileged and oppressive representatives of the older, corrupted allegiances."[3]

The process of islamization in the Indian Subcontinent followed a general pattern: expansion of political and financial control through military conquest of urban centers, followed by a slow process of social and religious change that spread out to the rural areas.[4] This policy stemmed in part from practical considerations. Since a main source of revenue for the Islamic state

was the payment of a poll tax by non-Muslims, widespread conversions would have weakened the economic base of the empire. Moreover, the Muslims knew their control over vast lands and subject populations was tenuous; common sense dictated avoiding undue provocation.

Third, several sociopolitical factors explain why Muslim governance flourished and the Islamic religion gradually took root in conquered territories. It would be disingenuous not to acknowledge the role of military force. The zealotry of Muslim conquerors in some cases created an atmosphere of coercion and intimidation—at times overt, at times more subtle—in which indigenous peoples felt threatened if they did not convert to Islam. But, on balance, Muslim leaders were remarkably tolerant (relative to the prevailing political climate), granting their non-Muslim subjects full rights in the *umma* if they converted to Islam and according them status as *dhimmis,* "protected citizens," if they chose not to convert. Those who did convert to Islam were often drawn by the new religion's doctrine of theological and social unity. In India, for example, Hindu workers and artisans were attracted by the caste-free nature of Islam and its greater "possibilities for development."[5] Others converted, no doubt, when they perceived the political, social, and economic advantages to being a Muslim in a Muslim-dominated state. As second-class citizens, *dhimmis* were required to pay special taxes and act deferentially toward Muslims and were forbidden to serve in the military, ride horses, or propagate their own religion. But they were also given opportunities unusual for the times, including the right to practice their religion and hold high office in the Muslim government. Furthermore, in lands such as Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, the transformation to Islamic rule caused little upheaval, because "the Arabs brought a new version of a basically familiar religious and ethical system to peoples whose native language was . . . closely related to the language of the Qur'an."[6]

In sum, a combination of factors explains Islam's unprecedented early expansion: the weakened state of the Byzantine and Persian empires; the zealotry of the Muslim armies who sensed a divine mandate, a moral imperative, and an economic opportunity; the comparatively tolerant treatment of conquered peoples and enlightened administrative practices that enabled the Muslims to maintain control of a vast empire; and the intrinsic familiarity of Islamic religious beliefs to neighboring Semitic peoples.

1. Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam* (London: Chatto and Windus, first published 1890; eleventh impression 1978), 218.

2. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Joseph, The Man and the Prophet," *Ensign* 26 (May 1996), 72.

3. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization,* vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 185, 199.

4. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 4.

5. Schimmel, *Islam in the Subcontinent,* 10.

6. Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam,* 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 93–94.

materialism, tribal affiliation, and economic selfishness that inevitably lead to strife and suffering.[4]

Within one hundred years of Muhammad's death in 632 C.E., the armies and beliefs of Islam had spread west to southern Spain and east to Persia. Islamic art and architecture and Islamic intellectual and scientific achievements contributed to the revival of Europe during the Renaissance.[5] Muslim scholars, in their efforts to understand and transmit the Qur'anic revelation, retrieved, preserved, studied, and elaborated on most of the great scientific, medical, philosophical, and mathematical treatises of the ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Greco-Roman worlds. Their efforts helped fuel the eventual development of the Renaissance in Europe, a fact not often taught in the Western histories of the world. Because many extant ancient texts were brought together, translated into one language (Arabic), studied, and transmitted to others, an explosion of knowledge occurred, and Arabic became a language of primary importance in Europe both for scholarly research and for commercial ventures to the East.

The Five Pillars

Islamic life revolves around the Five Pillars, which are witness of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage.

Witness of Faith *(Shahada)*. The Witness of Faith is a two-part declaration that embodies the central beliefs of Islam: "I witness that there is no god but Allah, and I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." To be or become a Muslim, one must embrace this statement as inviolable and recite it with conviction. The centrality of the Witness of Faith in Islamic religious life is evident in many rituals: it is customary for a father to whisper the shahada into the ear of his newborn infant, and five times each day it is broadcast from the tops of the mosques to call the faithful to prayer.

Allah is the word for God used by all native Arabic speakers, whether Muslim, Jewish, or Christian (native Latter-day Saints use the word *Allah* when they pray). The phrase "no God but Allah" states succinctly the cardinal tenet of Islam: strict monotheism, the uncompromising unity of God, which Muslims call *tawheed.* God is one, eternal, uncreated, and totally other than anything human finiteness can comprehend or describe. It follows, then, that polytheism is anathema in Islam. Muslims refer to this heresy as *shirk,* which means ascribing partners to God, and the Qur'an repeatedly enjoins believers to accept tawheed and avoid shirk.

The Qur'an teaches that Allah created the world and all things in it and that in time he will bring the world to an end. Then all human beings will be resurrected, judged according to their deeds and observance of tawheed, and assigned to paradise or hell for eternity. Paradise is portrayed in Islamic literature as a place of endless delights, pleasures, and rest, where

Islamic Contributions to the West

While the Western world struggled through the Dark Ages, Islamic civilization was vibrant and progressive. In fact, the West is forever indebted to the Islamic East for literally paving the way for the Renaissance in philosophy, mathematics, the natural sciences, literature, astronomy, medicine, the arts, and architecture.

The works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek and Latin Classical philosophers and scientists were actually passed on to the West from Islamic scholars, who preserved, expanded, and refined these works. Sophisticated Muslim mathematical and navigational skills contributed to the voyages of Christopher Colombus, Vasco da Gama, and other Western explorers. Muslim physicians and philanthropists developed specialized hospitals, physician training, and insane asylums in the tenth century, developments lacking in medieval Europe. Up until the sixteenth century, European medical schools used the great textbook *al-Qanun* to create their curriculum. Islamic influences also appear in the Western literary tradition. Classics such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* have intriguing similarities to Islamic texts written centuries earlier. While the Islamic influences in Western literary development is subtle, in the arts it is unquestionable. Much of our Western cloth, crafts, architecture, music, and opera were originally modeled or designed after Islamic Arab, Persian, and Turkish patterns and traditions. Perhaps one of the simplest ways to observe the vastness of the Muslim influence is through its echo in the English language. Hundreds of words for things in daily life come from the Islamic world. For example, the word "orange" comes from the Arabic word *naranj,* meaning "bitter orange"; "mattress" comes from *matrah,* which means a place where "something is 'thrown down;'"and "chess" comes from the term *shah,* which means "king." One may wonder why we say "checkmate" when the opponent's king is caught—it comes from the Persian phrase *shah mat,* meaning, "the king is dead."

Indeed, the Western world owes a great deal to the world of Islam. Although recognition has often been neglected in Western historical texts, we would do well to acknowledge and appreciate the rich contributions that Islamic civilization has made to the world.

—Kristen M. Allred, summarized from Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East* (Aspen Books, 1995), 195–212.

every pious desire of the believers, both men and women, will be fulfilled. Hell is portrayed as a place of endless punishment for those who oppressed other people, performed evil deeds, and denied the Oneness of Allah.

The second half of the Witness of Faith, belief in Muhammad's prophethood, implies acceptance of a broad view of God's relationship to humanity throughout history. For Muslims, Islam is God's revelation to humanity "for all times and all places," as they are fond of saying. Allah's communication did not begin with Muhammad's prophetic call in the cave at Mount Hira' in 610 C.E. (see fig. 2 on p. 99); rather, he has spoken to many prophets beginning with Adam and including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and many other biblical and extrabiblical figures.

The view of sacred history in Islam is, in many respects, analogous to the idea of dispensations in Latter-day Saint doctrine. Before the time of Muhammad, distortions and corruptions—apostasy—gradually eroded the pristine revelation of each prophet of God, necessitating the raising up of another prophet who would reestablish tawheed as the only true form of worship. Muslims, in witnessing that Muhammad is the prophet of God, accept the truths taught by previous prophets and sacred books, including the Torah and the Gospels in their original "pure" versions. But Muslims hold that Muhammad is the last and greatest of all in the prophetic pantheon—the "seal of the prophets" (Qur'an 33:40)—and that Allah revealed to him a complete and perfect Qur'an that will never be corrupted, obviating the need for any future prophets or scriptures.

Prayer *(Salat)*. Islam teaches that God is to be remembered at all times and in all places, and the Qur'an encourages Muslims to pray frequently and to await Allah's answer: "And your Lord says: 'Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer)'" (40:60). A prophetic hadith suggests that believers supplicate God in their every need, no matter how small: "Ask Allah for all your needs, even for the thong of your sandal when it breaks." Muslims engage in many forms of prayer: sometimes they are informal, private, and intensely personal; sometimes they are more formal in nature and address specific communal needs, as in the case of special prayers for rain during seasons of drought. Simple, formulaic prayers are normally uttered before and after a meal.

But the centerpiece of Islamic worship is the ritual prayer called *salat* that is conducted five times each day and involves performing a prescribed set of physical movements designed to turn heart and mind toward God. In preparation to perform salat, a Muslim must first have righteous intent *(niyya)* in his or her heart and must perform ablution, a washing of face, hands, and feet with water, symbolizing one's purity and readiness to approach God in prayer (fig. 2). The times of prayer are determined by the position of the sun in the sky and therefore vary somewhat according to

season of the year, geographical location, and daylight savings schedules. But generally speaking, the five prayer times are dawn, midday, late afternoon, sunset, and early evening. Salat is the focus of personal and communal worship in Islam, a powerful ritual that binds the *umma,* or worldwide community of Muslims, together despite differences of language, nationality, or religious interpretation (fig. 3).

Almsgiving *(Zakat).* The principle of *zakat,* or almsgiving, is designed to care for the poor, to foster empathy and compassion in the community of believers, and to provide for the building and maintenance of mosques and other Islamic institutions. The Qur'an states that charity and compassion, as opposed to mere mechanical observance of rituals, define one's worthiness in God's sight:

Courtesy James A. Toronto

FIG. 2. Men and women performing ablutions before praying in a large congregational mosque in Istanbul, Turkey. The ritual washing of hands, arms, feet, and head symbolizes one's purity of intent and prepares the worshiper's heart and mind to make the transition from the secular world to the Divine Presence. If water is not available for ablutions (as is often the case in arid, remote regions), Islamic law provides for alternatives, such as clean sand or dirt.

> It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing. (2:177)

Islam distinguishes between two forms of charitable giving: zakat, a legal duty obligatory for all Muslims, and *sadaqa,* a free will offering that is spontaneous and intended specifically to help the poor and those in need. According to Islamic law, zakat is to be paid at the end of each year, and the amount is designated as 2.5 percent of a person's personal wealth.

Fɪɢ. 3. Muslim families leaving the Haram al-Sharif after Friday congregational prayers in Jerusalem. It is customary for many Muslim families to attend Friday noon prayer together. During communal prayers, men and women are separated in different sections of the mosque in order to avoid distractions during worship. The tradition of segregating the sexes during prayer has a long history not only in Islam, but in Judaism and Christianity as well.

It would be a mistake to view zakat too narrowly as simply a financial transaction mandated by religious law. The notion in Islam of contributing 2.5 percent of one's personal possessions is parallel to the principle in Latter-day Saint thought (and in many other religious communities) that the stipulated tithing or other donation is merely a beginning point, a minimum. God is less interested in teaching the faithful to calculate precise percentages of their income than in inculcating a spirit of benevolence and concern for the welfare of other people. In this sense, zakat becomes, not a mechanical performance, but a state of mind and heart, a personal impulse and a community ethos that promote the well-being and safety of every individual.

Fasting *(Sawm).* Fasting plays a central role in individual spirituality and in the annual cycle of Muslim religious festivals. For Muslims the observance of fasting, especially during Ramadan, strengthens one's relationship with God, affirms one's religious identity in the umma, and promotes social harmony and equality.

The Qur'an and the Sunna of Muhammad emphasize the efficacy of frequent fasting *(sawm)* as a means of achieving islam—complete submission to Allah—and of promoting individual and communal well-being:

"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint" (see Qur'an 2:183–88). Statements of Allah, quoted by Muhammad but not found in the Qur'an, extol the benefits of fasting: "Fasting is a protection and a shield"; "The bad breath of one who fasts is sweeter to God than the fragrance of musk."[6] Muslims view sawm as having a dual purpose: to bring about a state of humility and surrender of one's soul to God, and to foster compassion and care for the indigent in the community. Thus, fasting and almsgiving go hand-in-hand: denying of oneself cannot be complete without giving of oneself.

The tandem relationship between fasting and almsgiving is most clearly in evidence during the month of fasting called *Ramadan.* The hadith make it clear that fasting during Ramadan is intended to be a time for reflecting upon one's spiritual life, seeking forgiveness of sins, and caring for the poor: "When there comes the month of Ramadan, the gates of mercy are opened, and the gates of Hell are locked and the devils are chained"; "The best charity is that in Ramadan."[7] The entire month is holy for Muslims because the Qur'an and Sunna prescribe fasting for the faithful from sunrise to sunset (twelve to sixteen hours depending on the season of the year) for thirty days in a row. One of the two major religious holidays in the Islamic world, *Eid al-Fitr* (The Feast of Breaking the Fast), is observed at the end of the month of Ramadan. It normally lasts three days into the new lunar month and is a time of rejoicing and prayer.

Pilgrimage to Mecca *(Hajj).* Every Muslim who is physically and financially able is required to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca, or the *hajj,* at least once in his or her lifetime (Qur'an 2:196–203; 3:97; 5:98). The hajj is the highest act of devotion for a Muslim. It is a time of spiritual reflection, of rededication to Allah and the Islamic faith, of purity and self-denial, and of peace with one's fellow beings. The coming together of more than two million people from myriad nations and from every walk of life, all dressed in white robes and worshipping Allah in unison (see fig. 3 on p. 172), reaffirms powerfully the unity and diversity of the worldwide umma and reinforces the faith and identity of individual pilgrims. The hajj is in a very real sense the Muslim equivalent of the Latter-day Saint temple endowment combined with the communal aspects of general conference, for it reminds Muslims of who they are and what God has done and still does for them. The central shrine, called the Ka'ba, is believed by Muslims to be a remnant of a place of worship originally constructed by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. For Muslims, the Ka'ba is thus strongly associated with the Abrahamic covenant established between Allah and humankind. The rites performed there bind Muslims to one another and to God in the cosmic struggle against evil.

Muslims who have performed the hajj describe it as a profoundly moving, ineffable experience that changes their life, solidifies their faith, and deepens

their spiritual enjoyment.[8] A charming form of folk art has arisen out of the hajj tradition: the homes of pilgrims are often painted in bright colors with pictures of the Ka'ba, Mecca, airplanes, or other scenes from the pilgrimage experience (see fig. 4 on p. 126). It is interesting to note that the hajj can be experienced vicariously as well. Islamic law allows for a son or daughter to act as proxy in performing the hajj on behalf of a father or mother who passed away before having the opportunity or means to go to Mecca.

The most important religious holiday in the Islamic world, *Eid al-Adha* (Feast of Sacrifice), occurs at the end of the hajj when the faithful who can afford to do so sacrifice an animal (usually a sheep or goat, but often a cow or camel) in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael (see Qur'an 37:100–111). The meat from the sacrifice is divided into thirds: one-third for the immediate family, one-third as a gift to neighbors and friends, and one-third as a zakat offering for the poor. Muslims throughout the world join with the pilgrims in Mecca in celebrating this rite, and the holiday lasts for at least three days as families and friends congregate for exchanging gifts, sharing meals, and enjoying picnics and games. The sacrifice completes the official hajj ritual, but many participants feel their pilgrimage is incomplete without a visit to Medina (about two hundred kilometers northeast of Mecca) to honor the memory of Muhammad by performing salat at the mosque where he is buried (fig. 4).

Jihad. Muslims sometimes speak of the principle of *jihad* as a sixth pillar of Islam. The word is usually mistranslated in English as "holy war," but the Arabic root does not denote holiness or war. The literal meaning is "struggle" or "striving," meaning to exert oneself in the service of Allah.
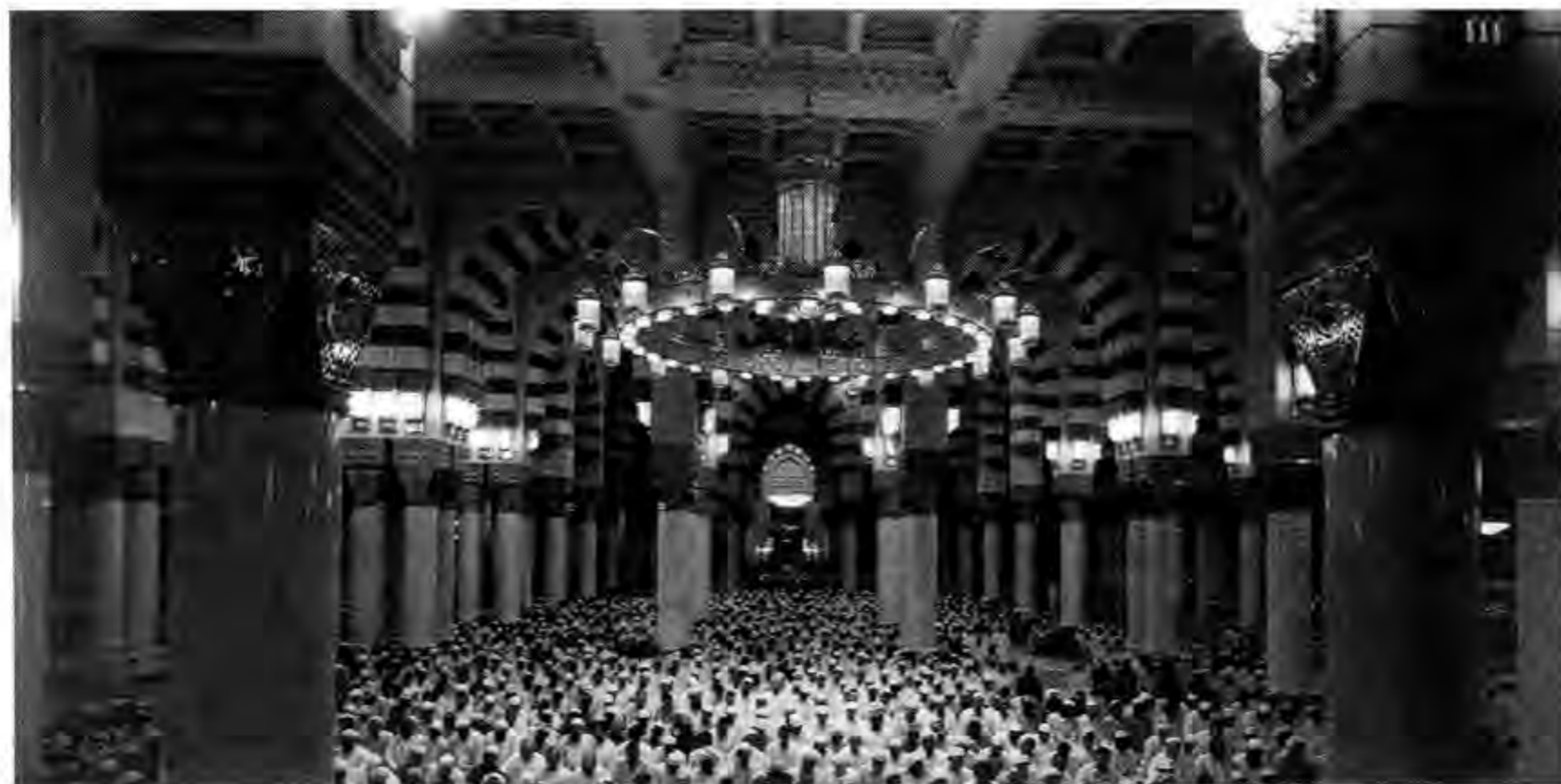
FIG. 4. The Prophet's Mosque in Medina, filled with pilgrims paying homage to Muhammad. Muslims respect all prophets but worship only Allah.

The Qur'an teaches that jihad involves violent struggle only under certain well-defined and restricted circumstances, such as defending family, home, religion, and innocent people against outside aggression. In everyday practice, jihad is a word that encompasses virtually every aspect of a Muslim's life and signifies the daily striving for self-improvement and the prosperity of the umma: "Those who believe, and emigrate and strive with might and main, in Allah's cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: they are the people who will achieve (salvation)" (Qur'an 9:20). One hadith states that Muhammad, while returning from a battle with the Meccans, informed the Muslim combatants that they were leaving behind the "lesser jihad" (military struggle) and taking up again the "greater jihad" (the struggle against the evil inclinations of the soul).

Contact and Dialogue between Latter-day Saints and Muslims

Over the years Church leaders have expressed admiration for Islam and for the spiritual contributions of its central leader, Muhammad. As early as 1855, at a time when Christian literature generally ridiculed Muhammad as the anti-Christ and the archenemy of Western civilization, Apostles George A. Smith and Parley P. Pratt delivered lengthy sermons in which they demonstrated a balanced understanding of Islamic history and spoke highly of Muhammad's leadership. Elder Smith observed that Muhammad was "descended from Abraham and was no doubt raised up by God on purpose" to preach against idolatry. He sympathized with the plight of Muslims who, like Mormons, find it difficult "to get an honest history" written about them. Speaking next, Elder Pratt acknowledged the prejudice with which Europeans and Americans typically regarded Islam, then went on to express his admiration for Muhammad's teachings, asserting that "upon the whole . . . [Muslims] have better morals and better institutions than many Christian nations."[9]

Latter-day Saint appreciation of Muhammad's role in history can also be found in the 1978 First Presidency statement to the world regarding God's love for all his children This declaration specifically mentions Muhammad as one of "the great religious leaders of the world" who received "a portion of God's light" and affirms that "moral truths were given to [these leaders] by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals."[10]

In recent years, Latter-day Saint respect for the spiritual legacy of Muhammad and for the religious values of the Islamic community has led to increasing contact and cooperation between Mormons and Muslims around the world. This is due in part to the presence of significant Latter-day Saint congregations in areas such as the Levant, North Africa, the Gulf, and Southeast Asia. The Church has sought to respect Islamic laws and

traditions that prohibit conversion of Muslims to other faiths by adopting a policy of nonproselytizing in Islamic countries of the Middle East. Examples of dialogue and cooperation include visits of Muslim dignitaries at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City; Muslim use of Church canning facilities to produce *halal* (ritually clean) food products; church humanitarian aid and disaster relief sent to numerous Muslim areas including Jordan, Kosovo, Turkey, and Afghanistan; academic agreements between Brigham Young University and various educational and governmental institutions in the Islamic world; the existence of the Muslim Student Association at BYU (fig. 5); and expanding collaboration between the Church and Islamic organizations to safeguard traditional family values worldwide.[11] The initiation of the Islamic Translation Series, cosponsored by BYU and the Church, has resulted in several beneficial exchanges between Muslim officials and Latter-day Saint Church leaders. A Muslim ambassador to the United Nations predicted that this translation series "will play

Courtesy James A. Toronto

FIG. 5. Officials of BYU and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at a reception held in their honor at the El-Fayez family farm in Amman, Jordan, in 1998. Five of the El-Fayez's children have attended and graduated from BYU. Many families in Jordan and Palestine have sent children to BYU. Each year, about sixty Arab students (most of whom are Muslim) attend BYU from countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Kuwait, and Oman. Pictured here, among others, are General Hmeidi El-Fayez, former advisor to His Majesty, King Hussein (far left); Elder and Sister Jeffrey R. Holland (next to Gen. El-Fayez); Dr. Jeffrey Tanner, associate dean of admissions at BYU (back row, middle); Nayyef El-Fayez, advisor to Queen Rania (to Dr. Tanner's right); Dr. Kamal Abu Jaber, former Jordanian Foreign Minister (to Nayef's right); Sultan El-Fayez (behind Dr. Abu Jaber); Elder and Sister Charles Didier, President of the Europe East Area (far right); and Haya, Rula, Ghadeer (president of the BYU alumni chapter), and Yara El-Fayez (all kneeling).

a positive role in the West's quest for a better understanding of Islam."[12]

A cabinet minister in Egypt, aware of the common ground shared by Muslims and Mormons, once remarked to Elder Howard W. Hunter that "if a bridge is ever built between Christianity and Islam it must be built by the Mormon Church."[13] The examples of Mormon-Muslim interaction mentioned above, together with the Church's 1989 establishment of the Jerusalem and Amman centers for educational and cultural exchange in the Middle East, reflect the attitude of respect for Islam that Church leaders have exhibited from earliest times (fig. 6). These activities represent tangible evidence of Latter-day Saint commitment to promote greater understanding of the Muslim world and suggest an emerging role for the Church (as Elder Hunter's

Courtesy Haws Marble

FIG. 6. Three Religions. Jerusalem's significance to Jews, Muslims, and Latter-day Saints is captured by this view of the Western Wall (lower right), Dome of the Rock (left center), and the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies (upper right). Dedicated in 1989, the Jerusalem Center has been home to hundreds of students and is a popular site for wedding portraits of Palestinian couples.

friend hinted) in helping bridge the gap that has existed historically between Muslims and Christians.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, speaking in October 2001 general conference, referred to the events of September 11, 2001, and the beginning of the bombing in Afghanistan and admonished Church members to be tolerant and understanding in their relations with Muslims:

> This is not a matter of Christian against Muslim. I am pleased that food is being dropped to the hungry people of a targeted nation. We value our Muslim neighbors across the world and hope that those who live by the tenets of their faith will not suffer. I ask particularly that our own people do not become a party in any way to the persecution of the innocent. Rather, let us be friendly and helpful, protective and supportive. It is the terrorist organizations that must be ferreted out and brought down.[14]

BYU Studies

Special Issue on Islam

Islam is a world religion in every sense of the word. From humble beginnings, it successfully transcended boundaries of space, time, culture, ethnicity, gender, and language to become a faith tradition of worldwide scope and impact. Despite the negative image of Islam in the West, it continues to be a dynamic, rapidly-growing religion, providing spiritual comfort and guidance to millions of people in nearly every country in the world. It is important for Latter-day Saints to attempt to understand the basic beliefs, history, aesthetic values, and contemporary issues of Islam. By endeavoring to comprehend and appreciate the soul, aspirations, and spiritual potential of another religious tradition, we often find new avenues of self-awareness, truth, and spirituality ourselves.

This issue of *BYU Studies* is an attempt to address a cross-section of important questions about the relationship of the Islamic world to the West and to the Latter-day Saint community in particular. The articles featured here have been written by Latter-day Saint scholars who are specialists in the topics they treat. Their research and analysis exemplify the fascination, respect, and appreciation that many Latter-day Saints feel for the complex attributes of Islamic civilization and for the religion of Islam as a prominent spiritual and cultural force in both the past and present. Given the diversity of Mormons and Muslims, as well as the complexity and richness of Islamic religious experience, inevitably some readers will disagree with some of the ideas presented here. We only hope that readers will recognize that great efforts have been taken to portray Islam in a well-researched, balanced, respectful, and insightful manner. Our intent is to provide research and perspectives that will foster understanding of other peoples and places, stimulate thoughtful discussion of difficult but vital issues, and promote greater tolerance and peace in a world that has too little of both.

---

1. Studies of converts to Islam indicate that two factors are uniformly attractive: the simplicity and power of the doctrine of *tawheed*, one God, and the sense of egalitarianism and acceptance that pervades the Muslim community.

2. When writing about non-Christian cultures and religions, courtesy dictates using B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (the Common Era) rather than the dating system based on Christ's birth. The Islamic calendar is lunar and begins its year one with the date of Muhammad's emigration from Mecca to the city of Yathrib (later named Medina) to escape persecution. Year 1 of the Islamic calendar thus corresponds to approximately 622 C.E. See Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 14–21.

3. The angel commanded, "Read! [The word can also be translated 'Recite!' or 'Proclaim!'] Read in the name of thy Lord who creates. Creates man from a clot. Read

and thy Lord is most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not." Qur'an 96:1–5. Thus, from the classical Arabic root *to recite* or *read* comes the title given to the Qur'an. The word implies that the Qur'an must be read, recited, and proclaimed to humankind. All Qur'anic citations in this article are from Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, ed. and trans., *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Medina, Saudi Arabia: The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1413 hijri [1992/93 C.E.]).

4. With the death of Muhammad, the faith of Islam was eventually fractured over the question of who his successor should be. Eventually, the Sunni and Shi'ite divisions within Islam have also been further subdivided by questions of doctrinal interpretation and issues of community and spiritual leadership. Sufi Islam also represents a particularly mystical aspect of Islamic practice emphasizing the attainment of a spiritual union with the Divine. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (San Francisco: Aquarian, 1994).

5. See John R. Hayes, ed., *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of the Renaissance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

6. These extra-Qur'anic divine utterances are cited in Mahmoud Al-Sirtawi, "Ramadaniyat: Al-Sawm Junna," *Al-Ajniha* (February 1996), 15–16. See also the English translation of Mahmoud Matraji, trans., *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar El-Fikr, 1993), 2:355.

7. Matraji, *Sahih Muslim*, 2:275; Al-Jaza'iri, *Methodology of the Muslim* (Beirut: Dar el-Fikr, 1994), 376.

8. In describing the spiritual rewards of hajj, Muslims often use terminology that is familiar to Christians. For example, a Jordanian friend said that the effect is "as if you are born a second time, feeling the purity and happiness and innocence of a small child."

9. See George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 3:32, 35, September 23, 1855; and Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:41, September 23, 1855.

10. In Spencer J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), v.

11. These activities are coordinated by the World Family Policy Center at Brigham Young University in partnership with the World Congress of Families.

12. "Islamic Diplomats Hosted in New York," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, April 3, 1999, 6. See also "News of the Church," *Ensign* 29 (June 1999): 74.

13. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *BYU Speeches of the Year* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1979), 36.

14. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in Which We Live," *Ensign* 31 (November 2001): 72.

In large letters is the Arabic word for Muhammad, considered by Muslims the last and greatest of many prophets of God. The small Arabic inscription at top is the traditional invocation recited by Muslims each time Muhammad's name is mentioned or appears in print. It means, "May God bless and preserve him."

Courtesy James A. Toronto

BYU Studies

Select Bibliography for Further Study

General Works on Islam

Al-Ghazali. *Inner Dimension of Islamic Worship*. Trans. Muhtar Holland. Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1983.

Ayoub, Mahmoud. *The Qur'an and Its Interpreters*. Vols. 1–2. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

Bowen, Donna Lee, and Evelyn A. Early, eds. *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*. 2d ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Cragg, Kenneth, and R. Marston Speight. *Islam from Within: Anthology of a Religion*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1980.

Denny, Frederick Mathewson. *An Introduction to Islam*. 2d ed. New York: Macmillan, 1994.

Esposito, John L. *Islam: The Straight Path*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Haykal, Muhammad Husayn. *The Life of Muhammad*. Trans. Ismail Ragi A. al Faruqi. n.p.: North American Trust, 1976.

Hitti, Philip Khuri. *Islam, a Way of Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970.

Hourani, Albert Habib. *Islam in European Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Lings, Martin. *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*. New York: Inner Traditions International, 1983.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Islamic Life and Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981.

Pickthall, Marmaduke William, trans. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: A Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction, and Notes*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1996.

Pullapilly, Cyriak K. ed. *Islam in the Contemporary World*. South Bend, Ind.: Cross Roads Books, 1980.

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

Rippin, Andrew. *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *Islam in Modern History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Watt, W. Montgomery. *Muslim-Christian Encounters: Perceptions and Misperceptions*. London: Routledge, 1991.

Latter-day Saint Publications

Hunter, Howard W. "All Are Alike unto God." In *Devotional Speeches of the Year*, 32–36. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1979.

Kennedy, David M. "More Nations Than One." In *The Expanding Church*, by Spencer J. Palmer, 69–79. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978.

Ludlow, Daniel H., ed. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. Vol. 2: 902–903; vol 4: 1592–93. New York: Macmillan, 1992. (Articles on the Middle East and on Mormonism and Islam.)

Mayfield, James B. "Ishmael, Our Brother." *Ensign* 9, no. 6 (June 1979): 24–32.

Palmer, Spencer J. *Mormons and Muslims: Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations*. Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1983. (See articles by Carlos E. Asay, Donna Lee Bowen, Arnold H. Green, and William J. Hamblin.)

Peterson, Daniel C. *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East*. Rev. ed. Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1995.

Platt, Joseph B. "Our Oasis of Faith." *Ensign* 18, no. 4 (April 1988): 39–41.

Pratt, Parley P. "Mahometanism and Christianity." *Journal of Discourses*. Vol. 3, 38–42 (September 23, 1855). Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86.

Smith, G. A. "The History of Mahomedanism." *Journal of Discourses*. Vol. 3, 28–37 (September 23, 1855). Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86.

Toronto, James A. "Islam." In *Religions of the World: A Latter-day Saint View*, by Spencer J. Palmer, and others. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997.

———. "A Latter-day Saint Perspective on Muhammad." *Ensign* 30, no. 8 (August 2000): 50–58.

Many Voices, One *Umma*

Sociopolitical Debate in the Muslim Community

James A. Toronto

As a religion expands beyond its original setting, it encounters new historical, economic, social, and geopolitical forces. The resulting clash between sacred truth and secular reality creates ideological tensions within a religious community that lead its followers to engage in a process of dialogue, reform, and reconciliation. This process of dialectical exchange occurs both between members of the community and between the community and outside forces. Often it gives rise to traumatic, even violent, conflict and frequently leads to schisms and the establishment of breakaway religious movements. The history of religion provides abundant evidence that the ability of a nascent religious community to deal effectively with these dialectical tensions is a crucial factor in determining whether it will remain a tradition of limited influence or become one of lasting, worldwide significance.

The Prophet Joseph Smith addressed the issues of tension and change when he observed, "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another. . . . This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed."[1] Numerous examples of this principle from Latter-day Saint history include changes in organizational structure, political and economic philosophy, temple worship, the practice of plural marriage, and the policy on Blacks and the priesthood. Such examples illustrate how Church leaders have applied the principle of "adapted revelation" as they have confronted and adjusted to new circumstances. The worldwide expansion and vibrance of the Church are evidences of its capacity to identify those elements that can be modified to fit changing realities and those that cannot be altered without compromising its essential identity, integrity, and vitality.

Islam provides another instructive example of the historical pattern of growth, adaptation, and change. From its beginnings early in the seventh century C.E., the Muslim community, or *umma*, has passed through periods of rapid expansion, structural adjustment, and external and internal strife. Today, more than a millennium after its inception, the umma is one of the largest and fastest-growing religious communities in the world and is projected to surpass Christianity in total membership by the middle of the twenty-first century.

BYU Studies

An assessment of the Islamic experience can provide understanding of the internal dynamics of one of the most prominent but misunderstood faith communities in the world. Such an examination can also yield insights on three vital issues in the broader arena of comparative religious studies: (1) the status of women, (2) religious extremism, and (3) the problem of maintaining unity in a changing world. This article examines these three key issues, which have occupied center stage in the Muslim community's historical evolution. Each issue reflects a dialectical tension that the umma has grappled with, whether as debate among Muslims themselves or as apologetic literature designed to explain and defend the Islamic experience to outsiders. In my analysis, I describe the origin and nature of each issue, assess the critical Muslim and non-Muslim arguments, and explore implications and related issues from the perspective of comparative religion.

The Status of Women in Islam

Islam has long occupied a prominent position in the wider debate on the role of women in religion.[2] Muslim practices are regularly condemned in feminist debate—by both Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals—as anachronistic and mysogynistic. And Western mass media and scholarship have typically portrayed Muslim women as anonymous entities bereft of rights, identity, intelligence, personality, or a significant role to play in society.

These views of women's roles in Islam form the nub of one of the sharpest contentions between the Muslim East and the Christian West. Western criticism of Islamic family life and gender roles strikes Muslims as hypocritical. They point to the high rates of sexual promiscuity, divorce, drug abuse, crime, and teenage pregnancy in the largely Christian Western nations as proof that the avowed superiority of liberal Christian mores is a delusion and that such permissiveness erodes the family and social structure of the nation.

Yes, Muslims affirm, their religion does advocate a more traditional form of family life, in which men and women have complementary, equally important roles. Generally speaking, men are the breadwinners and protectors; women are the homemakers and nurturers. But the fundamental requirements and rewards of Allah are the same for both men and women. Islam seeks to build marriages and families that foster faith, kindness, hard work, cooperation, and prosperity. Islam does not condone abuse of wife and children, as suggested in literature and movies in the West.[3] On the contrary, the Qur'an and *Sunna* (the example of the Prophet Muhammad) admonish men, women, and children to be kind, gentle, and respectful in their family relations.

The Muslim view of gender roles and family life is based on the Qur'an and Sunna.[4] The Qur'an teaches that Allah created men and women to work harmoniously together and to be a source of happiness

and peace to one another: "And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)" (30:21); and "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female: ye are members, one of another" (3:195; see also 2:187).

In contrast to the Christian tradition that appears to assign greater opprobrium to Eve than to Adam in their fall from grace, the Qur'an clearly indicates that both the man and the woman yielded to Satan's temptation and were therefore equally responsible for the expulsion from paradise (7:22–23). Allah does not distinguish between men and women in his expectations and rewards for believers: "If any do deeds of righteousness—be they male or female—and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them" (4:124). Another verse is more explicit on this point:

> For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for true men and women, for men and women who are patient and constant, for men and women who humble themselves, for men and women who give in charity, for men and women who fast, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allah's remembrance, for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward. (33:35)

The *hadith* literature (sayings and actions of the early leaders) portrays Muhammad as a paragon of kindness, courtesy, and gentleness in his dealings with his wives and other women, as a man who championed women's rights, advocated mutual understanding and respect between the sexes, and encouraged husbands by his personal example to treat wives well and help them with household chores.[5]

However, the Qur'an does prescribe different social and familial roles for men and women, and because the Qur'an's meaning on these issues is at times general in nature, the interpretation and practice of these divergent roles have become the focus of debate among Muslims and of criticism from outside the umma. The Qur'an designates men as "the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means" (4:34). Even though both believing men and women "should lower their gaze and guard their modesty" (24:30–31), the Sunna and Qur'anic commentaries make it clear that a greater degree of privacy in dress is required for women.[6]

Muslim sources point out that Islam greatly elevated the status of women. The Qur'an condemns the practice of female infanticide, apparently quite common in pre-Islamic Arabian culture, and allots to women certain rights in marriage and inheritance that they did not enjoy before the

advent of Islam. But because men have responsibilities for supporting the family that are not required of women, a male's inheritance in Islamic law equals that of two females (4:11). In order to protect women's honor against slander or false allegations, four witnesses rather than the usual two are required to establish guilt in cases of adultery (4:15; 24:4 and notes).

One can say that the Qur'an permits polygyny but does not recommend it. It limits to four the number of wives that a man can legally marry (in pre-Islamic Arabia, the number was unlimited), and this permission is given in the context of verses dealing with orphaned women and widows. It adds the condition that if the husband cannot "deal justly (with them)," then only one wife is permissible (4:3). Modernists in Islam interpret these verses to mean that, since it is virtually impossible for a man to care equitably and justly for four wives, Allah's intent is that Muslims practice monogamy. Another widely held Muslim view is that taking more than one wife is acceptable (especially in cases where the first wife cannot bear children), but that it is generally not practical for economic reasons (too difficult to support two or more households). Though various interpretations exist, the reality is that only a small percentage of Muslims practice polygyny today.

Because men have the duty of protecting women and providing for families, the Qur'an encourages "righteous women" to be "devoutly obedient." In the case of wives who are persistently and flagrantly disobedient, the Qur'an counsels husbands to "admonish them (first); (next), refuse to share their beds; (and last) beat them (lightly)" (4:34). The commentaries emphasize that slight physical correction is a last resort, to be used only in extremely rare cases and in a way that inflicts no pain or injury.[7]

The symbol of the polemic between Muslims and non-Muslims is the veil that many Muslim women wear in public. To Westerners, the custom in most Muslim societies of women covering the head when men are not required to do so is tangible evidence that Islam discriminates against women and relegates them to secondary status. As always, however, the reality beneath the surface of sociocultural appearances is complex and defies facile conclusions.

Muslims themselves have divergent views on the issue of veiling. Opinions and practices have varied at different times and in different places, and social, cultural, and political conditions heavily influence veiling trends. In some extremely conservative countries, all women are required to cover their bodies from head to toe when in public. In more moderate nations like Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco, veiling is normally a matter of choice, and one sees many women in society who have opted not to veil. In Indonesia and Malaysia, the ratio of veiled to nonveiled women is lower than in Middle Eastern Islamic countries.

Some Muslims hold that the veil is not required at all in Islam. They argue that Muslim women during the time of Muhammad did not veil and that the practice became a part of Muslim culture only after non-Arab peoples who had a tradition of veiling entered Islam in large numbers. The more mainstream contemporary view is that veiling is required as a means of fostering modesty and morality in society.

The question of just what constitutes a proper veil is a matter of personal interpretation. A full-length robe, gloves, and a face mask *(niqab)* with small slits for vision are required of women in some countries and conservative families, but most Muslims consider this practice extreme. Some women wear local costumes with a token covering of the hair. For example, many Muslim women from the Indian subcontinent, like former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, often wear a traditional gown and loose-fitting head scarf. Today the majority of women who veil wear a scarf *(hijab)* that covers their hair and neck but not the face and an ankle-length, long-sleeved robe with no gloves.[8]

Muslims generally agree that no one should be compelled to wear the veil; it must be a personal choice a woman makes when she is spiritually and psychologically ready. It is also true, however, that pressure from family and friends—sometimes subtle, sometimes intense—frequently has a bearing on decisions about veiling. During the past three decades, the Islamic community has witnessed a marked increase in the number of women donning the veil, a phenomenon related to the push for Islamization in many Muslim countries.

The diversity of interpretation among Muslims on the issue of gender roles and veiling is illustrated in the following quotes, each taken from an Islamic source and professing to be the correct Islamic view. In the first example, the difference of opinion concerns whether a woman should cover her whole body, including her face, or whether her face can be left uncovered:

> A Muslim woman may wear whatever she pleases in the presence of her husband and family or among women friends. But when she goes out or when men other than her husband or close family are present she is expected to wear a dress which will cover all parts of her body, and which should not reveal the figure. What a contrast with Western fashions which every year concentrate quite intentionally on exposing yet another erogenous zone to the public gaze! . . . The intention of Western dress is to reveal the figure, while the intention of Muslim dress is to conceal it, at least in public. . . . It is therefore required for a Muslim woman when she goes out to wear a dress that covers her from head to foot and does not reveal the figure. According to some scholars only the hands and face should be left uncovered, while according to some others the face should also be covered. . . . We must concede that on this issue there are two viewpoints and both are derived from careful reflection on the original sources. Everyone is free to prefer any one of these on the basis of arguments, but should also respect the other viewpoint.[9]

The second example reflects a much more liberal and generalized interpretation and avoids a precise definition of what constitutes "required modesty" in Islam:

> The social role of women requires mixing with men. Islam does not permit any discrimination between men and women, nor does it advocate a segregation between them. . . .
>
> Modesty is required *in the outdoor dress* of both Muslim women and men. However, there is no specific uniformed dress recommended for a Muslim woman. *Purda, chadoura, 'abaya, quftan* or *hayek* are local fashions preferred by women in different places and may be changed in any time according [to] the change of taste; these designs or fashions should not violate the basic and permanent requirements of an Islamic dress. . . .
>
> Islam allows any dress that fulfills the required modesty for a decent woman.[10]

The practice of veiling raises provocative questions about the functions and symbolism of clothing in confessional life. In Islamic society, veiling has several functions. It underscores the different roles of men and women, helps maintain proper relations between the sexes by promoting modesty of thought and conduct, expresses one's identity as a member of the Muslim community, and reinforces one's commitment to the faith and one's rejection of materialism (fig. 1).

Clothing serves similar purposes in non-Muslim communities as well. In a comparative context, it is worthwhile to consider corollary questions: What special attire is required in a given religious community, and what functions does it have? Which aspects of dress are specifically prescribed by religious dogma, and which are merely reflections of cultural norms? Are the mores and strictures governing dress exactly the same for both men and women? If not, why not? Modesty is valued in all religions, but how does the definition of modesty and its expression in personal attire change from culture to culture and from time to time within the same culture?

Most Latter-day Saints consider Church standards of dress to be a necessary, reasonable, and comfortable part of their religious lives, while outside observers describe these same standards as rigid and repressive. Most Muslims also feel that their requirements for dress, including veiling for women, are a necessary, reasonable, and comfortable norm for human society, even while outside observers denounce these norms as oppressive to women. An eminent American scholar who has spent years living among Muslim women gives several cautions against drawing conclusions based on superficial impressions:

> We [non-Muslims] tend to believe that those who look out (through the veil) suffer from the same exclusion as those of us who look at the veil and its hidden contents. However, we have no right to make such an assumption. Much depends on who makes the decision to veil—whether it is imposed or self-selected.

[Veiling is] "an outward sign of a complex reality."

[It] relates to the individual's sense of belonging to a group, and to the individual's sense of her own identity.

Women stress repeatedly . . . that the choice to wear Islamic dress is one they make themselves, and it must come "from inner religious conviction."

The majority of women . . . see themselves as making a statement or taking action that strengthens their own position within the society.[11]

One young Egyptian Muslim woman explains some of the social advantages of veiling: "My family trusts me implicitly, and now that I wear this [Islamic] dress, they are not worried if I stay out later than usual or mingle with friends they do not always approve of. In this dress, my reputation remains intact, for everyone knows that it is a respectable garment. People thus respect you if you wear it."[12]

The debate about religious clothing is one important dimension of the wider dialectic about gender roles and women's status in the Muslim community and, by extension, all religious communities. This is, in fact, one of the most pressing but neglected issues in the study of comparative religion. Gender role differentiation has been a feature of nearly every faith tradition in the world, and with the rise of the feminist movement during the past three decades, it has become an ever more controversial question at the forefront of religious discourse. The question, simply stated, is this: To what extent is religion a facilitating or a debilitating factor in women's historical struggle to achieve equal status, treatment, opportunities, and rights in society?

The debate is rendered more complex by the fact that, within the

Courtesy James A. Toronto

Fig. 1. White clothing and accouterments for women going on the pilgrimage *(hajj)* to Mecca. The items include pants and blouse; a cotton *hijab*, or head covering; a purse; a pair of light shoes; a shoe bag (to hold shoes after removing them to enter a mosque); and a cloth for drying off after performing ablutions before prayer. Even though the hijab covers the mannequin's face, women are required **not** to veil their faces while performing the hajj. Men also wear standard white clothing in Mecca.

historical experience of every religious community, one can find scriptural passages, authoritative dicta, and anecdotal examples to support either side of the argument. In the Islamic context, apologetic literature focuses on Qur'anic statements, Muhammad's normative behavior, and contemporary testimonials and case studies that affirm an Islamic position of honor, respect, equality, freedom, and a different-but-equal role for women.

But critics use the same sources and methods to support a contrary view. They cite the Qur'an's apparent sanction of a husband's right to use physical force to discipline his wife; Muhammad's alleged lasciviousness in taking multiple wives, even exceeding the Qur'anic limit of four; the provisions in Islamic personal and family law that assign women a status that is half of men's in matters of inheritance and legal testimony; and data from some Islamic countries indicating that women have less access to education, political participation, economic benefits, employment opportunities, and legal protection.

Muslim apologists are generally articulate in presenting Islamic teachings on equality and complementary roles for men and women and persuasive in pointing out the inaccuracies, contradictions, and hypocrisy that often typify non-Muslim allegations of misogyny in Islam. On the other hand, Muslim apologists frequently adopt a superficial, contemptuous approach to criticism that ultimately weakens the Islamic position. They dismiss the comments of critics as baseless ("merely part of a Western conspiracy to destroy Islam") and thus ignore or gloss over crucial points of this criticism that are well attested in Islamic scripture, history, and contemporary experience.

Although specific issues and arguments vary somewhat, the same dialectical pattern characterizes the debate on women's status in all the major world religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. A survey of the doctrinal, historical, and sociological record of human religious experience leaves little doubt that religion receives mixed reviews for its role in shaping women's development. Religious dogma and values have been detrimental at times. In the name of religion, women have been physically abused and killed to preserve male superiority and family honor; denied opportunities for personal growth, education, employment, travel, and freedom of expression; compelled to commit suicide, keep silent, undergo genital mutilation, and wear restrictive clothing; and subjected to discrimination in society and humiliation at home.

But the record also shows that religion forms the core of existential understanding that sustains women's lives and affirms female gender. Countless women throughout history have found profound peace, joy, and fulfillment through their participation in personal and communal religious life (fig. 2), and it is generally the case that women exhibit higher levels of

commitment in living a religious lifestyle and advocating religious values than their male counterparts.

Final judgment on the issue of whether religion's promotion of gender role differentiation hinders or promotes women's spiritual, social, economic, and political development will rest with the individual observer. Categorizing a given condition or behavior as detrimental or beneficial, oppressive or liberating, is a highly subjective process. Ultimately, these judgments often hinge on the depth of one's commitment to the spiritual and epistemological underpinnings of a given religious community. Given the complexity of the debate and the personal nature of the issues, it is imperative to avoid hasty judgments and superficial conclusions about the spiritual lives of people whom we observe from afar through dim light and therefore know imperfectly.

Courtesy William S. Dant

Fig. 2. Principal Maysa and Mariam at the Iqra' Academy, an Islamic school in Salt Lake City. *Iqra'* (recite, or read) was the first word uttered by the angel Gabriel at the inception of the Qur'anic revelation. Used here, iqra' reflects the Muslim commitment to lifelong learning.

The Question of Religious Extremism

In the minds of most Westerners, the term *Islamic Fundamentalism,* which appears almost daily in newspapers and television broadcasts, is synonymous with violence, terrorism, and fear. Muslim extremists, claiming to represent the interests and teachings of Islam, have engaged in hijackings, bombings, assassinations, attacks on Western tourists and businesses, and vitriolic denunciations of Western civilization. The high-profile activities of militant groups like Hizbullah in Lebanon, Islamic Jihad in Egypt, Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza have undoubtedly done more than anything else to shape negative public opinion and stereotypes about Islam.

Since the latter half of the nineteenth century, Muslims have been engaged in an intense internal debate about the status of their religion and their community in the modern world. Colonization of nearly the entire Islamic world by Western powers and the political and economic subjugation that followed precipitated a crisis among Muslims similar to the spiritual,

psychological, and intellectual angst that has surfaced in other world religions that espouse a doctrine of "chosenness."

In Judaism, it was the Holocaust, and in Shinto, it was Japan's defeat and the emperor's humiliation in World War II that forced agonizing reflection on this question: "If we are God's chosen people, then why has this happened to us?" That is essentially the existential dilemma that has impelled Muslims to search for answers to two basic questions: What brought about the military, economic, and spiritual decline of the Islamic community following more than one thousand years of supremacy in the world? What should be done to bring about renewal and reform?

Only in the past two decades has the West become keenly aware of this dialectic among Muslims. As the ideological ferment and militant political activism of the Islamic movement have spread beyond the borders of the Islamic heartlands, the Western nations have been drawn into the struggle. Western media and scholars have become interested in Islam and in its economic, social, and political influences. The oil embargo of 1973; the Iranian revolution and seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979; the assassination of Egypt's President Sadat in 1981; wars in Afghanistan, Chechneya, and the Gulf; and suicide bombings in Israel during the last decade have all helped illustrate how vital and urgent this internal debate among Muslims has become in world affairs. These events attest to the fact that Islam has replaced nationalism as "the major ideology of dissent" throughout the Arab and Islamic world.[13]

Analysts, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have often differed in their use of terminology to describe this intensification of Islamic identity and activity. It has been referred to, *inter alia*, as the Islamic Revival, the Islamic Awakening, the Islamic Resurgence, Islamic Fundamentalism, Islamization, and the Islamist Movement. Participants in these activities are variously called Islamists, religious militants, fundamentalists, fanatics, and extremists.[14] Many contemporary scholars prefer the term "Islamist Movement" to refer to the renewed push by Muslims to reform their societies according to Islamic principles of equity and justice.

No consensus has emerged among scholars about why or when the Islamic Resurgence began.[15] But it is safe to assert that, for at least a century, intellectuals, politicians, and religious leaders have engaged in a dialogue to identify the roots of the Islamic malaise and to articulate a vision of how Islamic societies can regain ascendancy in a modern world. The issue for Muslims is not Islam's viability as a set of spiritual truths and religious practices; the core of the conflict is the extent to which Islamic ideals should be permitted to govern not only religious matters in society but political, economic, social, and educational domains of life as well.

The complexity and diversity of the Islamist Movement for reform defy easy explanation, as it comprises a multiplicity of groups, ideologies,

and activities that are often at cross-purposes with each other. Virtually all Islamist factions agree on the goals for solving the problem but disagree sharply on the means for achieving those goals.

In assessing the origin of their decline in the world, Muslims typically cite both internal and external factors, as follows: First, they say, we Muslims must accept some blame for our demise because we have abandoned the faith; we have failed to live our religion as our forefathers did when Islam ruled the world. Second, colonial powers from the Christian West have taken advantage of our weakness and backwardness to conquer our countries, subjugate our peoples, exploit our economies, and impose alien, secular values that have corrupted our way of life. The goals for solving these two problems of internal decay and external domination are then obvious and almost unanimously agreed upon: First, we must cleanse our societies from within and return to Islam. Second, we must root out Western secular influences and resist further neocolonial attempts to weaken and humiliate us. The slogan "Islam is the solution" has become ubiquitous in the Islamic world, whether in literature, Friday sermons, daily conversations, or graffiti spray-painted on public buildings. A publication of the influential Muslim Brotherhood states, "There is no cure for the widespread disease of poverty, ignorance, sickness, and moral and national corruption except a return to the laws of Islam."[16] The ultimate goal of most Islamists is the establishment of an Islamic state that applies Islamic laws and principles in every phase of public and private life, including economics, politics, education, and family relations.

The various groups in the Islamist movement are deeply divided, however, on what methods should be adopted to achieve these goals. The vast majority of Muslims advocate a peaceful, moderate approach that emphasizes social and political activism to bring about reform: participating in the political process and election campaigns; establishing mosques, institutes, and newspapers to educate the masses and shape public opinion; and providing jobs and social services (like health care, adult literacy programs, and day-care centers) for the poor. In the ideology of moderate groups, a distinction is made between "modernism" and "secularism"; that is, Islam has no objection to the modern advances in science and technology that promote a healthier, more prosperous life, but it rejects the materialistic, secular values that seem to accompany those advancements in Western society.

On the other hand, a small percentage of Muslims have concluded that peaceful, gradual agitation for change is doomed to failure because the Muslim politicians, military officers, businessmen, and intellectuals who control their countries are corrupt, anti-Islamic puppets of Christian and Jewish neocolonial powers. Militant groups assert, therefore, that violent means are justified to throw off the oppressive yoke and to obtain the freedom and prosperity that a true Islamic state would provide.

These fringe groups view themselves as soldiers in a desperate war for survival against apostates and infidels, the outcome of which will determine the fate of the Islamic community. From the perspective of militant Islam, violence is justified by the Qur'anic principles of jihad because the fighters are defending innocent Muslims against hostilities, aggression, and suffering. Assassinating corrupt leaders, shooting intellectuals and newspaper editors, struggling violently to overthrow an oppressive regime, and bombing Western-sponsored institutions are activities viewed as religious duties, the performance of which reaps Allah's rewards (even an automatic place in paradise if one dies while carrying out this duty and thus becomes a martyr).

Mainstream Muslims denounce this kind of radical ideology as a gross misinterpretation of Islamic principles and as antithetical to Islam's historical advocacy of tolerance and peace. An American Muslim explains:

> Islam is against compulsion in religion, as Allah says in *The Qur'an:* "There is no compulsion in religion." . . .
>
> As to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, Allah ordained a peaceful co-existence and a mutual understanding, as He said in *The Qur'an:* "Say: O People of the Scripture [Jews and Christians]! Come to an agreement between us and you. . . .
>
> . . . And argue not with the People of the Scripture, except in the best way."[17]

A Pakistani student at BYU expressed the attitude of most Muslims toward religious extremism in an insightful editorial following the 1993 attack by Muslim militants against the World Trade Center:

> The Muslim students at BYU join the rest of the nation in condemning the recent terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. We also condemn the possible involvement of Muslims in this heinous crime. We regret the loss of innocent lives in this incident and hope the real culprits are subjected to exemplary punishment.
>
> These senseless acts have nothing to do with Islam and are against the spirit of the religion that emphasizes the concept of peace more than anything else. . . .
>
> The incident in New York City is not any more representative of Islam than the people in Waco, Texas [the cult of extremists led by David Koresh] are representative of mainstream Christianity. Cody Judy [who briefly held President Hunter hostage] does not represent Mormonism any better than do the Palestinian suspects of the New York bombing represent Islam. Acts of a handful of derelicts are not true representatives of the faith they adhere to.[18]

The Islamist Movement, in both its moderate and extreme manifestations, will continue to influence economic, social, and political developments throughout the world. Even though Islamist rhetoric couches the problems of Muslims in religious terms, there is little doubt that factors

other than spiritual delinquency must be addressed in order to bring about necessary reforms. Since the events of September 11, moderate but influential voices in the Islamic world have called for Muslims to study and remedy the problems that foster religious extremism and acts of violence.[19] The seedbed of religious extremism is prolonged suffering, humiliation, and despair arising from extreme sociopolitical conditions: poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, and political disenfranchisement. When exposed long enough to desperate circumstances, even moral, intelligent people sometimes resort to desperate measures and often invoke religion to acquire support and legitimacy.

Religious militancy is not a uniquely Islamic phenomenon that reflects, as some Westerners seem to suppose, a theological flaw in Islam or some sort of inherent Muslim predisposition toward fanaticism. In an article discussing the official policy of the United States toward Islam, Edward P. Djererian, former U.S. ambassador to Syria and Israel, advocates an enlightened and balanced approach to this issue. He cautions against Islamophobia, calls for understanding of the underlying causes of religious extremism, and suggests that religion can act as a positive catalyst in solving conflicts:

> The United States Government does not view Islam as the next "ism" confronting the West or threatening world peace. That is a simplistic response to a complex reality. . . . In the final analysis . . . it is social injustice—the lack of economic, social, educational, and political opportunity—that provides the extremists a constituency. . . . We differ with those who, whatever their religion, practice terrorism, resort to violence, reject the peaceful resolution of conflicts, oppress minorities, preach intolerance, disdain political pluralism, or who violate internationally accepted standards regarding human rights. . . . While there is a common perception that religious differences have been and remain a cause or pretext for conflict and wars, there is the other side of the coin where the work and actions of religious groups and individuals can help foster the peaceful settlement of conflicts.[20]

Extremists who rationalize violence in the name of God can be found in the history of every religious tradition, including Mormonism. The point here is not to justify violent acts of religious extremists but to encourage analysis and understanding of the conditions that create one of the great paradoxes in world religions: the growth of hatred, bigotry, and violence in the same spiritual soil that produces love, tolerance, and peace.

Islam's Search for Unity of Vision and Voice

As the twenty-first century progresses, the Muslim community must grapple with some thorny issues and daunting challenges. Foremost among these is the urgent need for a coherent vision of Islam's place in

modern society and a unified voice to articulate that vision persuasively. The issue of how to reconcile the traditional religious values, teachings, and practices of Islam with the requirements of an international socio-economic order based on concepts of secularism, rationalism, and democracy is a focus of intense debate within the umma. In a nutshell, the problem is how to adopt the beneficial aspects of Western technology without being harmed spiritually by the corrosive effects of Western culture.

Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia, referred to the "tormenting predicament" among Muslims of

> whether to remain loyal to one's traditions or to depart for a way of life perceived as superior. . . . [Muslims] generally fall into two distinct categories. There were those who foreswore everything from the West because of their passionate and tenacious hold on everything from their own traditions. And then there were those who, overwhelmed by the dazzling light of Western civilization, became renegades to condemn their own.[21]

Fazlur Rahman, one of the most gifted Muslim intellectuals of the twentieth century, asserts that Muslims, in dealing with this predicament, must take a fresh look at their history and forge a revitalized Islamic worldview:

> The heart of the problem which a Muslim must face and resolve if he wishes to reconstruct an Islamic future on an Islamic past [is] how . . . this past [shall] guide him and which elements of his history he may modify, emphasize or deflate. . . .
>
> . . . [It] lies in the actual, positive formulation of Islam, of exactly spelling out what Islam has to say to the modern individual and society.[22]

Two major obstacles stand in the way of the umma's efforts to deal with this predicament, each of which represents a paradox in the life of the modern Muslim community. First, since 1924 when Ataturk abolished the caliphate in Turkey, Islam has lacked any semblance of a centralized leadership that can speak authoritatively for all Muslims. (Some historians have argued that such a central authority ceased to exist with the death of 'Ali, the last of the four "Rightly-Guided Caliphs.") This historical development has influenced in both positive and negative ways the evolution of the Muslim community worldwide. On the plus side, the lack of a central organization has been a key factor in Islam's continuous growth and expansion, as it has allowed a significant degree of flexibility in adapting to widely divergent cultures.

On the minus side, the absence of a unified central voice has created ambiguities, dissonance, and even hostilities in areas not affected by the binding power of the Five Pillars. The great Arab Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (1126–1198), known as Averroës in the West, discussed the problem of tensions and schisms in early Islam.[23] These difficulties are most evident in the communal effort to define and implement an Islamic model for the

social, economic, and political dimensions of life in a modern world. On these kinds of issues, one encounters a degree of sociopolitical diversity in the umma that in its depth and passion is as remarkable as the ritual uniformity one also observes.

The reality is—and it is a reality that causes as much distress to thoughtful Muslims as it does confusion to non-Muslims—that the various Islamist reformers and movements have been unable to agree on just what an acceptable, distinctive, and viable "Islamic solution" is to intractable problems such as poverty, disease, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, and national governance. Fazlur Rahman echoes a common refrain in Muslim literature when he laments that "the greatest weakness of neorevivalism . . . [is] its substitution of cliche mongering for serious intellectual endeavor."[24]

Viewed from this vantage point, Muslim talk of pan-Islamic economic cooperation and political integration sounds overly optimistic. With a multiplicity of sects, ideologies, legal codes, schools of Islamic law, and politico-economic systems across the Islamic world and with no universally accepted authority to define issues, render binding interpretations, and rally support, the Islamic world faces daunting challenges in its divinely mandated duty to establish "the Islamic alternative" in both spiritual and temporal affairs throughout the world.

In recent years, when Islamist groups have managed to gain political power and implement Islamic states with the full weight of Islamic shari'a law (as in the case of Iran and Afghanistan), we see that the Islamist solution to complex socioeconomic problems so far has consisted of simplistic measures. Women have been forced to veil and to give up their jobs outside the home; cinemas, bars, and casinos have been closed down; schools have been segregated so that boys and girls cannot mingle; and people have been forced to observe prayer times. Neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia, who compete with each other for the self-ascribed title of the world's only true Islamic government, has succeeded in creating an inspiring model of modern Muslim governance that can bring leadership, vision, prosperity, and unity to a fractured umma.

The second obstacle concerns the role of Islamic law, shari'a, in governing a modern nation-state. Muslims view shari'a as a comprehensive code of law that governs essentially every aspect of private and public life: individual and group devotions, diet and eating habits, personal hygiene, marital relations, politics, commerce and banking, and education. It includes criminal as well as personal and family law. Shari'a is based on the Qur'an and Sunna but also incorporates the legal opinions of the great Muslim jurists throughout Islamic history. It would be tantamount to creating a system of law and daily life derived from the LDS standard works

and 1,400 years' accumulation of interpretation and commentary reflected in the published writings of general authorities.

It is axiomatic for most Islamists that shari'a must form the foundation of any truly Islamic polity because "God's law" provides the only lasting remedies to the social, political, and economic ills that beset humanity; that these remedies are as relevant and effective today as they were during Islam's golden era centuries ago; and that therefore Muslims must avoid a piecemeal approach and adopt the corpus of shari'a law in its entirety. The logic is that what was good for Muslims then will be good for Muslims now and what made Islam preeminent once will make Islam preeminent again today. Islam, as fleshed out in meticulous detail in shari'a law, is valid "in every time and in every place" (as Muslims like to say). Implementation of shari'a, then, is the sine qua non of any Islamist reform effort, the key ingredient that will ensure successful realization of an Islamic sociopolitical order in the world.

But careful observation of Islamic experience reveals the following dilemma: while many Muslim reformers extol the virtues of shari'a and regard it as the sure means of their salvation, other Muslim and non-Muslim voices question the efficacy of shari'a in a modern setting and view it instead as a primary cause of the Muslims' "tormenting predicament." Those who see shari'a as a hindrance to reform and progress argue that changing times require adapting religious traditions and principles to fit new realities. They point out that shari'a legal rulings reflect solutions that were worked out in response to specific historical situations from the seventh to the ninth centuries and that these answers cannot be transplanted effectively to meet the needs of a modern, pluralistic, technology-based society. The way out of the contemporary Muslim predicament, they believe, is not to adopt the solutions worked out and codified as law by earlier Muslims in Medina or Damascus or Baghdad. Rather, it is to emulate the hermeneutical *methods* and spiritual *energy* of the earlier generations who developed creative solutions to the problems of their times based on independent inquiry and original analysis of the Qur'an. Freed from overdependence on historical and legal precedents, contemporary Muslims can formulate their own dynamic responses that both reflect the Divine Will as contained in the Qur'an and address the ever changing realities of modern life.

Two contemporary examples illustrate the doctrinal dissonance created in the absence of a unified central organization in Islam and the complexity of the polemic surrounding the shari'a's proper role in a religiously pluralistic society. The first example involves the issue of women's rights. While Muslims counter criticism that Islam demeans and subjugates women with assertions that it has, in fact, been a liberating force with

regard to women's rights, the signals from traditional Muslim authorities are frequently ambiguous and confusing.

Muslim apologetic literature vehemently denies that Islam condones female circumcision, a practice that predates Islam and is essentially unknown to most Muslims but is widely carried out in the Nile Valley (Egypt and Sudan) and some other African areas. The practice has been condemned by various international organizations as a brutal violation of a woman's human rights. And yet, as recently as 1996, lawmakers in Egypt, acting in accordance with shariʻa guidelines, passed a law to forbid the adoption of children but refused to include a clause banning female circumcision. Egyptian newspapers quoted the head of Al-Azhar University, the oldest and arguably the most influential religious institution in Sunni Islam, as saying that circumcising girls is "as much a duty for Muslims as prayer." However, the new rector of the university, who is also a leading shariʻa expert, is quoted as opposing female circumcision and stating that "it is not a religious duty but merely a tradition and therefore subject to the opinion of doctors, not clerics."[25] The picture became even more blurred when the new rector, less than a week later, reversed his position and opined that a "moderate circumcision" can be "useful" for girls: "By keeping this moderation in circumcision we avoid the ill effects that some people have called to be banned. . . . The truth is that circumcision is balanced, is a cleanliness useful for women and men."[26] This example, as well as other recent cases dealing with abortion, surrogate parenting, and honor killings,[27] highlights the ambiguity that often characterizes Islamic discourse on sociopolitical issues and begs answers to these questions: How does one decipher Islam's position on a given issue? Who truly has authority to speak in behalf of the Muslim community?

Another example reveals the inevitable clash between the modern principle of religious pluralism and the shariʻa law governing religious minorities. Islam has historically treated non-Muslim minorities with an admirable degree of tolerance. But while such tolerance represented a progressive policy for its time, the emergence of post-Enlightenment social and political ideologies in the West and the increasing interdependency of nations demand a new standard: religious pluralism. This implies not just tolerating the beliefs of religious minorities and allowing them to worship, while granting them secondary status in society, but a full acceptance of their right to practice and propagate their faiths freely, to express their religious views openly, and to enjoy equal rights of citizenship. Muslim apologists are quick to point out that Islam advocates the full range of human rights, including religious liberty, and in recent years, several individuals and organizations have issued publications outlining their Islamic vision of human rights.

But this literature uniformly avoids the difficult issue of shari'a provisions that accord religious minorities respected but secondary status and that stipulate harsh penalties—including the death penalty—for Muslims who leave the faith or are declared apostates.[28] Islamic laws permitting conversion to Islam but forbidding Muslim conversion to other religions are incompatible with internationally recognized norms of religious liberty and present a major stumbling block in the umma's efforts to promote modernization and progress among Muslims. A recent study of human rights and religious freedom in Islam concluded:

> The Islamic human rights schemes . . . are mostly evasive on the question of protections for freedom of religion. . . . [This] indicates a lack of support for the idea that people should be free to follow the religion of their choice. . . . The failure of a single one of these Islamic human rights schemes to take a position against the application of the *shari'a* death penalty for apostasy means that the authors of these schemes have neglected to confront and resolve the main issues involved in harmonizing international human rights and *shari'a* standards.
>
> The lack of support for the principle of freedom of religion in the Islamic human rights schemes is one of the factors that most sharply distinguishes them from the International Bill of Human Rights, which treats freedom of religion as an unqualified right. The authors' unwillingness to repudiate the rule that a person should be executed over a question of religious belief reveals the enormous gap that exists between their mentalities and the modern philosophy of human rights.[29]

The literature on contemporary Islam treats many other examples that illustrate the difficulty of harmonizing shari'a law with modern standards and practices and the challenge of carrying out shari'a-based sociopolitical development, educational reform, and economic integration with the world community.

Is the shari'a an engine or a brake in national development? Does it promote or hinder the Islamic world's progress? These questions lie at the heart of Muslim efforts to define their direction as a community, maintain unity, and regain their preeminent position on the world stage. The debate is intensely emotional and divisive because shari'a has traditionally formed the heart of Muslim identity and the bedrock of Islamic orthodoxy. The dilemma of whether to accept a diminished role for shari'a in society or to face the prospect of continued underdevelopment and alienation in the international arena is a painful one for Muslims.

So far, three general approaches to the role of shari'a have emerged in the umma. First, liberal reformers like Mahmud Muhammad Taha of Sudan and Fazlur Rahman of Pakistan have advocated an approach that would forge a modern Islamic vision based on original reinterpretation of the Qur'an rather than dependency on the historical legacy of shari'a. But the idea of discounting the shari'a tradition is unthinkable to most orthodox

Muslims; hence, the proposals of these liberal reformers have generally been branded as apostate blasphemies.

Second, a particularistic but pragmatic approach is evident in the legal codes of many Islamic countries. While the constitutions of most Muslim governments proclaim the nation an "Islamic state," the shari'a is only partially applied in the legal system, normally in matters of personal and family law (such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and religious choice). While visiting the Islamic University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, I was startled to hear Muslim religion professors dismiss the application of the whole of shari'a as a legal option in their ethnically pluralistic but Islamic nation. "It creates too much contention and disruption," they explained. The fact that so many Muslim governments employ shari'a piecemeal is telling evidence and a tacit acknowledgment that it is inadequate, as now constituted, to meet the broad and complex range of legal needs in modern governance.

Third, hard-line Islamist groups remain adamant in their insistence that implementation of shari'a in its entirety is mandatory in a true Islamic state and that it is the only way to achieve "Islamic progress"—modernization without Westernization. Many reject the argument that shari'a is incompatible with prevailing international norms, while others defiantly welcome the prospect of the international opprobrium and isolation that might result from the full application of shari'a.

The ability or inability of Muslims to deal effectively with these two issues—defining a more unified voice and vision and achieving some form of consensus on shari'a's role—will profoundly shape their spiritual course and vibrancy in the twenty-first century and beyond. Present rivalries and deep-rooted disagreements within the contemporary Muslim community on political, social, and economic issues do not bode well for a successful resolution of these tensions.

An important characteristic of Islam's inner structure, however, compensates for the lack of unified leadership and maintains the essential identity and solidarity of the umma. Without a central hierarchy to provide direction or an authoritative voice to determine orthodoxy, one might expect to find widespread differences not only on sociopolitical issues but in belief and practice among the diverse Muslim populations. Instead, one encounters a distinctive social ethos and extraordinary theological and liturgical uniformity among Muslims everywhere. This paradox is a testament to the power and efficacy of ritual in a religious community. For more than a thousand years, the Five Pillars and related religious observances have provided the spiritual mortar that holds the House of Islam together and engenders communal identity and purpose (fig. 3).

The Islamic experience presents a fascinating case study of the processes of ferment and evolution that all religions undergo as times and circumstances change. The daunting task for every religious community is

Fɪɢ. 3. Palestinian Muslim men relaxing and chatting after prayer in front of al-Aqsa Mosque on Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif. The egalitarian, communal aspects of Muslim life have been important factors in the expansion of Islam worldwide.

to find creative responses to newly emerging realities and challenges without destroying its spiritual moorings, energy, identity, and unity. This effort requires that all religions engage in self-examination and dialectical discourse in order to determine what is the essential, immutable core of the faith and what is peripheral and transitory; to ascertain those aspects of religion that can be, as Fazlur Rahman said, "modif[ied], emphasize[d], or deflate[d]" to suit new conditions; and to recognize when something is, as the Prophet Joseph Smith observed, "wrong under one circumstance . . . [but] right under another." This process of identifying and resolving dialectical tensions is distressing, but vital, in the life of all religious communities. And its outcome is crucial in determining the direction, vitality, and longevity of every religion that seeks to exert its spiritual influence across boundaries of time, space, culture, and language—in short, to become a world religion.

James A. Toronto (toronto@byu.edu) is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. in English at BYU, an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard, and a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at Harvard. Portions of this essay were published previously in *Religions of the World: A Latter-day Saint View.*

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 256.

2. Two excellent sources on the role of women in Islam from the perspective of Western scholarship are Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 1992); and Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early, eds., "Gender Relations," in *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

3. One widely viewed film, "Not without My Daughter," portrays Islamic family life as oppressive to women and Muslim men as brutal wife beaters. Muslims who have seen the film are outraged that the story, a true account of an American woman's experience in Iran, implies that violence against women is sanctioned in Islam and that Muslim husbands and fathers are tyrannical. They point out that one can find examples of spouse abuse in every religion and that it is inappropriate to judge the lives of an entire religious community based on the wrongdoings of a few misguided individuals.

4. All Qur'anic citations in this article are from Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, ed. and trans., *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (Medina, Saudi Arabia: The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an, 1413 hijri [1992/93 C.E.]).

5. See, for example, Muhammad Iqbal, *The Rights of Women in Islam*, trans. Aftab Ahmad (Montreal: Editions Islamiques d'Amerique, 1988), 21–52. Among the hadith concerning family life cited in this source are: "Treat [your wives] well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers" (26); "The best of you are those who are best to their wives" (27); "Helping wives (in their domestic work) earns (men) the reward of charity" (30). Other hadith imply that husbands and wives who are honorable and faithful to God and to each other will be together in paradise (32, 47).

6. "The need for modesty is the same in both men and women. But on account of the differentiation of the sexes in nature, temperaments, and social life, a greater amount of privacy is required for women than for men, especially in the matter of dress and the uncovering of the bosom." ('Ali, *Holy Qur'an: English Translation*, 1012 n. 2984.) Al-Jaza'iri cites a hadith that alludes to items proscribed for men but allowed for women: "The wearing of silk and gold are forbidden on the males of my nation, and they are lawful to their women." Cited by Abu Bakr Jaber Ben al-Jaza'iri, "In the Good Manners of the Dressing," in *Methodology of the Muslim*, trans. F. Amira Zrein Matraji (Medina: Adel Abu el Seoud al Haidan, [1996]; rev. by Mahmoud Matraji, n.d.), 175–78.

7. See, for example, Yusuf 'Ali's comments in *Holy Qur'an: English Translation*, 220 n. 547; Al-Jaza'iri's exegesis in *Methodology of the Muslim*, 127; and Maulana Abul A'ala Maudoodi, *The Laws of Marriage and Divorce in Islam*, 2d ed., trans. Fazl Ahmed (Safat, Kuwait: Islamic Book Publishers, 1993), 24–27.

8. The most commonly cited source for this position is a hadith that reports Muhammad's telling women to cover their bodies completely in public except for their faces and hands.

9. B. Aisha Lemu and Fatima Heeren, *Woman in Islam* (Aligarh, India: New Crescent Publishing, 1977), 23–24, 46.

10. Fathi Osman, *Muslim Women in the Family and the Society* (Los Angeles: Minaret Publications, Islamic Center of Southern California, n.d.), 37–38.

11. Elizabeth W. Fernea, "The Veiled Revolution," in *Everyday Life*, ed. Bowen and Early, selected statements from pages 119–22.

12. Fernea, "Veiled Revolution," 121.

13. Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "The Islamic Resurgence: Sources, Dynamics, and Implications," in Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, ed., *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World* (New York: Praeger, 1982), 3.

14. The term *Islamic Fundamentalism* is generally shunned by scholars of Islam because it is too imprecise and laden with negative connotations to describe adequately the complexity of Muslim reform movements. The more acceptable phrase, at least for the time being, is *Islamist Movement*, and those Muslims actively involved in the

movement are Islamists. See Bruce B. Lawrence, "Muslim Fundamentalist Movements: Reflections toward a New Approach," in Barbara Freyer Stowasser, ed., *The Islamic Impulse* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 15–36.

15. For example, Richard P. Mitchell, "The Islamic Movement: Its Current Condition and Future Prospects," in Stowasser, *Islamic Impulse,* 75–86, argues against Fouad Ajami's and Daniel Pipes's assertion that the Islamic Resurgence is a product of the 1973 oil embargo and Saudi Arabia's rise to world prominence. See also Nemat Guenena, *The "Jihad": An "Islamic Alternative" in Egypt* (Cairo: American University Press, 1986), 17–24.

16. Statement by the founding committee of the Muslim Brethren, one of the most influential groups in the Islamist Movement. Quoted in their official newspaper, *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun,* May 7, 1946.

17. Qur'an 2:256; 3:64; and 29:46. Quoted in Assad Nimer Busool, *Islamic Fundamentalism?* (Chicago: American Islamic Educational Foundation, 1993), 4, 18.

18. S. Waqar Ahmad, "Terrorist Bombing Contradicts Islam," *Daily Universe,* March 16, 1993, 4.

19. See Khalil Hanwave and K. S. Ramkumar, "Call for Dialogue at Jeddah Forum," *Arab News,* January 20, 2002, http://www.arabnews.com/Article.asp?ID=12151. See also "Dean of Shari'a and Law at Qatar University in Support of the U.S., the War on Terror, and Curricular Reform," dispatches 337, 338, The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Washington, D.C. (memri@memri.org).

20. Edward P. Djererian, "United States Policy toward Islam and the Arc of Crisis," *Baker Institute Study,* no. 1 (Houston: James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, 1995), 2, 4.

21. Anwar Ibrahim, "The Need for Civilizational Dialogue," Occasional Paper Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, 1995).

22. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam,* 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 237, 249.

23. Averroës, *Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory,* trans. Charles Butterworth (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001), 29–32, "On the emergence of factions within Islam."

24. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 137.

25. The two sheikhs of Al-Azhar cited here are, respectively, Gad Al-Haq Ali Gad Al-Haq and his replacement, Muhammad Sayed Tantawi. See "Egypt Bans Adoption but Not Female Circumcision," *Jordan Times,* April 4–5, 1996.

26. "Partial Circumcision Can Be 'Useful'—Tantawi," *Jordan Times,* April 10, 1996, 7.

27. For further examples and exploration of these issues, see "Al-Azhar Scholars Deny Desperate Couple Chance to Start Family," *Egyptian Mail,* April 21, 2001, 9; Abul Fadl Mohsin Ebrahim, *Abortion, Birth Control, and Surrogate Parenting: An Islamic Perspective* ([Indianapolis]: American Trust Publications, 1991); Donna Lee Bowen, "Abortion, Islam, and the 1994 Cairo Population Conference," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (May 1997): 161–84; Yotam Feldner, "'Honor' Murders—Why the Perps Get off Easy," *Middle East Quarterly* 7 (December 2000): 41–50.

28. The hadith are the main source of this shari'a doctrine: "The blood of a Muslim may not be legally spilt other than in one of three [instances]: the married person who commits adultery; a life for a life; and one who forsakes his religion and abandons the community." *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* (Nawawi's forty hadith), 4th ed. (Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1979), 58.

29. Ann Elizabeth Mayer, *Islam and Human Rights: Tradition and Politics,* 2d ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 160.

The Language of God
Understanding the Qur'an

Daniel C. Peterson

The faith of Islam, one of the three great "Abrahamic" religions, as they might be called, is closely akin to the other two, Judaism and Christianity. It is tightly bound to and thoroughly permeated by its holy book, the Qur'an. Strangely, though, despite the historical and contemporary importance of Islam and despite Islam's kinship with the faith that has dominated Western civilization, neither Islam in general nor the Qur'an in particular is well known in the West. Nor do Westerners typically know very much about the founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad.[1] Yet the story of Muhammad is a dramatic one, and Islam, fascinating in its own right, is both sufficiently different from Christianity and sufficiently similar to allow its study to throw intriguing light upon the faith even of non-Muslims who devote themselves to the subject. Much in the way that the study of a second language may enable students to better understand their own, reflection upon Islam, I am convinced, can profit Jews and Christians as well as Muslims.

In this essay, I shall concentrate upon what the Qur'an has to say and what its own nature discloses about Islam's view of the role and character of language. I do not restrict this discussion to human language, because, significantly, the Qur'an itself does not seem to distinguish in any rigid way between the language of God, the language of angels, and the language of mortal human beings.

The revelation of the Qur'an began in or near A.D. 610 and continued until the death of Muhammad twenty-two years later. In form and in the duration of reception, it bears

A child studies the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the heart and soul of Islamic life, devotion, and art.

51

a rough resemblance to the Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Qur'an is composed of 114 separate, quite discrete *suras* (revelations) arranged according to a roughly (and inversely) chronological scheme; the suras only rarely, if ever, have a thematic relationship with one another. The Qur'an is neither a history book nor a chronicle nor a gospel, and the voice in it is never that of Muhammad but that of God.

Traditionally, the revelation of the Qur'an began with sura 96:1–5, spoken to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, who found Muhammad meditating in a cave on Mount Hira' above Mecca. Already in this passage, we begin to learn something about a Qur'anic view of language:

> Read! In the name of your Lord, who created,
> Created man from a drop.
> Read! By your most gracious Lord,
> Who taught by the pen,
> Taught man what he did not know.[2]

The twice repeated imperative *iqra'*, which I have translated as "read!" comes from the same root as the word *Qur'an* itself. It could just as accurately, and perhaps preferably, be translated as "recite!" For the pre-Islamic Arabs, an oral society if ever there was one, whose highest art form was poetry, did not read silently to themselves any more than their Western contemporaries did.

It is striking, in any event, that God is identified here, in the very first Qur'anic revelation, with the use of language and writing. Out of all of the self-designations that God might have chosen, and which, in fact, do occur frequently in the Muslim scripture—such as "the Creator of the heavens and the earth," "the Omnipotent," "the Omniscient," "the Lord of the throne," "the Merciful, the Compassionate," and so on—the Qur'an has God choosing to describe himself first as the being who teaches humankind by means of the pen. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, God's capacity to speak is implicitly contrasted with the inability of idols, or false gods, to do so (21:63, 65; 37:92). Aaron's golden calf, the Qur'an points out, was unable to speak (7:148; 20:89).

The very language of Sura 96:1–5 is itself interesting. For one thing, it rhymes:

> Iqra' bi-ismi rabbika alladhi khalaq
> khalaqa al-insana min 'alaq
> Iqra' wa-rabbuka al-akram
> Alladhi 'allama bi-al-qalam
> 'Allama al-insana ma lam ya'lam.

The Qur'an as a whole takes the form of rhymed prose—that is, while it has end rhyme, it lacks meter. This style is known in Arabic as *saj'*, and it was

associated preeminently with the oracular utterances of the pre-Islamic soothsayers known as *kahins*. (The word is cognate with the Hebrew *cohen*, or "priest.") To this day, the incantatory, almost musical, language of the Qur'an has a powerful impact on those who hear it and those who recite it.

Interestingly, the term *lugha*—the standard Arabic word for "language"—does not occur in the Qur'an. That absence might seem to discourage the writing of an essay bearing the title I have chosen. But the root *l-s-n* does occur, sometimes in its literal meaning of "tongue" and sometimes in the familiar extended sense of "language."

The Power of Language

From one perspective, in the Qur'an language is morally neutral. It can be used for good or for ill. But the Qur'an unhesitatingly ranks language and its use according to a hierarchy of moral value and, it must be said, of obedience to God. While good words ascend to God (35:10), words can also be used to blaspheme (18:5). The word of unbelief or blasphemy is contrasted with the word of piety (compare 9:74 with 48:26). A good word, says the Qur'an, is like a good tree, while an evil word is like an evil tree (14:24–26).

The word *qawl*, meaning "speech," can itself be used for good or ill. *Qawl* can refer to speech or discourse that is displeasing to God (4:108). For example, *qawl* is used when God is said to object to evil public speech (4:148) and evil utterance (5:63) and when he is said to dislike loudness (7:205; 49:2) and a "show of words" (13:33) as well as tawdry and deluding speech (6:112). But *qawl* is also used to denote "argument" or "debate" (34:31). And, says the Qur'an, the best of speech is that which summons God (46:18). Speech is graded or ranked according to its object, or, alternatively, by the moral character and godliness of the speaker. Indeed, *qawl* can also refer to divine utterance itself (36:58). It can be a divine decree or judgment (23:27; 27:82, 85; 28:63; 36:70; 37:31; 41:25). It can refer to revelation (28:51; 39:18) and to prophecy (32:13; 36:7). The Qur'an describes itself as "decisive speech" (86:13), as speech "sent down" from the presence of God (73:5). "Who is more truthful than God with regard to speech?" asks the Qur'an (4:122). Yet divine speech can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from counterfeits. "This is nothing but the speech of a human [*qawl al-bashar*]," say the skeptics, as quoted in the Qur'an itself (74:25). No, the Qur'an replies to such skeptics, it is the speech of a noble messenger, not of a poet or a soothsayer (69:40–42; 81:19). Nor is it the speech of a demon (81:25).

The Qur'an recognizes that language can be used to lie (3:38; 16:62, 116), to mock and to distort (4:46), to wound (33:19; 60:2), and to spread ignorant gossip (24:15). Human words may be empty of reference to reality (23:100). The Jews, the Qur'an says, have changed words from their proper places in order to distort the will and revelation of God (4:46; 5:13, 41). Of

another group, the Qur'an remarks that "they say with their tongues what is not in their hearts" (48:11). Believers, on the other hand, are to avoid vain, idle, or empty talk (23:3; 25:72; 28:55). The word of unbelievers will be made low, while that of God is made high (9:40). There will be no vain speech in paradise (19:62; 52:23; 56:25; 78:35). Muhammad does not speak whimsically (53:3). On Judgment Day, the wicked will be unable to speak or else will be prohibited from doing so, and thus, they will be unable to defend themselves against the charges that will condemn them. Presumably, too, they will be incapable of polluting God's presence with unclean speech (23:108; 27:85; 77:35). By contrast, the celestial book speaks the truth on the Day of Judgment (45:29).

The Holiness of Arabic, the Language of the Book

Variation in human languages is one of the divine signs pointing to God, says the Qur'an (30:22). Yet such variation also presents an obvious communication problem. Accordingly, God sends prophets in the languages of their people so that things will be clear (14:4). For itself, the Qur'an is fully conscious that it is in Arabic (46:12). "We have made [the Qur'an] easy in thine own tongue," says God to Muhammad (19:97; compare 44:58).

But Arabic is not merely one among the languages of divine revelation. There is something special about it, in the view of the Qur'an. Arabic is, as later Muslims insisted, *lughat al-mala'ika,* "the language of the angels."

The confession published by an early-twentieth-century translator of the Qur'an, an English Muslim convert with the improbable composite name of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, is memorable in this connection. He wrote in the foreword to his translation:

> The Koran cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykhs and the view of the present writer. The Book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the Glorious Koran, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the meaning of the Koran—and peradventure something of the charm—in English. It can never take the place of the Koran in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so.[3]

Accordingly, Pickthall named his translation *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran,* not presuming to claim that what he had written out in English could be identified with the speech of God. Other translators have taken the same humble approach. The great A. J. Arberry, for instance, called his highly literary and very beautiful effort *The Koran Interpreted.*

A vital part of every Muslim apologetic is the *i'jaz al-Qur'an,* the inimitability of the Qur'an. The book's unapproachability, its peerlessness as a paradigm of language, is said to be proof of its divine origin. For, ask Muslims, could an uneducated man have produced this book?[4]

The Heavenly Book

The Qur'an is conceived in Islam as a portion, brought to earth, of a celestial prototype. For orthodox Muslims, Muhammad had nothing whatever to do with its composition. It is the speech of God. Muhammad clearly understood and accepted the notion of a heavenly book, and he always saw himself as producing a book on earth to represent the heavenly original.[5] In his view, the revelations of the Qur'an, like the Torah *(tawrah)* and the Gospel *(injil,* from Greek *euangelion,* "good news") before it, were "recitations" or "readings" from the very words of God, which were written in the "Mother of the Book" *(umm al-kitab,* 13:39; 43:4) and kept on a closely guarded tablet *(lawh mahfuz)* in the divine presence.

The concept of the heavenly book has taken various forms in the ancient Near East. It can be a book of wisdom, a book of laws, a book of foreordained destiny, a record of works, or a book of life. The heavenly book appears to be all of these, on various occasions. For example, the Qur'an declares:

> Truly, this is a glorious Qur'an
> In a preserved tablet. (85:21–22)

> This Qur'an is not such as could be invented save by God. Rather, it is a confirmation of what came before it and an exposition of the Book [*kitab*], about which there is no doubt, from the Lord of the worlds. (10:37)

Qur'anic use of the term *kitab* reflects the basic meaning of the root *k-t-b,* which is associated with writing. But that root also bears the meaning "to prescribe," "to ordain," or "to decree."[6] Thus, for instance, the Qur'an advises:

> O you who believe! Retaliation is ordained [*kutiba*] for you in cases of murder—the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. (2:178)

A few verses later, it adds:

> O you who believe! Fasting is ordained [*kutiba*] for you as it was ordained [*kutiba*] for those before you. (2:183)

There is, thus, an intimate association in the Qur'an between the act of writing something down and the notion of making something permanent and authoritative. This association can often be detected in the way the Qur'an uses the term *kitab.* The connection surely figures in the Qur'an's use of the term to refer to the heavenly book, resting in the presence of God, in which all events—past, present, and future—and all existing things have been inscribed in advance:

> With him are the keys of the unseen, which none but he knows. He knows whatever is on land or in the sea, nor does a leaf fall except he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness [depths] of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, but what is in a manifest book. (6:59)

> There is no animal on earth but what is dependent upon God for its sustenance, and he knows both its permanent abode and its temporary resort. All is in a manifest book. (11:6)

> No female conceives nor bears without his knowledge. No one lives long, nor has his life foreshortened, unless it is in a book. (35:11)

This is also the book in which the deeds of each individual are recorded, for good or evil—a record that will determine the destiny of each individual on the Day of Judgment:

> On that day, we shall summon all people with their leaders. And whoever receives his book in the right hand, these will read their book and they will not be wronged even slightly. (17:71)

> And the earth will shine forth with the light of her Lord, and the book will be set out and the prophets and witnesses will be brought forward and judgment will be pronounced in truth between them, and they will not be wronged. (39:69)

The Qur'an was communicated orally to Muhammad, piece by piece over the course of slightly more than two decades, in an Arabic version (see 12:1; 13:37; 20:113; 26:192 ff.; 41:3; 44:58; and especially 91:44). The heavenly book was not given to Muhammad as a totality; he received only a portion (90:78; 4:164). Thus, the Qur'an did not exhaust it. Indeed, no finite book would be capable of doing so. Twice, Muhammad is commanded:

> Say: If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if another sea of ink like it were brought. (18:109)

> And if all the trees on earth were pens and there were seven seas stretching behind the sea, the words of God would not be exhausted. (31:27)

Other revelations to the "people of the book" *(ahl al-kitab)* were derived from the heavenly book and thus were, at least originally, consistent with it and confirmed by it. Notice that the reference is to the "people of the book," in the singular, and not to the "people of the books." The reference is unmistakably to the one heavenly book kept in the presence of God, rather than to the manifold and varying transcripts from that book found among the squabbling religious communities of earth. Islam teaches that unfortunately the Jews and the Christians corrupted the revelations they received.

Geo Widengren has noted that many parallels to the concept of the heavenly book can be found in the ancient Mesopotamian "Tablets of Destiny," by which, at the festival season of New Year, the gods determine the fate of the cosmos and all that is in it for the next year:

> Few religious ideas in the Ancient Near East have played a more important role than the notion of the Heavenly Tablets, or the Heavenly Book . . . [and] the oft-recurring thought that the Heavenly Book is handed over at the ascension in an interview with a heavenly being, or several heavenly beings, mostly gods (a god).[7]

Islamic tradition soon assimilated Muhammad's experience to the ancient model of a single, complete reception of a heavenly book during an ascension into the presence of God. This ascension was the famous *mi'raj,* undertaken, according to many traditions, from the place on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah that is now covered by the Dome of the Rock. Somehow, it was felt, the prophet had received the Qur'an all at once, in the sense that it had been brought down to earth on the night of the first revelation. That night, probably the twenty-sixth of Ramadan, was later described as "the Night of Power" or "the Night of Destiny" *(laylat al-qadr)*:[8]

> We have indeed revealed it in the Night of Destiny.
> And what will make you understand what the Night of Destiny is?
> The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months.
> By God's leave, the angels and the Spirit come down in it on every kind of errand.
> Peace it is, until the rising of the dawn. (97:1–5)[9]

With all this in mind, it is not difficult to see in Islam the paradigmatic instance of "book religion." And that would not be untrue. But it would be too simple.

The Qur'an as Book and Speech

Quotations from the Qur'an are an absolutely essential part of Islamic art, which is, by and large, nonrepresentational. Snippets of the Qur'an often show up in almost talismanic uses. Calligraphy is one of the most important Islamic arts—perhaps, indeed, the dominant visual art—and can be seen in monumental stone architecture as well as in elegant illuminated manuscripts. I recall an experience at a shop in the Grand Bazaar of Istanbul where I was negotiating to buy a plate with a Qur'anic inscription on it, of much the same kind that one would see in Cairo or East Jerusalem. Suddenly, the Turkish-speaking shopkeeper eagerly asked me if I could translate the inscribed passage for him, and I realized with a bit of a start something that I had known intellectually but that had not really managed to sink in: I, the infidel, could read a Qur'anic verse that he, the Muslim resident of a Muslim country, could not. (I have had analogous experiences in Iran, another non-Arab but Islamic nation.)

But the written text does not exhaust the sacrality of language in Islam. There exists at the same time a vitally important oral dimension to the word of God as Muslims receive it. Writing and speaking are not mutually

BYU Studies

exclusive. This is not an either-or situation, although our own modern sensibility may make that fact difficult for us to grasp. William Graham has observed:

> For us the written word has become the basic form of language, not a secondary vehicle for its communication, not a mere "graphic representation of language" (de Saussure). So tied are we to the written or printed page that we have lost any awareness of the essential orality of language, let alone of reading. Not only do we want everything of moment "in black and white," but we presume that that is the fundamental medium of language. There seems to be a basic human tendency for the visual to replace the aural, for writing to become more important than speech, and print seems to accelerate this tendency. "The speaker or writer can now hardly conceive of language, except in printed or written form; . . . his idea of language is irrevocably modified by his experience of printed matter."[10]

The young Augustine of Hippo was astonished to see the older Saint Ambrose reading silently. "When he was reading," Saint Augustine later recalled, "he drew his eyes along over the leaves, and his heart searched into the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent."[11] Silent reading seems to have become dominant, at least in the West, only in the nineteenth century.[12] "It may be," says Professor Graham, "that the earliest use of the written text is simply as an *aide-mémoire*."[13] Oral recitation of the Qur'an punctuates the Muslim's daily life in ways that we in the West—even before the secularization of our culture—have never really known. The Qur'an is the Muslim liturgical book, the Muslim prayerbook, and the Muslim hymnal, as well as the Muslim book of scripture. Today, readings from the Qur'an begin, end, and ornament the broadcast day on both radio and television. Recitation from the Qur'an is among the chief features of a Muslim funeral. Standard printed editions of the Qur'an contain marks to help in oral recitation; notations in the margins divide the text into thirty *ajza'* or, alternatively, sixty *ahzab,* for reading and recitation.

Functioning alongside the Qur'an as authoritative texts within the Islamic faith (though, at least theoretically, subordinated to the Qur'an) are the *hadith,* or "traditions"—accounts of what the Prophet Muhammad or one of his associates said or did or taught. One of these hadith begins with the following words: "God has said: 'Whoever is so absorbed in reciting the Qur'an that he is distracted from praying to Me and asking [things] of Me . . . '" Now, at this point, most of us would be tempted to complete the hadith in our minds with something bearing the general sense of "This is sin, for the worshipper should not be turned from the Signified itself to the mere Sign." But our own cultural expectations mislead us. The complete hadith actually reads, "Whoever is so absorbed in reciting the Qur'an that he is distracted from praying to Me and asking [things] of Me, him I shall give the best reward [that is granted to] those who are grateful."[14]

"He who does not recite the Qur'an melodiously is not one of us," says another hadith.[15] I well recall an experience that I had while studying in Cairo. Several of us foreign students had petitioned to have a course taught on the Qur'an, and finally the administration of the American University in Cairo had acquiesced. But on the day that we registered for the class, the professor, a rather well-known, progressive, Western-educated Muslim scholar, died suddenly from a heart attack. So the university scrambled and came up with a replacement teacher from the state-sponsored University of Cairo. He was a very pleasant fellow, and he immediately launched into a program of training us to pronounce the Qur'anic text properly. As tongue-tied foreigners, we didn't mind that. At first. As the course dragged on, though, we began to ask when we would actually get to the point of discussing the substance of the Qur'an. Soon, he assured us. Very soon. But we never got there. The entire class was devoted to pronunciation and memorization. It was, in many respects, an intensely frustrating experience. But it was also, as I have reflected upon it since, a revelatory one.

I mention these phenomena not to objectify them as strange nor in any way to dismiss Muslim fascination with the language and script of the Qur'an—apart from its meaning—as somehow magical or superstitious. I do not regard it as such in the least degree. But it is clearly different from our own accustomed approach. We do not transliterate the English Book of Mormon into *kanji*. No Christian group that I know sees anything salvific in memorizing the Greek New Testament.

I have in my possession a copy of the Qur'an that I bought two decades ago in Cyprus. I was looking then to improve my Turkish, and I went into a little shop on the Turkish side of the island and asked for a Turkish copy of the Qur'an. I came out with something that I thought filled the bill. Sitting in the front passenger's seat as we drove away, I began to read. And I was immediately astonished at how easy it was. I was amazed at how much Arabic had survived in the Turkish rendition. But then I realized that it *was* Arabic—written in the modified Roman alphabet that Turkey has used since early in the twentieth century. What could be the purpose of such a thing? I wondered. If a Turkish Muslim knew enough Arabic to understand the Qur'an, he or she would surely know enough to read the Arabic alphabet. So why print an Arabic Qur'an in Romanized letters? The answer is that it was done precisely because the book is *not* intended for Turks who know Arabic, but rather for those who do not. Reading it in their own familiar alphabet, such Muslims would now be able (at least approximately) to pronounce the sacred words—the very words of God himself from the Preserved Tablet, the Mother of the Book. I have watched young Turkish children learning to recite the Qur'an by rote memorization in the courtyard of an Istanbul mosque. They are not learning to understand the

Arabic, except in the broadest sense of the term, but to recite it, to make it sound right. Professor Graham notes:

> Muslims . . . have insisted with remarkable consistency that every Muslim, whatever his or her linguistic or cultural background, must maintain the purely Arabic recitation of the Qur'an in formal worship (*salat*), even if the only Arabic he or she knows is the memorized syllables of a few short *surahs* necessary to *salat.* . . .
>
> Why this fastidious fervor about the Arabic text? Because it is God's direct discourse, *ipsissima vox* [his very own voice]. He sent his revelation as a clear "Arabic recitation" (*qur'an 'arabi*) that was transmitted verbatim through His apostle. For humans to translate it amounts to unfounded and dangerous tampering with the very speech of the Almighty. Because of the fundamental holiness of the words of the Qur'an, the classical Arabic language [though, I would add emphatically, *not* the modern vernacular dialects] has taken on a sacrality felt in often quite visceral fashion by the Muslim who knows it as the sublimely beautiful and untranslatable language of God's perfect revealed word, even if he or she speaks no Arabic.[16]

The root *q-w-l*, which we encountered above in *qawl*, is the usual and very common root in the Qur'an (and beyond, in classical and modern standard Arabic) for "speech." It appears over three hundred times in the Qur'an as an imperative addressed to Muhammad. "Speak!" he is commanded. "Say!" he is told. The oral character of the Qur'an is very clear at this point. Although it is today a written book and although it comes, in Muslim belief, from a cosmic, heavenly book, its origin as an earthly phenomenon lies in oral commands to Muhammad that were to be transmitted orally to the people of Arabia.

Reverence for the Holy Book

It should not be forgotten that the very name *Qur'an* comes from the Arabic verb *qara'a*, "to read" or "to recite," and that it can plausibly be translated as "reader" or "lectionary" or "book of readings." This is, after all, the sense of the cognate Syriac word *qeryana*, used in Eastern Christian congregations up to and beyond the coming of Islam.

> Truly it is a clear recitation [*qur'an mubin*] in a written [or "fixed"] Book [*kitab maktub*], which none may touch except the purified—a sending down from the Lord of the worlds. (56:77–80)

Professor Graham thinks that our modern focus on written texts has impoverished our sense not only of the orality of scripture but of the sacredness of its written forms:

> These relatively recent attitudes toward scripture go beyond a simple emphasis upon the written rather than the spoken use of the text. For example, something of the commonplace character of the modern book often attaches even to sacred texts. The casual familiarity with which we move among and

handle books as a part of everyday routine has bred in us its own kind of contempt for, or at least carelessness of, the unremarkable and ubiquitous printed page. In the specific case of scripture, the cheap and easy availability of myriad versions of the Jewish or Christian scriptures has done much to reduce the special quality of the physical text as an object of reverence and

A Muslim man reading the Qur'an in the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, Syria, 1998. In his right hand he holds a *misbaha*, a string of beads often used by Muslims to recall the names and attributes of God.

Courtesy James A. Toronto

devotion in and of itself. Scripture's presence as a bound volume in a living-room bookcase, a church pew, or a hotel-room drawer may conceivably encourage Bible reading, but it also reinforces the primary image of scripture as but another printed book. The tracing of manuscript traditions and collation of textual variants has improved our understanding of the growth of scriptural texts, but it has also taught us how to treat them only as simply historical documents. Consequently, we have some difficulty empathizing with persons for whom a copy of a sacred text was or is a seldom and wonderful thing, perhaps a magical and awesome thing, to be handled with solicitude and to which the proper response is reverential deference or even worshipful veneration.[17]

Muslims, by contrast, for all their focus on scripture as oral phenomenon, have lost nothing of their reverence for the written text. Orthodox Jews and devout Muslims alike would be horrified at the common practice of Latter-day Saints, who, when they sit down in a classroom, not infrequently put their scriptures on the floor—something that Mormon citizens of the United States, at least, would presumably not do with an American flag. I recall the time that I took a paperback edition of the Arabic Qur'an to be bound in leather, out near the Khan al-Khalili area of Cairo where the bazaar is located. When I went to pick it up, I saw that engraved on the spine was not only the phrase *Qur'an Karim,* "noble Qur'an," but "Let none touch it but the pure" (56:79). At first I wondered whether this were a slap at me, an unbeliever, but I soon realized that, in fact, it was a simple but significant indicator of a dominant Muslim attitude toward the written word of God. I have heard of especially devout Muslims who would not use even newspaper to line a cage or wrap fish, for fear that the word *Allah* might appear therein. One thinks, too, of the *geniza,* the place in the synagogue where old Torah scrolls are placed. (Eventually, reverence for the written word spread to such things as land deeds, and they too were placed in the *geniza,* to the ongoing delight of modern archaeologists).[18]

The Qur'an as an Analogue and Explication of Creation

The Qur'anic word, to Muslim understanding, partakes of the divine. Consider the following passage, which seems to summon its hearers/readers to a kind of natural theology:

> Truly, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and in the ship that sails in the sea, carrying things useful to the people, and in the water that God sends down from the sky so that he enlivens the earth after its death and disperses animals throughout it, and in the change of the wind and the subservient clouds between heaven and earth, there are signs [*ayat*] for thoughtful people. (2:164; compare 6:96–97; 45:3–5)

Significantly, the term used for the "signs" of the natural realm *(ayat)* is the same Arabic word used to denote the individual verses of the Qur'an.

Thus, nature, properly viewed, becomes a revealed "book" very much like the Qur'an itself, composed of individual "signs" or "miracles":

> Truly, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day there are signs [*ayat*] for those of understanding, those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and who contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, you did not create this for nothing!" (3:190–91)

(The identification of miracles as signs pointing to the divine recalls the equivalent usage of the Greek word *semeia* in the New Testament gospel of John.) "Do they not look at the sky above them," the Qur'an asks of the unbelievers, "how we have built it and adorned it without flaw? And the earth, how we spread it out and cast into it firmly-rooted mountains and caused to grow in it every delightful pair, as a sight and a reminder for every repentant worshiper?" (50:6–8; compare 67:2–5). Such passages imply that the ultimate condemnation of the pagan polytheists will be just, even if they never heard the message of the Qur'an itself, because they had before them the book of nature and its clear testimony to the existence, beneficence, and oneness of God.[19]

Moreover, we are admonished to read the signs of nature correctly: "Among his signs [*ayat*] are night and day, the sun and the moon. Do not bow before sun and moon, but bow before God, who created them" (41:37; compare 6:75–79). The symbols were not created for their own sake but are intended to point beyond themselves. God does not speak to unbelievers and will not do so even on the Day of Resurrection and Judgment (2:118, 174; 3:77).

Although the creation of the heavens and earth was, in some sense, a greater achievement than the creation of man (40:57; 79:27–30), that cannot mean that it was more difficult. For the Qur'an stresses God's utter freedom in creation and the sublime effortlessness with which he acts (4:133; 5:17; 14:19–20; 35:16–17; 42:49; 46:33; 50:38). The most dramatic assertion of his creative power in the Qur'an is the repeated declaration that he has merely to say to a thing "'Be!' and it is" *(kun fa-yakun)* (3:47, 59; 6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 36:82; 40:68; 54:49–50). One can hardly fail to be reminded here of the divine command in Genesis 1:3, "Let there be light!" *(fiat lux)* or of Ptah's creation, by creative words, of the gods in the Memphite theology of ancient Egypt. (The name *Ptah* may indeed be cognate with the Arabic verb *fataha,* "to open." The first sura of the Qur'an is the *Fatihah,* "the opener.")

Traditional understandings to the contrary, however, it does not seem that such passages entail a doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing).[20] Indeed, in several of the passages where the phrase *kun fa-yakun* occurs, creation ex nihilo is excluded by the context; in no passage is

BYU Studies

it required. Thus the subject of suras 3:47, 3:59, and 19:35 is the virginal conception of Jesus, whom, the second passage affirms, God first created from dust, *then* said to him *kun fa-yakun*. This order of creation points up a striking characteristic of passages containing this phrase: 2:117 is typical of them in stating that God "decrees a matter [*amr*]" and *then* "says to it [*la-hu*] 'Be,' and it is" (compare 3:47 and 40:68). Several other passages actually speak of a "thing [*shay'*]" to which God says *kun fa-yakun* (6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 36:81–82; and 40:68; compare 54:49–50). There seems to be an underlying and preexisting substrate to which the divine imperative is addressed, as clearly is the case in the story of the Sabbath-breakers who are told "Be ye apes [*kunu qirdatan*]!" (2:65; 7:166). The command *kun!* would therefore seem to be determinative or constitutive rather than productive of something out of utter nothingness. But in either case, the power of the divine word, of divine language, is unmistakably manifest.

The Word: A Bridge between Christology and the Qur'an

In Islam, as with the *logos* of John 1, God creates the universe by his word. In the New Testament, though, it is the figure of Christ who is primary. The reference to him as *word* or *logos* is metaphorical. In Islam, it is actual language—God's language—that is primary.[21] It is nonetheless striking, I think, that roughly three centuries after the beginning of Christianity, Christian theologians were debating whether Jesus Christ, the Johannine Word of God, was created or whether he was consubstantial with God. The Arians, who, in the name of monotheism, held Christ to be a creature (albeit an unimaginably exalted one), eventually lost out in spite of several periods of imperial favor that seemed for a while to have assured their victory. They have effectively disappeared today. The Athanasian party, who insisted that Christ was *homoousios*, of the same substance with the Father, rather than merely *homoiousios*, of similar substance, triumphed.

Roughly three centuries after the mission of Muhammad, Islamic theologians were debating whether the Qur'an, as the word of God, was created or whether it was co-eternal with God as his uncreated speech. The Mu'tazilites protested that the doctrine of an uncreated Qur'an, co-eternal with God, led to polytheism, or at least to dualism and, accordingly, to a compromise of the monotheism that is at the heart of Islam. For several decades, it seemed they had triumphed, but they ultimately lost. The Ash'arites and their other enemies pushed them effectively into exile and oblivion. However, this development came at the cost of a considerable loss of clarity. As Ahmad b. Hanbal famously put it, Muslims were to assert the eternality of the Qur'an, as they were also simultaneously to affirm humankind's moral responsibility for sin and human lack of freedom beneath the absolute sovereignty of God, *bi la kayf*—"without asking how."

It is significant that, whereas a great deal of theological dispute within Christendom has centered on the dual nature, divine and human, of Jesus Christ, and on the virgin birth as a symbol and demonstration of Christ's deity, discussion in Islam (far less rancorous and far nearer to consensus than in Christianity) has focused on *i'jaz al-Qur'an*, the "inimitability" of God's word as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Muslim attention has also directed itself to the "protection" from sin, or *'isma*, enjoyed by the prophet. Very much like the role of the virginity of Mary, the prophet's sinlessness has served to guarantee that God's word was transmitted purely and without blemish to humanity.[22]

In fact, some Christians have been so concerned to maintain the utter stainlessness of the vessel through whom the divine Word came to earth that they eventually developed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which (contrary to common non-Catholic misunderstanding) refers not to the conception of Christ but to that of the Virgin Mary. In the words of the *Ineffabilis Deus*, a papal bull issued by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854:

> Concerning the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, ancient indeed is that devotion of the faithful based on the belief that her soul, in the first instant of its creation and in the first instant of the soul's infusion into the body, was, by a special grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, her Son and the Redeemer of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin.[23]

It is truly not far from such a doctrine to that of Muhammad's miraculously protective *'isma*. (Islam, lacking any doctrine of original sin, has no need of a device by which to protect the Prophet from inherited guilt. It is enough for Muslims that Muhammad committed no personal sins.)

Professor Graham notes:

> For Christians, the encounter [between God and humans] comes first and foremost through the person and life of Christ (which are accessible, but not exclusively so, in scripture). In Islam, on the other hand, it is in the concrete text, the very words of the Qur'an, that Muslims most directly experience God. Scripture for Muslims is itself the divine presence as well as the mediator of divine will and divine grace.[24]

This perhaps helps to explain why the physical text of the Qur'an is to be treated with such respect. The closest thing in Islam to Christianity's notion of the Incarnation of Christ, of the incursion of God into this world from beyond, is the Qur'an. Professor Graham may not be far wrong when he compares the recitation of the Qur'an, its embodying in sounds, with the Eucharist.[25] Just as, for a Catholic, the consecration of the sacramental wafer or host makes it, in some intangible but nonetheless real sense, the very body *(verum corpus)* of the Son of God, to recite the Qur'an is to recite, in ceremonial formality, the very words of God.

Again, an analogy springs to mind between the role played by Christ in certain ancient strains of Christianity and that played by the Qur'an in Islam. Saint Athanasius of Alexandria and many other early Christian thinkers believed we are saved (and deified) by becoming one with Christ. God, it is said, became human so that humans might become divine.[26] In Islam, by contrast, the "Word" is the Qur'an, the pure utterance of God himself, which human beings may themselves read and recite and of which, thereby, they may become co-articulators. Though few if any contemporary Muslims would agree to this, it is difficult to escape the sense that the reciter of the Qur'an, in a limited but important way, is unified with God in the utterance of God's own words. It is a kind of deification through speech.

I cannot conceive of a higher view of language.

Courtesy William S. Dant

Father and son studying the Qur'an, 2002. After school, seven-year-old Ahmed joined his father, Sheikh Ali, at Ali's office in the Masjid Al Noor Mosque in Salt Lake City. Although Sheikh Ali speaks Arabic, over 75 percent of Muslims worldwide do not, but they strive nonetheless to read the Qur'an in its Arabic original and to memorize Arabic verses for use in prayer.

Daniel C. Peterson (daniel_peterson@byu.edu) is Associate Executive Director of the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. in Greek and philosophy at Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles. This essay is a slightly modified version of the annual James L. Barker Lecture in the Humanities, delivered on November 11, 1999, at Brigham Young University. I am grateful to those who selected me for this honor and who thereby propelled me to think about the Qur'an and language.

1. There are numerous biographies of the Prophet Mohammad. Not, I hope, among the worst is Daniel C. Peterson, "Muhammad," in *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Michael J. McClymond (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 457–612.

2. All translations of the Qur'an are my own.

3. Marmaduke Pickthall, trans., *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), xxvii.

4. The question may perhaps bear a familiar ring to Latter-day Saint readers.

5. See the discussion and references in Geo Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 568–69; and Geo Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and His Ascension (King and Saviour)* (Uppsala and Wiesbaden: A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln and Otto Harrassowitz, 1955), 115–19.

6. See the discussion in William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83–84.

7. Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala and Leipzig: A. B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln and Otto Harrassowitz, 1950), 7. Compare Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie*, 546–47; and Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, 199, 204. Obvious similarities can be identified between Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai and the old Mesopotamian idea; the notion persisted in Judaism in such texts as 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. It existed among the Mandaeans and the Persians and in Islamic sectarian movements even after the death of Muhammad. See Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 10, 22–24, 26 n. 1, 27, 35, 42–43, 46, 58, 68, 72, 74–75, 84–85; Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God*, 29–30, 80–95. Daniel 10:21 may reflect a belief in the heavenly book. For background information on Muhammad's vision, see Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, "The Throne Theophany/Prophetic Call of Muhammad," in *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 323–37; compare Blake Thomas Ostler, "The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4 (1986): 67–95.

8. The Islamic calendar is a lunar one, and its months thus move through the seasons and cannot be correlated with the months of the solar calendar.

9. For another account of the "Night of Destiny," see F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 205–7, 215–18.

10. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 9–10, quoting H. J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print*, 6.

11. Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. William Watts (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 273.

12. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 41.

13. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 15.

14. Cited in Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 79.

15. Cited in Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 79.

16. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 85.

17. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 46.

18. For a very readable narrative account of the Cairo Geniza, see Leo Deuel's fascinating *Testaments of Time: The Search for Lost Manuscripts and Records* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 351–81. Standard scholarly treatments of the subject include Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947); and S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 5 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967–1988).

19. Compare Paul's comments in Romans 1:18–23.

20. For a more detailed treatment of this question, see also Daniel C. Peterson, "Does the Qur'an Teach Creation *Ex Nihilo*?" in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990,* ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah:

Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 1:584–610.

21. Significantly, though, the Qur'an too knows Jesus as "a word of God" *(kalimat Allah)*. But the designation plays no significant role in either the Qur'an or in Islamic thought generally.

22. See Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 85.

23. See, for example, "Ineffabilis Deus—The Immaculate Conception—Apostolic Constitution Issued by Pope Pius IX on 8 December 1854" at http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/bvm00013.htm.

Conservative Protestants, who pay no particular attention to the Virgin Mary, now focus very much on the inerrancy of the Bible. This issue merits attention in a comparative context with Islam and Catholicism, but such a discussion is beyond the scope of the present essay.

24. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 87.

25. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word*, 87.

26. On Athanasius, see Keith Edward Norman, *Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000). There is a considerable literature on the concept of *theosis*, or human deification, in Christian thought. A form of the concept remains prominent in Greek Orthodoxy and is well represented in the Syriac tradition.

Courtesy Folco Quilici

A lone Muslim worshiper faces the *qibla*, direction to Mecca, as he performs one of the five daily prayers. This supplicant, finding himself far removed from a constructed mosque at prayer time, has delimited his own sacred space—a place of prostration, or *masjid* (from which the term mosque is derived), within a rectangle of stones.

Behind the Arabesque

Understanding Islamic Art and Architecture

Cynthia Finlayson

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. A likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp—the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as it were a brightly shining star—lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof gives light, though fire touch it not—light upon light. God guides to His light whom He pleases. And God sets forth parables for men, and God is Knower of all things.

—Qur'an 24:35

The deep, spiritual impact that Islam has had on its adherents over the centuries has manifested itself in unique forms of Islamic art and architecture whose ultimate goals include the worship of Allah through the beauty of form and decoration and the lifting of the human soul from the profane to celestial realms. At times, the assumptions and canons of Islamic art and architecture may seem visually foreign to Western viewers. But the messages, when deciphered, proclaim the glories of God and his Universe and the promises of a spiritual and physical renewal for the faithful in an eternal paradise—messages not at all foreign to Latter-day Saint religious communities today.

Given the worldwide dispersion of Islam, it is impossible within this short article to describe all the manifestations of style and composition in Islamic art and architecture, both secular and religious, from 632 C.E. to the present for every geographical and cultural region of the Islamic world. Obviously, Syrian and Iraqi craftsmen of the seventh century C.E. had a different style and context than do Indonesian Muslim artisans of today. However, this article will attempt to present some of the deepest cultural and religious constructs that have shaped Islamic art and architecture over time and that have provided the basis for new interpretations in the ongoing vibrant world of art and architecture influenced by Islamic religious and cultural identities today.

Cultural and Artistic Contexts

Because the beautiful prose of the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad at a certain time and in a certain place, this sacred text assumes—as a vehicle of spiritual communication—unique levels of commonly understood cultural constructs. Although Arabia and the rest of the Near East hosted great urban centers, their societies in the seventh century were profoundly influenced by the behaviors and social customs of nomadic Bedouin cultures. To travel from place to place in the Near East, even the most sophisticated of urban dwellers had to deal with the physical and psychological constraints that Near Eastern geography and climate have placed on human endeavors and development over the millennia.

In the nomadic Near Eastern setting (or even that of a commercial caravan venture), the benefits of material goods had to be carefully balanced against the relative difficulty of transport. In other words, since all goods had to be carried, often over great distances, to new pasture and water resources (or urban settings) in a challenging climate, excessive materialism could be deadly. The accumulation of extensive libraries of written records was impossible for those peoples living in a nonagrarian or nonurban context. Over time, the ancient nomadic cultures of the Near East thus developed an emphasis on sophisticated language. Traditions, histories, and poetry were all memorized and thus carried easily without excessive weight or danger to the well-being of the clan or tribe. These cultures also depended heavily on the cooperative role of the individual tribal member in the struggle for everyday survival. Additionally, clan members were active in the maintenance of the tribal identity through language, oral histories, and poetry, as well as through personal actions associated with family and tribal honor. More importantly, since many aspects of family identity required the extensive use of memorization that was not necessarily tied to material artifacts or written texts, as in other civilizations, the Semitic/Arab mind was often trained to appreciate and handle multiple levels of events or story lines occurring at the same time.

Freed from the one-dimensional constraints of a cultural emphasis on material objects, many Semitic cultures with strong nomadic heritages experienced profound spiritual events that propelled them beyond the material world to a higher spiritual plane and to a personal relationship with Deity. Significantly, the three great monotheistic religions of the world have their origins in the nomadic Near East, and great religious leaders and innovators such as Abraham, Moses, Christ, and Muhammad spent considerable time in its stark deserts and mountains. Conversely, all of these religious cultures (as also most others in the world) experienced problems with spirituality when faced with the challenges of the material emphasis of settled agrarian or urban life. These are the same spiritual

challenges that Latter-day Saint communities increasingly face in the modern context of material wealth. In the profound words of warning from the Qur'an to all humankind, "Abundance diverts you [from spirituality]" (102:1).[1]

Because of this heritage of complex oral traditions, Islamic literature, (both religious and secular) as well as art and architecture, delights in the ability to focus on multiple levels of meaning and decoration often exhibited to the viewer simultaneously. The story within the story within the story, or the motif within the motif within the motif, or the complexity of multiple levels of symbolic meaning reflect the ancient paradigms of the complex thought processes described above (plate 1). These multiple levels are especially evident in the literary constructs of the Qur'an and the art it inspired. Thus, within Islamic religious art and architecture, complex artistic conventions often attempt to reveal to the viewer the incomprehensible nature of the mind of God and the wonders of his creations. They invite the human mind to contemplate through intricate geometric pathways, artistic symbols, and color combinations the greatness of God. They also free the viewer to worship God without the dangers of worshipping pagan images in human or animal form.

Muhammad experienced firsthand paganism's destructive forces and worked to purge Arabia of both idol worship and the sacrifice of children to pagan deities and forces of nature. This struggle greatly influenced Muhammad's perception of the appropriate use of art. Though a great lover of beauty, Muhammad through his actions and sayings provided a basis for determining appropriateness, especially within the confines of the mosque as well as within the privacy of the Muslim home. Thus, according to one story in the hadith, Muhammad forbade one of his wives to hang a tapestry or textile with a motif on the wall of her house but allowed it to be used as a covering for pillows in her home.[2] Its position on the wall was deemed to be too similar to pagan images and Christian icons, but its use as a pillow was an appropriate form of home decor since it was placed in a more acceptable visual position.

Because of the pervasive historical presence of paganism within tribal Arabia, Islam traditionally has taken a strong stand against any hint of its reemergence in Islamic religious contexts. Human and animal images are thus not usually found in Islamic religious buildings—a strict reaction against the dangers of idol worship or icon worship, especially in houses of prayer. As an artistic alternative, the complexities of intricate vegetal scrolls (arabesques), geometric designs, and calligraphy as well as the repetitive use of architectural decorations such as archways and *muqarnas* (architectural detailing that resembles stalactites or honeycombs) create environments of sacred contemplation and union with God, especially within the

mosque.[3] The openness of interior spaces within Islamic mosques and even Muslim homes is also functional in nature. It promotes communal worship and social interaction while also eliminating any barrier between the individual and God.

These architectural conventions have often also been utilized within secular palaces (plate 1). Even there, complex embellishments visually complement and enhance the ability of a Muslim to find God through the complexities of multiple ideas, patterns, and symbolism. Open spaces promote brotherhood and community involvement. Within secular art, however, the traditionally understood religious constraints against human and animal images have not always been observed. Additionally, craftsmen within the world of Islam were greatly influenced by Byzantine, Sassanian, and indigenous pre-Islamic motifs and concepts as well as by the local crafts of cultures absorbed by rapid Islamic expansion. Animal and human motifs have become at various times acceptable in secular crafts such as ceramics, textile weaving, and metal working, where Muslim craftsmen (or non-Muslim craftsmen living within predominantly Muslim societies) have developed their embellishments to the level of fine art (plate 2). Additionally, with the later adoption of manuscript illumination by Muslim artisans, literature other than the Qur'an (and there are even exceptions here) may contain human depictions that enhance the story line (plate 2).

For Islamic painters, realistic perspective with accompanying vanishing points so critical in the development of Western art is deemed less important as an artistic construct. Perspective, while mimicking reality, often limits the visual availability of surface planes both to the brush of the artist and to the enjoyment of the viewer. Thus, great Muslim painters like Bihzad delighted in the beautiful embellishment of miniature paintings that defy perspective but entertain the eye. The "flatness" of the painted surface has also been used at times by Muslim artists to aid the viewer in refraining from worshipping the object rather than the Creator of all Reality.

As Muslim artists have become increasingly influenced by Western art since the era of European colonialism and the two World Wars, Western artistic constructs have became more evident within their works. However, themes of predominantly Islamic influence or those of indigenous cultural identity still often pervade the art of modern Islamic cultures (plate 4). Additionally, many countries with large Muslim populations are currently involved in the revitalization of traditional arts and crafts as well as the conventions of Islamic fine art and architecture. Within the realms of modern design, Islamic and Near Eastern constructs are also offering new and vibrant concepts to the world at large based on reinterpretations of traditional Islamic art and architecture.[4]

The artistic emphasis within Islamic art on surface decoration, or *horror vacui* (the horror of empty spaces and thus their covering with extensive decoration), also reflects another important cultural construct that has helped define the development of Islamic art and architecture over time—the innate and ancient Near Eastern love of embellishment.

Despite the lifestyle example of Muhammad and his warnings against personal ostentation, frivolous uses of material wealth, and excess spending on architectural edifices, powerful cultural and political forces within the geographical regions of the developing Islamic world pulled Islamic art and architecture in other directions. Near Eastern cultures long before the advent of Islam had associated both exterior and interior embellishment with status. Simply from headdress style or the embellishment of clothing, individuals in many real-life situations could ascertain an acquaintance's social and economic status, marital situation, religious affiliation, and clan, tribal, or village origins. Similarly, elaborate visual costuming, hairstyles, and accompanying ritual objects have always been emphasized in Near Eastern art as marks of social status and position both in this life and the next and have long taken precedence over realistic portraiture or realism itself, so important to the West. A primary example of this cultural phenomenon occurred in the art of the ancient, pre-Islamic Arab civilization of Palmyra (in present-day Syria). Though exposed to Greek and Roman styles of realistic portraiture, Palmyrenes placed more emphasis on the embellishment of the costumes and headdresses in their funerary portraits rather than on realistic facial features.

It was thus natural as Islam expanded beyond Arabia that the mosque—a symbol of Islam and an edifice dedicated to the worship of God—should take on embellishments that would represent the Near Eastern concepts of Islam's status in this world and its claims on paradise in the next. Within Islamic mosques, the *qibla* wall with its niche, or *mihrab*, pointing the direction of prayer to Mecca and symbolically the direction of union with God, and the *minbar*, or high-stepped speaker's pulpit for Friday readings of the Qur'an and congregational messages, were the first objects that began to receive special artistic attention (plate 3). Perhaps this was because of their specific association with Muhammad.[5] Over time they have become focal points of extensive artistic embellishment and often contain a multiplicity of complex, symbolic visual messages to the worshipper.

Beauty of the Word

With the codification of the Qur'an into a written text and with the elaboration of Arabic script into different styles, calligraphy developed into an art form with powerful spiritual and visual authority and became a

medium of Islamic artistic embellishment and avenue of worship (plate 4). Believed to be the literal word of God to humankind, the written phrases of the Qur'an take on an importance that Westerners often do not understand. The language of the Qur'an is deemed so sacred that it must not be changed from the Classical Arabic in order to have full power and efficacy when read, recited, or written. Since this was the language and prose chosen by Allah to communicate his message, it must be memorized in Classical Arabic even if a believer is from Indonesia or China. In Islam, the Qur'an often takes on the role of the medium of salvation for humankind. Just as Christians believe that Christ's life, death, and self-sacrifice provide the sacred pattern and conduit for eternal salvation and are symbolic of God's unlimited love, Muslims believe that obedience to the words of the Qur'an provide the direct spiritual links and pathways to God and the ultimate human attainment of paradise. Consequently, through seeing, hearing, and emotionally feeling God's word in the Qur'an, humankind can come closest to experiencing in this life the presence of God himself. Thus, the Qur'an is meant in Islamic contexts to be a multimedia event of the greatest and deepest possible spiritual experience. By reciting or reading from the Qur'an, the worshipper shares in God's divine power and his message of universal salvation and love for the obedient and faithful. The use of both simple and complex calligraphic passages from the Qur'an as embellishments for mosques, secular buildings, and objects thus connotes the presence and protection of God's sacred word and the power of its message to the viewer and the world.

While the decoration of the exterior of many mosques is quite plain and by contrast their interiors greatly embellished (a common Near Eastern and Mediterranean architectural device), other mosques (especially those with dome structures) literally dress or "drape" their exterior surfaces with dazzling tiles or mosaics proclaiming in beautiful calligraphy the words of God (plate 8). The vibrant colors chosen for such embellishments also often have symbolic associations with paradise or divine protection. Additionally, just as in Islamic painting, where all surfaces are revealed and embellished for the viewer, Islamic architects (in contrast to their counterparts in the West) delighted in refraining from disguising architectural elements but rather exposed and emphasized their surfaces by complex decoration (plate 5). Like the surfaces of a diamond glittering in the sun, Islamic architectural elements play with color, texture, light, and shadow to create celestial environments that attempt to transcend the dimensions of earthly geometry and space. One of the best and earliest examples to illustrate this trend in early Islamic architecture and art is at the same time the oldest significant piece of religious architecture extant from the early Umayyad Islamic world. This edifice is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (see plates 1, 8).

The Vault of Heaven

As Islam conquered geographical areas dominated by the Byzantine Christians, the early Umayyad Muslim caliphs felt pressed to erect architectural edifices whose beauty and sanctity would compete with the great edifices of the Eastern Christian Church. Jerusalem is not only sacred to Jews and Christians but, next to Mecca and Medina, is one of the holiest cities of Islam. From the ruins of Temple Mount, the Prophet Muhammad was carried off in a dazzling night vision of the seven degrees of heavenly paradise. This occurred from a spot associated by some Muslims with the site where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his firstborn son to God. For Muslims, this willing victim is assumed to have been Ishmael not Isaac. As a traditional father of many Arab tribes, Ishmael is thus viewed as a great example of spiritual submission (*Muslim* means one who submits to God's will), tying other Semitic groups besides the Jews to the Abrahamic covenant and to Temple Mount.

After the conquest of Jerusalem by Muslim forces, the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al Malik began construction of the Dome of the Rock over this holiest of sites. It was completed 691–692 C.E. but has been repaired and refurbished on numerous occasions since that time. Significantly, for Islamic architects it provided the precedent for the reintroduction of the dome for non-Christian edifices in the Islamic world.

Both domes and barrel vaulting had originated in the ancient Near East and Egypt, where both architectural elements had been utilized within funerary structures and in secular housing. Small domed edifices seem to have been exploited by Hellenistic architects especially in Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt. During campaigns and visits to the Near East, both the Roman emperors Trajan and, later, Hadrian realized the aesthetic and psychological potential of these architectural forms when combined with new Roman structural technologies. Rome soon hosted Trajan's markets and then the great Pantheon of Hadrian, whose huge domed ceiling represented the heavenly vault and power of the gods of the Empire. The extended Roman dome succeeded in re-creating the heavenly stratosphere on a human scale while at the same time propelling the human spirit and eye to a divine dimension.

The religious usage of ceiling decoration had also existed in Egyptian and late Hellenistic and Roman temples of the Near East. There astrological paintings were often used to ornament the ceilings of the shrines of the male deities associated with celestial and seasonal powers over rain and drought and thus over the powers of life and death. Later Christian architects simply revitalized this pagan usage, substituting images of Christ and the Apostles and saints for Zeus, Bel, Sol Invictus, and the various deities of the celestial constellations. By the advent of Islam in the Near East, the

interior decorated dome and central church plan had become the special prerogatives of the Eastern Christian Church.

The visual power of dome imagery, which is thus historically so closely tied to celestial power and order, is sometimes lost on modern Western audiences. We rarely look heavenward. If we want to know the time, we check a wall clock or look at our wrist watches. If we want to know the season, month, or day, we check a yearly calendar on the wall. When we want to travel from point A to point B, we follow well-laid-out roads, whose routes are carefully delineated for us on maps stored in the glove compartments of our cars. These conveniences are relatively recent in the history of humankind. Previously, humankind relied on the heavens for all of these critical aspects of information and saw in their order and vastness a power greater than man, worthy of human awe and worship. Thus, the architectural dome was associated, by those who often looked heavenward, with critical aspects of celestial power and divine order. In the ancient Near East, the movements of the heavens and heavenly bodies were literally tied not only to one's daily life but to cosmic and earthly rejuvenation. In some pagan contexts, the planets and constellations of the heavens were even the carriers of human souls to eternity and thus the importance of the use of astrological decorations within domes and ceilings. The adoption of the dome in Islamic contexts thus has profound symbolic meaning given the contexts of the Qur'an and its assertion of the power and mercy of Allah and the promises of paradise.

With the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, Islamic architects (obviously using Byzantine craftsmen and ideas) began developing the dome beyond the constraints of pagan and Christian usage (plate 6). Combining religious fervor with calligraphic designs of Qur'anic passages that specify the oneness of God and the role of Jesus in Islam, the Dome of the Rock stepped into the realm of religious propaganda, emphasizing Islam's role in reestablishing the Abrahamic covenant over those who had fallen short in keeping its demands—Jews and Christians. Devoid of figural art (except for various images of buildings, crowns, and vases in mosaics on the lower coursings), the dome was draped on its exterior with textilelike tile work and embellished within and without by dazzling mosaics and painted surfaces tinted with gold. More importantly, the decoration of the dome itself—over thirty-five meters high and replete with calligraphy and complicated repetitive patterns—began the attempt by Islamic architects to create limitless space through visual complexity (plate 7). This artistic process of attempting to visually break the bounds of hemispherical space was perfected by the later development of *muqarnas* as a common Islamic dome or ceiling embellishment.

These artistic conventions promoted the greatness and incomprehensibility of Allah's personality over the pagan influences of Christian doctrine that accepted Christ as divine. According to the Qur'an, "Say He, God, is One. God is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten, and none is like Him" (112:1–4). The seemingly limitless interior space of the Islamic dome combined with the beautiful embellishment of the dome's exterior have over time become the premier trademarks of great Islamic architecture. The Dome of the Rock thus provided the architectural and decorative precedent for all later Islamic architecture and, more significantly, proclaimed new uses of architectural space for spiritual and religious awareness that are uniquely Islamic.

The Realms of Paradise

More than any other thing, a righteous Muslim strives to be united with God in paradise. Qur'an 88:1, 8–16 reads:

> Has there come to thee the news of the Overwheiming Event? Faces on that day will be happy, glad for their striving, in a lofty Garden, wherein thou wilt hear no vain talk. Therein is a fountain flowing. Therein are thrones raised high, and drinking-cups ready placed, and cushions set in rows, and carpets spread out.

Images such as these of the beauty of paradise are powerful and plenteous in the Qur'an. They become even more poignant when one realizes the scant availability of water within the boundaries of Muhammad's Arabia. The imagery of paradise in the Qur'an and in Islamic art and architecture is thus closely tied to the imagery of water and fertile gardens awaiting the faithful. According to one hadith concerning the life of the prophet, Muhammad refused to take an opportunity to enter Damascus, an oasis city watered by the Barrada River and beautified by its numerous gardens, groves, and fertile fields. A human being, stated Muhammad, should enter paradise only once. He taught, however, that righteous human endeavor, the study of God's creations and gifts to humankind, and the correct dispersal of material goods could help develop a paradise in this life for communities of the faithful.

Because of the powerful imagery of paradise in the Qur'an and the spiritual and physical efforts necessary for its attainment, Islamic art and architecture often utilize water and garden imagery in many contexts. This imagery is particularly prominent in textile motifs, especially in carpets, where irrigated gardens with their multiplicity of floral designs reflect actual irrigated fields and the architecture of Islamic houses and palaces. In Islamic Persia, the irrigated garden became a prominent stylistic convention of paradise but also reflected the Persian love of the rose and its delicate scent as a symbol of the union of the soul with God (the thorns of

earthly life must be endured to obtain the beauty of paradisiacal union with the flower, the Beloved).[6]

The sound, sight, and smell of water with its accompanying psychological benefits as well as its functional uses for air conditioning within buildings was also exploited by Muslim architects, the most famous example of these devices being the Alhambra Palace of Granada, Spain. Palaces, however, were not the only buildings to utilize these concepts. Muslim hospitals were some of the first to develop an environment of healing based not only on the patient's physical needs but also on his or her emotional and psychological potential for healing. Thus, not only were carefully regulated medicines dispensed in Islamic community hospitals, but these complexes also often hosted beautiful gardens and fountains with musicians to entertain the sick with healing refrains.

Despite the traditional Islamic injunctions against ostentatious monuments for the dead, certain cultures that converted to Islam developed the art of the mausoleum to perfection, often incorporating the imagery of the celestial dome within their design but also replicating the gardens of heavenly paradise within their decoration. The Timurid and eventually the Mughal Muslim dynasties, as conquerors of northern India, adopted elements of Hindu architecture for their unique funerary monuments. These artistically mixed societies are but a few examples of this phenomenon throughout the world of Islam. Most famous of the monuments produced by the Mughals is the incredible Taj Mahal, created by Shah Jahan for his deceased wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631. According to some scholars, the mausoleum as well as its surrounding gardens, fountains, and pools symbolically reflect the actual environs of paradise as envisioned by Sufi Islamic mystical texts; the Taj itself is positioned as the throne of God on Judgment Day (plate 8).[7] The imagery of paradise in Mughal Islamic contexts was thus closely tied to aspirations of a very personalized eternal rejuvenation.

Conclusions

Only a few of the forms and conventions of Islamic art and architecture have been discussed in this paper. Additionally, only a few possible cultural and religious contexts were presented to help illustrate the probable origins of the development of an Islamic "style" and "message" as seen within the constructs of Islamic art and architecture. The complexity of embellishment counterbalanced by the simplicity of visual space, the use of symbolic geometric forms including that of the hemisphere within structures and art, the proliferation of Qur'anic calligraphy representative of the very presence and nature of God's word to humankind, and the spiritual and physical longing for paradisiacal glory are all manifested in Islamic art and architecture.

Given the beauty and complexity of Islamic artistic endeavors over the centuries, this short discussion seems woefully inadequate. However, above and beyond these meager scholarly endeavors, I hope that these paragraphs and the images themselves will spark within the reader an emotional tie to the spiritual aspirations of their Muslim brothers and sisters and inspire an appreciation for the art and architecture of the Islamic world that transcends the barriers of both cultural and religious differences.

Cynthia Finlayson (csf62@email.byu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Art History at Brigham Young University. She received her B.A. from George Washington University in 1974; an M.S.S. in Near Eastern anthropology and archaeology, museum studies, and third-world development at George Washington University in 1984; and a Ph.D. in classical and ancient Near Eastern art history with a minor in Islamic art and architecture from the University of Iowa in 1998.

1. Qur'an 102 reads, "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Abundance diverts you, until you come to the graves. Nay, you will soon know, nay, again, you will soon know. Nay, would that you knew with a certain knowledge! You will certainly see hell; then you will see it with certainty of sight; Then on that day you shall certainly be questioned about the boons [material blessings bestowed upon you]." All Qur'anic quotes taken from *The Holy Qur'an,* trans. Maulana Muhammad Ali (Columbus, Ohio: Abmadiyyab Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore, 1994).

2. See Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (New York: World Publishing, 1962), 12–13.

3. *Muqarnas* is an Arabic term for the decorative architectural detailing resembling stalactites or honeycombs especially used in Classical Islamic architecture for ceilings and vaults. The word is derived from a Greek term for the scales used as roofing tiles. Islamic muqarnas often function to visually explode the geometric confines of a ceiling or dome to give the illusion of infinite space; thus it often symbolizes the infinite nature of *God.* See John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 190.

4. The contributions of great architects like Hassan Fathy are but one example. See *AramcoWorld* 50, no. 4 (July/August 1999).

5. According to Muslim tradition, the early followers of Muhammad met within the confines of Muhammad's simple house, which included a typical Near Eastern courtyard, covered porticos, and separate, more private, rooms for his wives and children. Protection and food were always available for the poor, travelers, or those with special needs. Muhammad would often preach in the courtyard by leaning against his staff, which had been pushed into the ground. As the correct direction of prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca, both the staff and the position that Muhammad took for prayer and preaching were eventually associated with the correct direction for congregational prayer. As Muhammad grew older, he began to sit upon a bench or chair raised on a podium to deliver the Friday Qur'anic recitation and message. Thus the development of the qibla, mihrab, and minbar within the later Islamic mosque. Mosques also often retain a large courtyard with fountains for ritual purification before prayer and for large public gatherings; covered porticos for protection of worshippers from the sun or the natural elements; and interior columned spaces whose architecture focused on the development of a sacred space for worship and prayer directed toward

the qibla wall, the mihrab, and Mecca. See Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 15–17.

6. This is a typical allegory found within Sufi mystical thought, whose images of the soul's quest for union with Deity are found in Sufi poetry, parables, and philosophical writings. All have greatly influenced the development of Islamic art and architecture as well as literature and thought. See Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi: Expressions of the Mystic Quest* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1976).

7. See Wayne Begley and A. Desai, "The Illumined Tomb: Documentary Sources for the Taj Mahal," unpublished manuscript, University of Iowa, 1991.
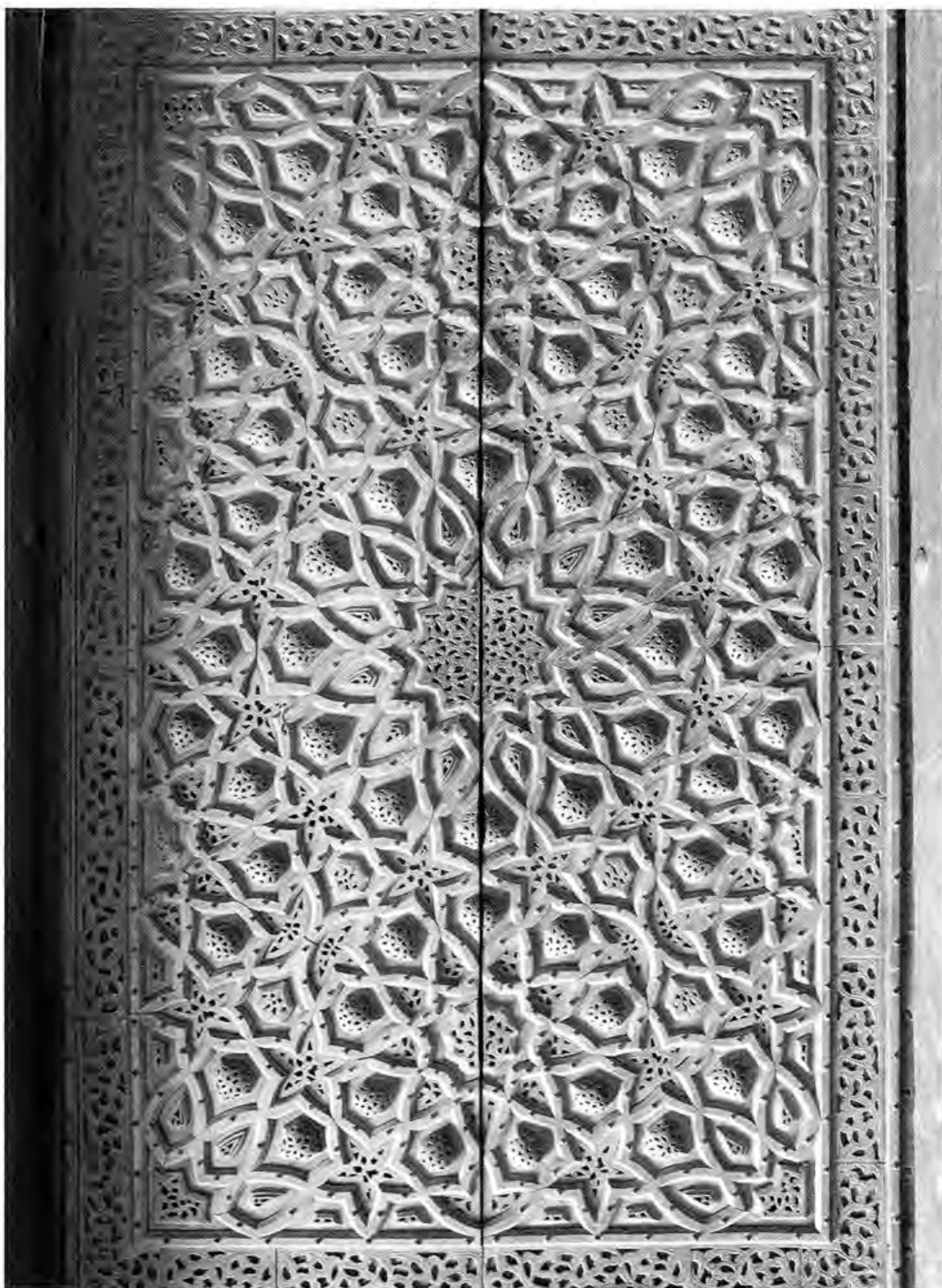
Courtesy Val Brinkerhoff

Wooden doors carved in traditional Islamic arabesque and geometric motifs, illustrating the order and unity of God's creation.
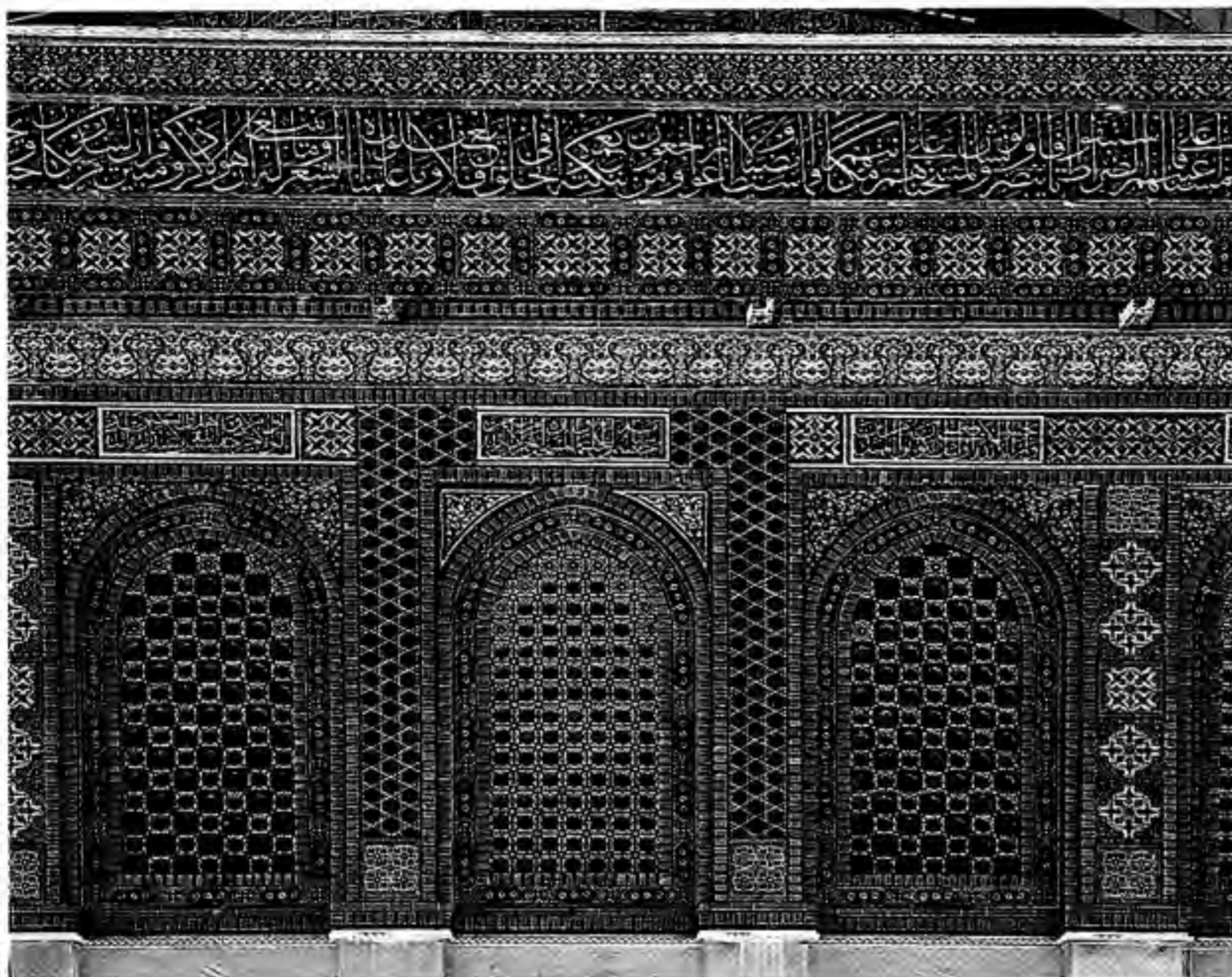
PLATE 1

Left: Intricate mosaic patterns and calligraphy from the Qur'an decorate the exterior of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Both geometric shapes and Qur'anic calligraphy as well as the blue-green color have deep protective and symbolic meanings for Muslims.

John Telford

Above: Muqarnas decoration of the Court of Lions in the Al-Hambra Palace in Granada, Spain. *Muqarnas* is the Arabic term that evolved from the Greek word for scales utilized in roofing tiles. In Classical Islamic architecture, the term is applied to the honeycomb vaulting that looks like the stalactite deposits of caves. Its effect is both to elaborately decorate a surface while at the same time to extend space into eternity.

British Museum

PLATE 2

Left: As the Angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in a cave above Medina, the angel commanded, "Recite!" "Recite in the name of thy Lord who created all things, who created man from clots of blood." From the Arabic word for "recitation" or "reading" (*qur'an*) comes the name of the holy book of revelations revered by all Muslims as the direct word of God (Allah). Here, in a fourteenth-century miniature painting from Egypt or Syria, the Angel Gabriel proclaims the importance of *Allah's* revelations to the world with the sound of a trumpet.

Copyright Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY

Above: An elaborate brass bowl from Egypt or Syria inlaid with silver and gold demonstrates the beauty and refinement of Islamic craftsmanship during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Within such crafts, the depictions of humans and animals were acceptable to some Islamic communities.
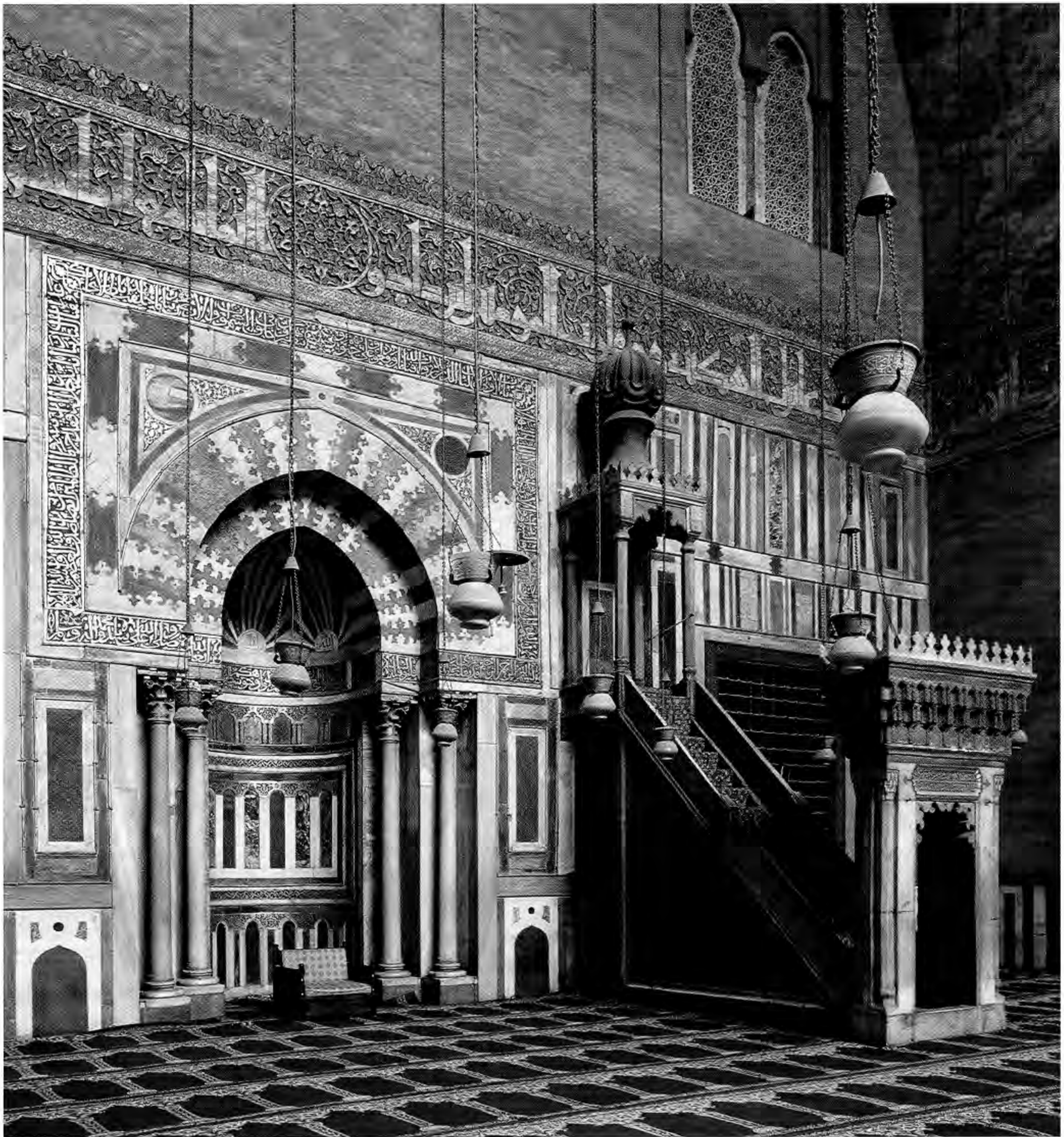
Plate 3

A mosque's qibla wall with indented mihrab orient the Muslim worshipper in prayer both toward Allah and toward Mecca and the Ka'ba as a symbol of God's covenant with the righteous. The stepped minbar to the right is utilized especially during Friday mosque services for readings from the Qur'ran and as a platform for religious sermons. This mosque is in Cairo.
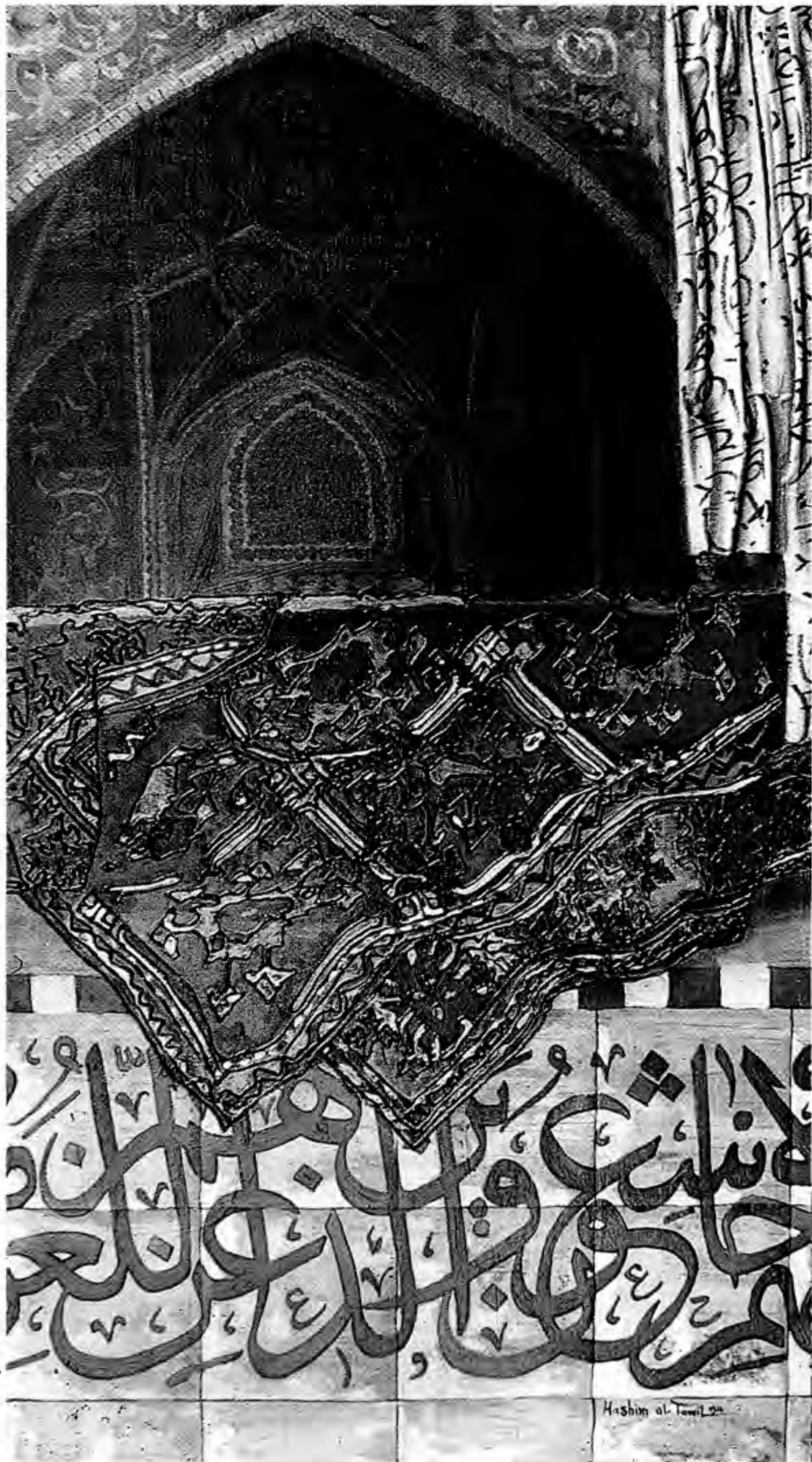
Plate 4

Left: The contemporary Muslim artist and scholar Hashim al-Tawil demonstrates the rich heritage of Islamic art, architecture, calligraphy, and palette in an untitled work created in 1996.

Below: Calligraphic embellishments of the Holy Qur'an visually call faithful Muslims to remember and obey its teachings, which are considered as direct revelations from God and are applicable to all aspects of both secular and spiritual life.

PLATE 5

Right: The minarets of Azhar (The Splendid) Mosque founded in Cairo, in 969/973 C.E. during the Fatemid dynasty. This mosque grew into one of the greatest centers of religious learning in the Islamic world and today is the center of the al-Azhar University. From such minarets, the call to prayer goes out to the faithful five times per day.
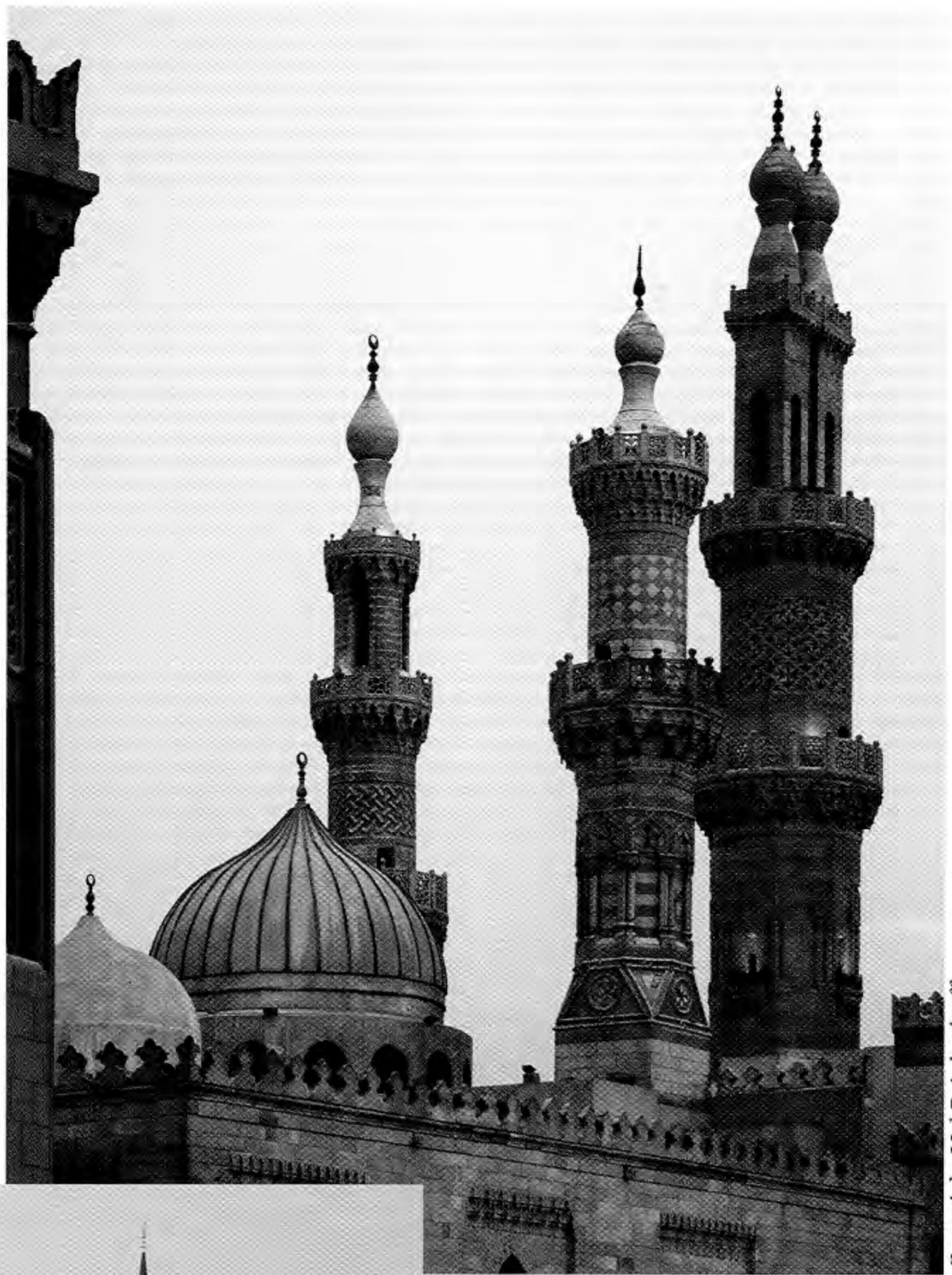
Left: Mosque of Sultan Ahmed. More commonly known as the "Blue Mosque" (1609–1616, Ottomon Empire), it is located in Istanbul, Turkey. The pencil-shaped minarets and the domes, inspired by the great Eastern church of Hagia Sophia, mimic the style of the great Islamic-Ottoman architect Sunari, who is credited with designing and building over ninety mosques and other buildings during his long lifetime. His architectural imprint influenced all of the Ottoman empire and the entire Islamic world.

PLATE 6

Interior dome decoration of the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem. Copyright Scala/Art Resource, N.Y.

PLATE 7

Interior of a mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, photographed with a wide-angle lens. The play of light and shadow, color, and texture creates an environment that transcends earthly geometry and space.

PLATE 8

The domes of Islam symbolize the cosmic and universal power of Allah. *Upper:* The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is the oldest major extant Islamic structure in the world and not only sits in the vicinity of the ancient Jewish Temple but covers a traditional site of Abraham's sacrifice. Muslims believe it is the spot from which Muhammad was carried in a vision of paradise. This locale is one of the holiest in Islam and symbolic of the Abrahamic covenant binding God to his human creation. *Lower:* The Taj Mahal looms in the dusk as the crown of a complex of gardens and pools that were possibly laid out to mimic Sufa concepts of paradise.

Al-Ghazali, a Muslim Seeker of Truth

Brian M. Hauglid

In conjunction with some noted Islamicists and under the leadership of Daniel C. Peterson, associate professor of Asian and Near Eastern Languages at BYU, several significant Islamic texts are being or will be translated into English and published in order to make these texts available to the West. The first published volume of the Islamic Translation Series: Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism is *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahafut al-Falasifa)*, written by al-Ghazali (d. 1111).[1] It seems fitting to begin such a series with a work by al-Ghazali, as he holds an esteemed place in the Islamic world. However, Latter-day Saints will also find in al-Ghazali a remarkable individual who lived his life in the pursuit of truth and seems to have received a degree of spiritual enlightenment. After an initial discussion of al-Ghazali's autobiographical narrative, this essay will strive to illustrate the principle that the "light of truth" (D&C 88:6) is available to all sincere seekers.

Dissatisfaction with Philosophy

Abu-Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111) was born in a village near Tus in Khurasan (modern-day Iran).[2] His life falls roughly within the reign of the Seljuk Turks, who had converted to Islam and occupied the area in which al-Ghazali was born and raised as well as other areas of the Islamic empire. This period proved to be particularly productive: schools were established and great learning took place. In an age of outstanding scholarship, Al-Ghazali was noted for his remarkable intelligence, which was exhibited at a young age.[3]

In 1091 the famous Nizamulmulk made thirty-three-year-old al-Ghazali director of the equally famous Nizamiyyah *madarash* (college) located at Baghdad. There al-Ghazali taught Islamic jurisprudence *(fiqh)* and theology *(kalam)* and made significant contributions in several other fields. Although successful, Ghazali became increasingly dissatisfied "with his very acceptable expositions."[4] In addition, he had serious doubts about how the theologians and philosophers of his day relied on obtaining knowledge rationally. After his friend Nizamulmulk was assassinated in 1095, al-Ghazali left his teaching position for over a decade and did not return until he felt he had found the way to acquire knowledge of truth.[5] After his return, al-Ghazali wrote his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* (Deliverance from error), detailing his experience. In his account, al-Ghazali describes the general atmosphere of his time (an atmosphere of

religious ferment and contradictory claims), which led to his intense search for truth and certainty:

> You must know—and may God most high perfect you in the right way and soften your hearts to receive the truth—that the different religious observances and religious communities of the human race and likewise the different theological systems of the religious leaders, with all the multiplicity of sects and variety of practices, constitute ocean depths in which the majority drown and only a minority reach safety. Each separate group thinks that it alone is saved. . . .
>
> From my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty,[6] I have recklessly launched out into the midst of these ocean depths, I have ever bravely embarked on this open sea, throwing aside all craven caution; I have poked into every dark recess, I have made an assault on every problem, I have plunged into every abyss, I have scrutinized the creed of every sect, I have tried to lay bare the inmost doctrines of every community. All this have I done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation.[7]

The motivation behind al-Ghazali's quest for certainty is reminiscent of Jacob's statement in the Book of Mormon that "the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13). Al-Ghazali explained his search in similar terms: "What I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is." He affirmed that this type of knowledge must be a "sure and certain knowledge" in which "no doubt remains along with it, that no possibility of error or illusion accompanies it, and that the mind cannot even entertain such a supposition."[8]

Before leaving his position at Nizamiyyah, al-Ghazali experienced a period of extreme skepticism. During this time, al-Ghazali questioned even his senses. In a dialectic conversation with sense perception, al-Ghazali determined at one point that

> only those intellectual truths which are first principles (or derived from first principles) are to be relied upon, such as the assertion that ten are more than three. . . .
>
> Sense perception replied: "Do you not expect that your reliance on intellectual truths will fare like your reliance on sense-perception? . . .
>
> . . . "Do you not see," it said, "how, when you are asleep, you believe things and imagine circumstances, holding them stable and enduring, and, so long as you are in that dream-condition, have no doubts about them? And is it not the case that when you awake you know that all you have imagined and believed is unfounded and ineffectual? Why then are you confident that all your waking beliefs, whether from sense or intellect, are genuine?"

Al-Ghazali concluded that "perhaps life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come."[9] Hence, al-Ghazali reached a critical point of questioning even axiomatic truths, such as the mathematical

assertion that ten is more than three. During this two-month period of complete skepticism, al-Ghazali felt as if he were suffering a disease from which he needed to be healed.[10]

He subsequently limited his search for truth to the teachings of four groups that he viewed as seeking sure knowledge. Al-Ghazali hoped one of these groups would provide certainties that could also possibly cure him of his disease. These groups were (1) the Theologians, "exponents of thought and intellectual speculation";[11] (2) the Batiniyah, who derived truth from an infallible leader (imam);[12] (3) the Philosophers, "exponents of logic and demonstration";[13] and (4) the Sufis or Mystics, who "possess vision and intuitive understanding."[14] According to al-Ghazali, "the truth cannot lie outside these four classes."[15]

For several years before leaving teaching, al-Ghazali carefully investigated the first three of these groups of seekers. After reading all of the theological works extant in his day and writing a few of his own, al-Ghazali concluded that

> theology was not adequate to my case and was unable to cure the malady of which I complained. . . . [the Theologians] did not deal with the question [of attaining certain knowledge] thoroughly in their thinking and consequently did not arrive at results sufficient to dispel universally the darkness of confusion due to the different views of men.[16]

Turning to the Batiniyah, al-Ghazali concluded that these seekers could not know for certain whether the imam was infallible and therefore could not fully rely on what the imam said. According to al-Ghazali,

> the astonishing thing is that they [this group's adherents] squander their lives in searching for the "instructor" and in boasting that they have found him, yet without learning anything at all from him. They are like a man smeared with filth, who so wearies himself with the search for water that when he comes upon it he does not use it but remains smeared with dirt.[17]

In philosophy, al-Ghazali encountered a science with which he was less familiar. Realizing "that to refute a system before understanding it and becoming acquainted with its depths is to act blindly," he "set out in all earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy from books, by private study without the help of an instructor." He was able to make this study only in his free time, but, he claimed, within two years he had a "complete understanding of . . . the philosophers."[18] His refutations of philosophy are contained in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. Al-Ghazali did not see this science as a vehicle for attaining certain knowledge.

Search for the Light

When al-Ghazali turned to mysticism (defined here as "a spiritual experience that depends upon neither sensual nor rational method"[19]), he

again studied all of the material available to him but found that "what is most distinctive of mysticism is something which cannot be apprehended by study, but only by immediate experience . . . by ecstasy and by a moral change."[20] Al-Ghazali's investigation into mysticism demonstrates his profound spiritual nature—his sincere desire to please God and to determine the best possible course for attaining certainty:

> It had already become clear to me that I had no hope of bliss of the world to come save through a God-fearing life and the withdrawal of myself from vain desire. It was clear to me too that the key to all this was to sever the attachment of the heart to worldly things by leaving the mansion of deception and returning to that of eternity, and to advance towards God most high with all earnestness. . . .
>
> . . . One day I would form the resolution to quit Baghdad and get rid of these adverse circumstances; the next day I would abandon my resolution. . . .
>
> For nearly six months . . . I was continually tossed about between the attractions of worldly desires and the impulses towards eternal life. [In July 1095] the matter ceased to be one of choice and became one of compulsion. God caused my tongue to dry up so that I was prevented from lecturing. . . .
>
> This impediment in my speech produced grief in my heart, and at the same time my power to digest and assimilate food and drink was impaired; I could hardly swallow soup or digest a single mouthful of food. My powers became so weakened that the doctors gave up all hope of successful treatment. . . .
>
> . . . [After openly expressing a desire to leave] I distributed what wealth I had, retaining only as much as would suffice myself and provide sustenance for my children. . . .
>
> In due course I entered Damascus, and there I remained for nearly two years with no other occupation than the cultivation of retirement and solitude, together with religious and ascetic exercises, as I busied myself purifying my soul, improving my character and cleansing my heart for the constant recollection of God most high, as I had learnt from my study of mysticism. . . .
>
> At length I made my way from Damascus to the Holy House (that is, Jerusalem). . . .
>
> Next there arose in me a prompting to fulfil the duty of the Pilgrimage, gain the blessings of Mecca and Medina. . . .
>
> I continued at this stage for the space of ten years, and during these periods of solitude there were revealed to me things innumerable and unfathomable.[21]

Al-Ghazali found that in mysticism the certainty he was seeking "did not come about by systematic demonstration or marshaled argument, but by a light which God most high cast into my breast."[22] Interestingly, this sounds very much like the language of revelation. In fact, Joseph Smith's experience in some ways parallels that of al-Ghazali. The Prophet was also confronted by the contradictions of the various religions of his day and

sought the light of revelation. Furthermore, Joseph Smith, like al-Ghazali, received the answer to his question, not through rational processes, but in a revelation experienced beyond the intellectual level.

After his spiritual experience, al-Ghazali struggled with his decision to return to his profession. At length he felt divinely prompted to move back to Nishapur (just south of Tus) and continue teaching. However, he knew he was a different person from the one who had left many years earlier:

> Now I am calling men to the knowledge whereby worldly success is given up and its low position in the scale of real worth is recognized. This is now my intention, my aim, my desire; God knows that this is so. It is my earnest long- ing that I may make myself and others better. . . . I believe . . . there is no power and no might save with God, the high, the mighty, and that I do not move of myself but am moved by Him, I do not work of myself but am used by Him.[23]

Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Odyssey

Al-Ghazali wrote many books that have had an enormous impact on Islam. One of his most influential contributions is the seminal multi- volume *Ihya' 'ulum al-din* (The revivification of the religious sciences). In this work, al-Ghazali sought to share his insights in order to infuse into the religious practices of his day (which he felt were more mechanical than sincere) a stronger emphasis on the meanings behind worship and duty. Al-Ghazali desired that Muslims worship God in their hearts and not just in their actions. In his introductory book to the *Ihya'*, the *Bidayat al-hidayah* (The beginning of guidance), al-Ghazali counseled the wor- shipper to perform numerous practices to keep religion alive in the heart. Here are just a few examples:

> *On Waking from Sleep.* In waking from sleep endeavor to be awake before daybreak. Let the first activity of the heart and tongue be the mention of God most high. . . .
>
> *On Ablutions.* [Al-Ghazali cited many prayers to be performed while washing in preparation for any of the five mandatory prayers.] . . . If a man says these prayers during his ablution, his sins have departed from all parts of his body, a seal has been set upon his ablution, it has been raised to beneath the throne of God and unceasingly praises and hallows God, while the reward of that ablution is recorded for him to the day of resurrection. . . .
>
> *Going to the Mosque.* . . . When you walk to the mosque, walk easily and calmly, and do not hurry. Say as you go: "O God, by those who beseech Thee . . . I ask Thee to deliver me from the Fire and to forgive my sins, for there is none that forgiveth sins save Thee."
>
> *Going to Sleep.* When you want to go to sleep, lay out your bed pointing to Mecca, and sleep on your right side, the side on which the corpse reclines in the tomb. Sleep is the similitude of death and waking of the resurrection. Perhaps God most high will take your spirit this night; so be prepared to meet Him by being in a condition of purity when you sleep. . . .

The Worship. . . . If your heart is not attentive and your members not at rest, this is because of your defective knowledge of the majesty of God most high. [He counseled worshipers to picture themselves being watched by servants of God.]

Fasting. . . . When you fast, do not imagine that fasting is merely abstaining from food, [and] drink. . . . Rather, perfect fasting consists in restraining all the members from what God most high disapproves. . . .

. . . When you have understood what it means to fast, do so as much as you can, for it is the foundation of devotional practices and the key to good works.[24]

In *The Beginning of Guidance,* al-Ghazali also gave counsel, still pertinent today, on identifying and avoiding the worst sins of the heart. The eyes, ears, and tongue of every person, he declared, will witness for or against them on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, he warned, we should guard against certain actions. Among the eight related to the tongue are these:

Lying. Keep your tongue from lying, whether in earnest or in jest. . . .

Breaking promises. Take care not to promise something and then fail to perform it. . . .

Backbiting. . . . The meaning of backbiting is the mention of matters concerning a man which he would dislike, were he to hear them; the person who does this is a backbiter and wicked, even if what he says is true. . . .

With respect to the sins of the heart, al-Ghazali wrote:

Envy. . . . The envious man is the one who is pained when God most high out of the treasures of His might bestows on one of His servants knowledge or wealth or popularity or some piece of good fortune, and who therefore wants that favour taken away from the other person, even though he himself will not obtain any advantage from his removal. This is the depths of evil. . . .

Hypocrisy. . . . It consists in your quest for such a place in the hearts of people that you thereby obtain influence and respect. The love of influence is one of the "desires given rein to," and through it many people go to destruction. Yet people are destroyed only by themselves. . . .

Pride, arrogance, boastfulness. This is the chronic disease. It is man's consideration of himself with the eye of self-glorification and self-importance and his consideration of others with the eye of contempt. . . . Every one who considers himself better than one of the creatures of God most high is arrogant. . . . Your belief that you are better than others is sheer ignorance. Rather you ought not to look at anyone without considering that he is better than you and superior to you.[25]

Concluding Observations

In September 1832, the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland that "the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that

hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit" (D&C 84:46). As I have studied and written about al-Ghazali, the truth of this scripture has become ever clearer to me: the Lord has touched and inspired many individuals, in Islam as in many other religious traditions. On February 15, 1978, the First Presidency under the direction of President Kimball issued an official statement titled "God's Love for All Mankind," which affirms this truth:

> The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.

Similarly, Alma 29:8 teaches, "For behold, the Lord doth grant unto all nations, of their own nation and tongue, to teach his word, yea, in wisdom, all that he seeth fit that they should have; therefore we see that the Lord doth counsel in wisdom, according to that which is just and true."

Much like the religious leaders mentioned in the First Presidency's statement, al-Ghazali was a sincere individual who "received a portion of God's light." His search for truth and religious certainty parallels the spiritual yearnings of many religious figures—including Joseph Smith—who, dissatisfied with their circumstances and environment, sought heavenly guidance. This brief glimpse into al-Ghazali's life demonstrates yet again the love and wisdom the Lord sheds upon all who diligently seek his aid. Furthermore, individuals such as al-Ghazali invariably serve a higher purpose: to lift and bless as many of God's children as possible.

Brian M. Hauglid (brian_hauglid@byu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. in Near Eastern Studies at BYU and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Middle East Studies: Arabic at University of Utah.

1. Abu-Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1997). For more information, see Giles H. Florence Jr., "Making Sense of the Incoherence," *Brigham Young Magazine* 52 (spring 1998): 26–29. This volume is reviewed by David Paulsen later in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

2. Located at approximately 34°N 58°E in northeastern Iran.

3. He spent some years of study with one of the greatest theologians of his day, al-Juwayni.

4. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2:180.

5. Al-Ghazali did not leave his family penniless but provided sustenance in the form of public *waqfs* (usually land grants from which to receive monies). See Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:180.

6. Probably written some time after 1106. See George F. Hourani, "The Chronology of Ghazali's Writings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 79 (1959): 232.

7. Abu-Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazali*, trans. W. Montgomery Watt (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1994), 18.

8. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 19–20. The idea of certainty comes from the Arabic word *yaqin,* which can also signify an instinctive or inferential knowledge. See Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon,* 8 parts (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1956; Lebanon: Librarie du Liban, 1980), 8:3063–64. Note also the context in the Arabic original, in which one can read this word either way. See *Munqidh min al-dalal* (Damascus: n.p., 1960), 61.

9. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 22–23.

10. Al-Ghazali said that his was a "baffling" private disease that he did not exhibit in any outward expression. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 24. Hence, this sickness was most likely related to an emotional illness such as severe depression.

11. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 26. In Islam this is referred to as the science of *kalam* (rational theology). Questions concerning the origin of the Qur'an (created or uncreated), freedom of will, and the attributes of God (eternal or not) were discussed. For a good treatment of these issues and pertinent Muslim theologians, see W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979). See also Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law,* trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). For a study dealing with al-Ghazali and Islamic theology and earlier theologians in particular, see W. Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of al-Ghazali* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), 87–125.

12. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 26. This name is from the word *batin,* which means belly, interior, inside, or inner portion. It was thought by the adherents of this group that the imam possessed access to an inner or special knowledge. However, the name most commonly associated with this group is Isma'ili, which connotes its genealogical origination. Its most distinguishing characteristic is its reliance on the concept of infallible leadership and the authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) of the imam. Hence, this group can also be referred to as the Ta'limiyya. For more information, see Bernard Lewis, *The Origins of Isma'ilism: A Study of the Historical Background of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Cambridge: AMS, 1975).

13. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 26. With the translation of numerous Greek philosophical materials into Arabic during the early ninth century, many notable Muslim philosophers emerged who made significant contributions to philosophical thought. See Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology,* 37–48; and Watt, *Muslim Intellectual,* 25–71.

14. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 26. For a very good introduction to Islamic mysticism, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

15. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 26.

16. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 28.

17. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 55.

18. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 29.

19. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 57.

20. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 58–63.

21. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam,* 4.

22. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 24. Compare this statement with Doctrine and Covenants 9:8, which says, "If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right," and with the discussions of the light of Christ in Doctrine and Covenants 84:45 and 88:11.

23. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 82–83.

24. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 101, 103–7, 110, 127, 130–31, 142–43.

25. Al-Ghazali, *Faith and Practice,* 147–48, 159–62.

Muslim Perspectives on the Military Orders during the Crusades

William J. Hamblin

On July 4, 1187, the armies of Saladin, sultan of Egypt and Syria, surrounded thousands of Crusaders surmounting the Horns of Hattin (fig. 1) near Tiberias in Galilee. Exhausted by heat, thirst, and days of marching and fighting, the Crusaders were forced to surrender. Thousands of the resulting prisoners were sold into slavery, but not all. While King Guy and the Frankish aristocrats who had led their followers to disaster were allowed for the most part to ransom themselves,[1] the knights of the Military Orders faced a different fate.[2] After his triumphant victory, Saladin singled out the captive Templars and Hospitallers for execution.

Of course, such atrocities by both sides were hardly uncommon during the Crusades; Richard Lionheart's massacre of 2,700 Arab prisoners—plus their wives and children—following his capture of Acre comes to mind.[3] Yet Saladin's treatment of the Templars and Hospitallers after the battle of Hattin stands in stark contrast to his generous treatment of prisoners captured later that year at Jerusalem, where Saladin

FIG. 1. The Horns of Hattin, near Tiberias, Israel. The Horns of Hattin was the site of Saladin's great victory over the Crusaders in 1187.

paid the ransom for thousands of poor Christians and let them go free.[4] What caused the particular enmity between Saladin and the Templars and Hospitallers? To understand this situation one must begin with an examination of Muslim perspectives on monasticism in general.

Muslim Views of Christian Monasticism before the Crusades

Although pre-Islamic Arabia is often viewed, with some justification, as somewhat of a cultural backwater, the Arabs nonetheless had extensive contacts with both the Sassanid Persian and Byzantine empires. Through the contacts with Byzantium, and especially through interaction with the

Christianized Arab Ghassanid tribe, pagan Arabs first came into contact with Christian monasticism.[5] Arab poets make a few references to Christian monks; one perhaps allegorical allusion describes a bedouin wandering lost in the desert by night, who sees in the distance the flickering light from the lamp of a monk reading in his cell and finds shelter with him.[6]

But such minor incidental references in poetry are insufficient to give us anything but the vaguest hints about how pre-Islamic Arabs viewed monasticism. For a more complete understanding of how the Muslim view developed, we must turn to the Qur'an, where monasticism is discussed in four passages that laid the foundation for subsequent Muslim attitudes toward monks during the Crusades. On the positive side, the Qur'an describes monks as leading people near—although not fully to—the path of God:

> You will find that the most implacable of men in their enmity to the faithful [Muslims] are the Jews and the pagans, and that the nearest in affection to them are those who say: "We are Christians." That is because there are priests [*qassisin*] and monks [*ruhban*] among them; and because they are free from pride. (5:82)[7]

This positive attitude toward monasticism was further emphasized by the story of the monk Bahira, found in the earliest surviving biography of Muhammad, written by Ibn Ishaq. As a young teenager, Muhammad journeyed with a caravan to Syria:

> When the caravan reached Busra in Syria, there was a monk there in his cell by the name of Bahira, who was well versed in the knowledge of Christians. . . . There he gained his knowledge from a book that was in the cell, so they allege, handed on from generation to generation. . . . They allege that while he was in his cell he saw the apostle of God [Muhammad] in the caravan when they approached, with a cloud overshadowing him among the people.[8] Then they came and stopped in the shadow of a tree near the monk. . . . When Bahira saw him he stared at him closely, looking at his body and finding traces of his description [in the Christian books]. . . . [H]e began to ask him about what happened in his . . . sleep, and his habits, and his affairs generally, and what the apostle of God told him coincided with what Bahira knew of his description. . . . [The monk Bahira told Muhammad's uncle and guardian Abu Talib,] "Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah! if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil; a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly."[9]

This passage reveals a number of implicit attitudes about monasticism. First, there is a clear preference in early Islamic sources for hermitic (solitary) monks over coenobitic (communal) monks. The favorably depicted monk in early Islamic sources is generally the lone ascetic devoting his life to prayer and contemplation in the wilderness. In a sense, Muhammad himself pursued this ideal, for his early biographers describe him as a
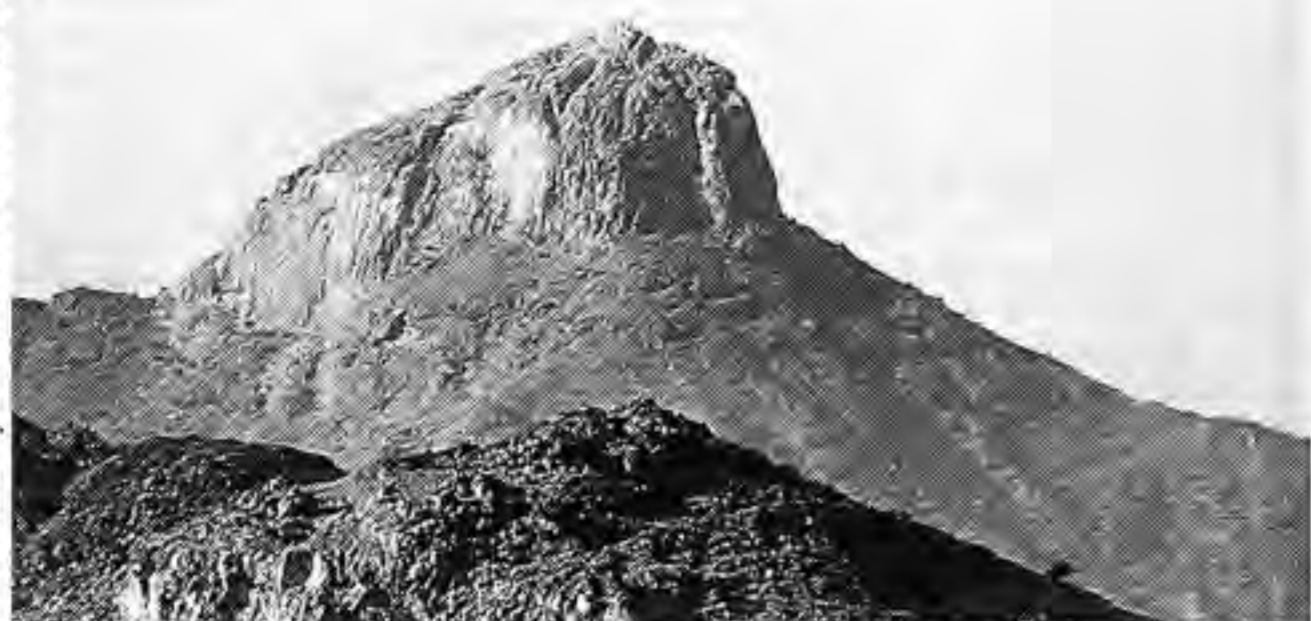
FIG. 2. Mount Hira', Saudia Arabia. Mount Hira' was the site of the Prophet Muhammad's first vision of Gabriel and the place where he spent a month each year in devotional prayer and contemplation.

hanif, a nondenominational monotheist who for one month each year withdrew to Mount Hira' (fig. 2) near Mecca, for *tahannuth,* devotional prayer and contemplation. This is where he received his first vision of Gabriel and revelation of the Qur'an.[10] There is also, however, an implicit criticism of monks in this passage. The monk Bahira was in possession of an apocryphal book that, when interpreted correctly, prophesied of the coming of Muhammad. Yet unlike Bahira in this story, most of the very monks who were the keepers of this arcane tradition, and who should therefore have clearly seen Muhammad for the prophet he was, refused to accept him.

In addition to this basically positive assessment of monks, however, the Qur'an also outlines three major problems with monasticism. First, monasticism places human intermediaries between God and mankind.

> They make of their clerics *[qassisin]* and monks *[ruhban],* and of the Messiah, the son of Mary, lords besides God; though they were ordered to serve one God only. (9:31)

Second, monasticism was not ordained by God. However well intended, it is a human invention:

> We [God] gave him [Jesus] the Gospel, and put compassion and mercy in the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism *[rahbaniya],* they invented it themselves (for We [God] had not enjoined it on them), seeking thereby to please God; but they did not observe it faithfully. We rewarded only those who were true believers; for many of them were evil-doers. (57:27)[11]

Finally, monks are accused in the Qur'an of corruptly using their positions as rulers in society to garner personal wealth and power:

> Believers, many are the clerics and the monks who defraud men of their possessions and debar them from the path of God. To those that hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in God's cause, proclaim a woeful punishment. (9:34)

Yet despite the problems with monasticism enumerated in the Qur'an, monks—and Christians in general—were considered "People of the Book,"[12] followers of God who had received an early portion of God's

revelation but not the fullness revealed to Muhammad in the Qur'an. As such they became a tolerated religious minority within Islam. This attitude is reflected in the early Islamic conquests in the seventh century, when the churches and monasteries of the Christians were given special protection in peace treaties. The caliph 'Umar's (ruled 634–644) treaty with Jerusalem is typical of many other treaties from the period:

> This is the assurance of safety *(aman)* which the servant of God, 'Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, has granted to the people of Jerusalem. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves[,] for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and the healthy of the city, and for all the rituals that belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited [by Muslims] and will not be destroyed. Neither they nor the land on which they stand, nor their cross, nor their property will be damaged. They will not be forcibly converted.[13]

Thus, since the earliest days of Islam, monasticism was a protected institution of a protected religious minority.

The protected status of Christianity and monasticism in early Islamic society is emphasized by the important roles some Christians played under Islamic rule. Under the caliphs, the literary and scholarly skills of Christian monks were highly prized, with many monks serving as clerks and even high ministers. The most famous is perhaps the great defender of icons, John of Damascus (655–750), who was originally a prominent minister for the Umayyads at Damascus before taking orders and retiring to Mar Saba near Bethlehem, where his cell is still exhibited to visitors.[14] Christians such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq (Joannitius) were the leaders of the famous translation academy *Bayt al-Hikma* (House of wisdom) at Baghdad in the ninth century.[15]

Somewhat paradoxically, Coptic monasticism in Egypt flourished under Islam and may have reached its height in the tenth century. This was because under earlier Byzantine rule, Coptic monasticism was suppressed as heretical, whereas it was tolerated by the Muslims. Although there were certainly attacks against monks and monasteries by Arabs, these tended to be incidents of brigandage or extortion by corrupt officials rather than formal government policy. Throughout the Middle Ages, relations between the Egyptian government and the Coptic monks generally remained good. For example, the late-thirteenth-century Egyptian Mamluk sultan Baybars I—noted for his pursuit of jihad, or holy war, against the Crusaders—was a guest of the monks at a monastery of Dair Abu Maqar while traveling in Wadi Habib.[16]

Thus, despite minority status and intermittent persecutions, Orthodox, Syriac, Coptic, and Nestorian monasticism all survived in Islamic lands up to the period of the Crusades.[17] Based on the Qur'an, the traditional Islamic interpretation was that monasticism was a well-intentioned

human institution, whose advocates did not always live up to its principles. It was not, however, revealed by God. This was the prevailing Arab attitude towards monasticism at the beginning of the Crusades.[18]

Religious Intruders

The coming of the Crusaders, however, brought three new developments that transformed relations between Muslims and Christian monasticism. First, the monks were now Latin Catholics, who frequently had little or no understanding of Islam. Second, unlike the monks who had submitted to Islamic political authority, the Crusaders came as hostile triumphant conquerors determined to dominate Muslim peoples and holy places. And finally, unlike the ascetic otherworldly monks of Eastern Christianity with whom Muslim rulers were familiar, the Crusades brought the warrior monks of the Military Orders, men who explicitly sought the destruction of Islam. These new developments compelled a radical reevaluation of Muslim attitudes towards monasticism.

In the period 1118–1156, the Military Orders played a relatively minor role in the Holy Land—in fact they are not well documented even in Latin sources. Among the Arabs their existence went completely unnoticed. In 1157, the rising importance of the Orders began to attract the attention of Muslim writers. The first surviving mention of the Orders is found in Ibn al-Qalanisi's *History of Damascus,* which mentions the participation of both the Hospitallers and Templars in the battle of Banyas in 1157.[19] Here we also find the first use of the Arabic technical terms for Templars and Hospitallers. The latter were called simply the *isbitariyya,* a straightforward arabized form of the Latin word *hospitalis,* which means a place of lodging for wayfarers. The Arab term for Templars, however, is the somewhat obscure *dawiyya,* whose origin and meaning is unknown but which is thought to perhaps have derived from the Latin *devotus,* one devoted to God's service.[20]

Most Arab texts from 1157 to 1180 simply mention the Orders as Frankish military units participating in a conflict or owning a castle, without giving them any particular attention. A very revealing tale, however, comes from Usamah ibn-Munqidh, a Syrian nobleman and lord of Shayzar Castle who served as a mercenary in Fatimid Egypt for a number of years. In his old age, he wrote a delightfully garrulous anecdotal biography in which he describes the following encounter with the Templar knights at the Arab al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem:

> Everyone who is a fresh emigrant from the Frankish lands is ruder in character than those who have become acclimatized and have held long association with the Moslems. Here is an illustration of their rude character.
>
> Whenever I visited Jerusalem I always entered the Aqsa Mosque, beside which stood a small mosque which the Franks had converted into a church.

When I used to enter the Aqsa Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars *[al-dawiyya]*, who were my friends, the Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it. One day I entered this mosque, repeated the first formula, "Allah is great," and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me, got hold of me and turned my face eastward saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray!" A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer. The same man, while the others were otherwise busy, rushed once more on me and turned my face eastward, saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray!" The Templars again came in to him and expelled him. They apologized to me, saying, "This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward." Thereupon I said to myself, "I have had enough prayer." So I went out and have ever been surprised at the conduct of this devil of a man, at the change in the color of his face, his trembling and his sentiment at the sight of one praying towards the *qiblah* [the direction of Mecca].[21]

There are a number of interesting aspects to this story. For one thing, it seems the Templars allowed Muslims to pray at the al-Aqsa Mosque after it had been converted into a Christian religious complex. Somewhat paradoxically from the modern perspective, for Usamah the knights Templar are examples of moderate toleration, the voice of reason when compared to the uncomprehending pilgrim from the West. At any rate, Usamah certainly had no animosity towards the Templars, whom he calls his friends. All of this was to change with the rise of the two great counter-crusading Sultans, Nur al-Din of Syria (ruled 1146–1174), and Saladin of Egypt and Syria (ruled 1171–1193).

Even so, during the early phases of Nur al-Din's and Saladin's rise to power the Military Orders were apparently not viewed as a special threat. In the latter half of the twelfth century, Arab sources recognize the Military Orders as distinct groups among the Franks. These sources demonstrate some understanding of the internal organization of the Military Orders. They correctly note that the warrior monks are called "brothers" (Latin *fratres* = Arabic *ikhwa*), live in a monastic house (Latin *domus* = Arabic *bayt*), and have a special relationship with the pope. But the Orders are not perceived differently than other Frankish soldiers and nobles.[22]

The nature of Arab views of the Orders during this period is reflected in the treatment of captive knights, which can be contrasted with Saladin's later treatment of the knights of the Orders after the battle of Hattin, described at the beginning of this paper. On June 18, 1157, the Grand Master of the Templars Bertrand of Blancfort was captured by Nur al-Din along with eighty-seven knights near Banyas. He and his knights were held to ransom like any other Frankish warriors and were released in May 1159 through intervention of Manuel, emperor of Byzantium.[23] Two decades later in 1179, the situation was still much the same. On June 10, 1179, at the

battle of Marj Ayun, Saladin captured Odo of Saint-Amand, master of the Templars.[24] Here again Saladin treated the Templars no differently than any other members of the Frankish aristocracy. Baldwin of Ibelin was ransomed for 150,000 dinars; Hugh of Galilee for 55,000. Saladin was willing to exchange Grand Master Odo for an influential Muslim prisoner, but according to William of Tyre, "the Grand Master was too proud to admit that anyone could be of equal value to him" and remained in prison where he died a year later.[25] For this study, it is important to note that in 1179, a mere eight years before the battle of Hattin, Saladin was still willing to release the Templar grand master for an appropriate ransom.[26]

In August of that same year, Saladin captured over seven hundred prisoners and the Templars' newly fortified castle of Chastellet on Jacob's Ford in the upper Jordan. Whereas Saladin specifically ordered the execution of crossbowmen and Muslim apostates who were in Crusader service, it seems that the Templars themselves were not selected for any special punishment.[27] Apparently at this time crossbowmen were viewed as more of a threat to Islam than the knights of the Military Orders.

Saladin's Jihad against the Military Orders, 1180–1193

In the later decade of Saladin's life, the countercrusade accelerated rapidly, with Saladin escalating his jihad and triumphing against the Crusaders.[28] By the 1180s, the Orders were increasingly viewed as a serious threat to Islam for three reasons: their military prowess, their intransigence in making peace, and their spiritual pollution of Muslim holy places, specifically Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock.

The courage and military prowess of the Templars and Hospitallers were renowned in the West, and Muslims shared these views. Of course the knights of the Orders were not superheroes, as they are sometimes depicted in popular books on the subject. Nonetheless, the Muslims who fought against them perceived them as superb warriors. Ibn al-Athir, one of the great Arab historians of the Crusades, describes two hundred Templar and Hospitaller prisoners as "the backbone of the Frankish armies"[29] and the "fiercest of all the Frankish warriors."[30] Here is his explanation of Saladin's motives for executing the monks of the Military Orders after Hattin:

> Then God Most High bestowed victory upon the Muslims [at Hattin], and the Franks were defeated. Many were killed and the rest captured. Among the dead was the commander of the Hospitallers, who was one of the most famous Frankish knights. He had done great harm to the Muslims. The Muslims pillaged the surrounding region, taking booty and prisoners and returning safely to Tiberias. . . . It was a great victory, for the Templars and Hospitallers are the firebrands of the Franks.[31]
>
> These two groups were especially selected for execution because they had the greatest valor of all the Franks; so [Saladin] saved the [Muslim] people from

their evil. He wrote to his deputy in Damascus ordering him to kill all of them who fell into his hands, and it was done.[32]

But the military prowess of the Orders was only one aspect of their perceived threat to Islam. Many other Frankish knights were also superb warriors, but this alone did not merit their execution upon capture.

The intransigence of the warrior monks was another matter. The legendary Assassins—fierce fanatical Islamic terrorists living in impregnable castles in the mountains of Syria—were renowned for their ability to intimidate and manipulate both Christian and Muslim rulers in the twelfth century by the threat of assassination. But they could not cow the Military Orders, who not only refused to pay the extortion demanded by the Assassins but instead received 2,000 besants a year in tribute *from* the Assassins.[33] The knights of the Military Orders simply refused to be intimidated by the threat of assassination.

The Muslim perspective of the intransigence of the Military Orders is best reflected in the writings of Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Abi Bakr al-Harawi (ca. 1145–1215), a courtier, military theorist, and propagandist in the service of Saladin.[34] A noted scholar and traveler, al-Harawi seems to have served as a type of secret agent for Saladin. As a part of ongoing military reforms, Saladin ordered the preparation of at least three manuals on statecraft and warfare, one of which was written by al-Harawi, entitled *Al-Harawi's Discussion on the Stratagems of War.*

Al-Harawi's manual offers some interesting insights into Muslim prejudices concerning the Crusaders. In describing the Latin clergy, al-Harawi wrote:

> [The Sultan] should not neglect to write to the clergy [concerning surrender]. . . . For they have little religious sentiment and are capable of treachery and disloyalty; they desire the things of this world and are indifferent to the things of the next; [they are] irresponsible, thoughtless, petty, and covetous, . . . being concerned with rank and status among kings and nobles; [they] have a permissive religious judgment regarding their own [actions].[35]

On the other hand, al-Harawi's view of the Hospitallers and Templars is quite different:

> [The Sultan] should beware of [the Hospitaller and Templar] monks, . . . for he can not achieve his goals through them; for they have great fervor in religion, paying no attention to the [things of this] world; he can not prevent them from interfering in [political] affairs. I have investigated them extensively, and have found nothing which contradicts this.[36]

In other words, the Military Orders were a threat not only because of their military strength but because of their absolute spiritual devotion to their cause as well. And that devotion, when it entailed the destruction of Islam, represented an unacceptable threat to Muslims in the age of Saladin.

Finally, added to the military threat and intransigence of the Orders were the spiritual threat to Islam they represented and the blasphemous impurity they were seen to have brought to the Muslim holy places they controlled.[37] Although the Crusader capture of Jerusalem in 1099 was viewed by Muslims as a calamity, the recovery of Jerusalem as a Muslim holy place was not a crucial issue in the early decades of the Crusades. Beginning in the 1160s, however, Nur al-Din and later Saladin both made jihad against the Crusaders a fundamental part of their state ideologies and the reconquest of Jerusalem a fundamental part of that jihad.[38]

From the Muslim perspective, the Templars, with their headquarters on the Temple Mount, had transformed the sacred Haram al-Sharif—the Noble Sanctuary—into a place of blasphemous spiritual impurity. Muslim rhetoric on this issue was often quite harsh. 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani describes some of these attitudes:

> As for the Dome of the Rock, the Franks had built on it a church and an altar. . . . They had adorned it with pictures and statues and they had appointed in it places for monks and a place for the Gospel. . . . In it were pictures of grazing animals fixed in marble and I saw among those depictions the likenesses of pigs. . . . The Franks had cut pieces from the Rock and carried some of them to Constantinople and some of them to Sicily. It was said that they had sold them for their weight in gold. . . . [Our] hearts were cut because of its cuts.[39]

Not only this, but "on an iron door a representation of the Messiah [was placed] in gold encrusted with precious stones,"[40] and "bottles of wine for the ceremony of the mass"[41] were found in the sacred places. Additionally,

> the Aqsa mosque, especially its *mihrab* [prayer niche indicating the direction to Mecca], was full of pigs and obscene language, replete with the excrement they had dropped in the building, inhabited by those who have professed unbelief, have erred and strayed, acted unjustly and perpetuated offenses, overflowing with impurities.[42]

For Muslims, the Templars had made a sacred edifice into a place of idolatry. The Qur'an was replaced by copies of the Bible. Drinking of alcohol—forbidden by the Qur'an—was now commonplace in the mass; animal filth and pigs—unclean animals in Islam—defiled the holy site. The Christians regularly defiled holy places by wearing shoes.

The only option was the reconquest and purification of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock, which became the proclaimed goal of both Nur al-Din and Saladin. A panegyric poem about Nur al-Din describes this ideal:

> May it, the city of Jerusalem be purified by the shedding of blood
> The decision of Nur al-Din is as strong as ever and the iron of
> his lance is directed at the Aqsa.[43]

FIG. 3. The Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). While the entire sanctuary is regarded as a mosque, its most notable sacred buildings are the al-Aqsa Mosque (left center, building with dome and long roof), built 705 C.E., and the Dome of the Rock (right center), commenced 685 C.E. Known to Jews and Christians as the Temple Mount, the Haram al-Sharif served as the headquarters for the Templars from about 1119 until it

When Saladin finally retook Jerusalem in 1187, his first act was to restore the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosques (fig. 3) to a state of ritual purity. Saladin "ordered the purification *(tathir)* of the [Aqsa] mosque and the [Dome of the] Rock of the filths *(aqdhar)* and impurities *(anjas)*"[44] of the Templars. All Christian icons, crosses, and symbols were removed and the mosques thoroughly cleaned. Next "rose-water was poured over the walls and floors of the two buildings which were then perfumed with incense."[45] The great gilded cross which the Templars had placed on top of the Dome of the Rock was thrown to the ground and taken to Baghdad, where it "was buried beneath the Nubian gate [in Baghdad]

was recaptured by Saladin in 1187. This view is a detail from a panoramic photograph of Jerusalem probably taken around 1900, before the area was excavated revealing the southern stairwell dating from the first century. The photograph, a fold-out brochure, was purchased by Joseph Booth or Reba Booth during a mission to Turkey (see pp. 239, 246). Courtesy E. Leon Stubbs.

and thus was trodden upon"[46] by all who entered the city. Likewise, when the Khwarazmians (a Turkish people) took Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1244, they purified it "and purified the Haram (Temple Area) and the shrines there from the filthy Franks and the foul Christians."[47]

The feelings of the Muslims concerning the expulsion of the Templars and the restoration of the sanctity of Jerusalem are well summarized by Ibn Zaki: "I praise [God] . . . for his cleansing of His Holy House from the filth of polytheism and its pollutions."[48]

As described at the beginning of this paper, Saladin, after a decade of campaigning, inflicted a decisive defeat on the Crusaders at the battle of

Hattin on July 4, 1187. Imad al-Din described the horrible details of execution of the Military Orders after the battle:

> The Sultan [Saladin] sought out the Templars and Hospitallers who had been captured and said: 'I shall purify the land of these two impure peoples.' He assigned fifty dinars [gold pieces] to every man who had taken one of them prisoner, and immediately the army brought forward at least a hundred of them. He ordered that they should be beheaded, choosing to have them dead rather than in prison. With him was a whole band of scholars and Sufis [mystics] and a certain number of devout men and ascetics; each begged to be allowed to kill one of them, and drew his sword and rolled back his sleeve. Saladin, his face joyful, was sitting on his dais; the unbelievers showed black despair, the troops were drawn up in their ranks, the amirs [commanders] stood in double file. There were some who slashed and cut cleanly, and were thanked for it; some who refused and failed to act, and were excused; some who made fools of themselves, and others took their places. . . . How many ills did [Saladin] cure by the ills he brought upon a Templar.[49]

Saladin's massacre of the knights of the Military Orders must be understood in the context of this triple threat of military prowess, intransigence, and profanation of sacred space. Ibn al-Athir succinctly described Saladin's policy towards the Military Orders: "It was [Saladin's] custom to execute the Templars and Hospitallers because of their fierce enmity towards the Muslims and their great courage."[50]

Factionalism in the Ayyubid Confederation, 1193–1250

Following Saladin's great victory at Hattin and his conquest of Jerusalem, Arab relations with the Military Orders again began to change. The knights of the Military Orders had been bested in battle, and their numbers significantly decreased by combat and by execution. Jerusalem and many of the Orders' castles had been conquered. Most importantly, the Dome of the Rock had been purified and restored to the sanctity of Muslim rule. The Templars and Hospitallers still remained fierce opponents of Islam, but accommodations can be reached even with the fiercest opponents. Their removal from the Temple Mount meant they were no longer profaning Muslim sacred space. Muslims were thus able to begin to make accommodations with the Military Orders.

At the same time, the Orders began to abandon their former intransigence, becoming increasingly willing to make accommodation with the Arabs. Thus, in the decades following the death of Saladin (fig. 4), the Military Orders once again were perceived as just one division of many among the faction-ridden Crusaders. Acting upon this perception, Muslim rulers were frequently willing to make truces, treaties, and even alliances with the Orders. This willingness to reach accommodations with the Military Orders was exacerbated in the early thirteenth century by ongoing struggles

for predominance among the Ayyubids—Saladin's fractious successors. Some Ayyubid princes actually began to ally themselves with the Military Orders in an attempt to gain political advantages over their Muslim rivals. In 1240, al-Salih Ayyub, sultan of Egypt, ceded Ascalon to Frankish barons allied with the Templars, hoping to undermine their alliance with his rival from Damascus, Isma'il.[51]

FIG. 4. Saladin's Tomb, Damascus. Saladin, the most successful leader of the countercrusade, was an unrelenting enemy of the Military Orders.

This story demonstrates not only an indifference to the ideological threat of the Orders, but at least some degree of understanding of the internal politics of the Crusaders. Fraternization with the enemy was not uncommon; when Sultan Isma'il of Damascus allied with the Orders against Egypt, his general Ibrahim was allowed to stay in the monastic "house of the Templars"[52] in Acre during the preparations for battle.

Another event demonstrates the political rivalries. One thousand Arab slaves were engaged in building Safed Castle for the Templars, and a plot was undertaken to free them. But when Sultan Isma'il heard of it, rather than offering assistance to the plotters, he revealed the plan to the Templars to curry their favor. The Templars promptly executed the slaves as a warning to forestall further potential rebellions.[53] Thus, Isma'il was willing to acquiesce in the death of a thousand Muslim slaves in order to maintain his alliance with the Templars. For most of the early thirteenth century, the Orders were seen as just one other player in the never-ending Machiavellian struggle for power among the various Christian and Muslim princes of Palestine. For Muslim rulers in this period, the Military Orders were no longer merely menacing enemies to be despised or attacked but were sometimes potential allies to be cultivated.

The Mamluks and the Expulsion of the Military Orders, 1250–1291

The rise of the Mamluk sultans in 1250 initiated the final phase of Arab relations with the Military Orders.[54] For centuries Muslim princes had been using slave-soldiers—*mamluk* in Arabic—as bodyguards. During the Crusades, these guards were slowly transformed into elite regiments numbering in the thousands. In the succession struggles that followed the death of Sultan al-Salih of Egypt in 1250, the leaders of these slave-soldiers managed

to seize the throne, inaugurating the era of the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, which lasted until the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

Founded by rebellious slaves and usurpers, the Mamluk sultanate rested on shaky ideological foundations. The Mamluks justified their usurpation by claiming—perhaps rightly—that they were the only soldiers skilled enough to be able to overcome the double threat of the Crusaders and Mongols, who had invaded the Near East beginning in 1218.[55] From the late-thirteenth-century Arab perspective, the Mongols were a far more serious threat to their civilization than the Crusaders.[56] While the Crusaders had the capacity to capture a few Arab ports, the Mongols had the capacity to completely destroy Islamic civilization and religion, as the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1256 demonstrated. Thus, the demise of the Crusaders in the late thirteenth century was somewhat delayed by Mamluk preoccupation with the Mongol threat from Mesopotamia.

Delayed, but not forestalled. For under the great warlords Baybars (1260–1277) and Qalawun (1279–1290), the Mamluks of Egypt were able both to prevent the Mongols from conquering Syria and Palestine and to dismember the remnants of the Crusader kingdom. Baybars was the most successful, conquering dozens of Crusader cities and castles, many of which were owned by the Military Orders.[57] But, unlike Saladin, Baybars does not seem to have made use of any special anti-Templar or Hospitaller propaganda as justification for his attacks. Numerous treaties were made with the Military Orders, which read like standard military treaties of the period.[58] There were apparently no special clauses in the treaties relating to the Orders' status as warrior monks.

Like Saladin, Baybars massacred Templar and Hospitaller prisoners after his successful siege of the Templar fortress of Safad in Galilee in 1266.[59] However, unlike Saladin, his motivation was not primarily ideological. Baybars claimed that the Templars had violated the terms of the peace treaty by attempting to leave the castle with their arms, so they were "beheaded on a hill near Safad in a place where they had been used to behead Muslims."[60] One Templar, who had once eaten with Baybars and therefore had a right to guest-protection, was spared; he converted to Islam and entered the sultan's service.

On the other hand, when Baybars took the great Hospitaller fortress of Krak de Chevaliers in Syria (fig. 5) a few years later in 1271, he granted the entire garrison a safe-conduct, which he honored.[61] After this siege, Baybars sent a letter taunting the Grand Master of the Hospitallers:

> This letter is addressed to *frère* Hugues—may God make him one of those who do not oppose destiny or rebel against Him who has reserved victory and triumph for His army . . . to inform him of the conquest, by God's grace, of [Krak de Chevaliers], which you fortified and built out and furbished . . .

Courtesy James A. Toronto

Fig. 5. Krak de Chevaliers, Syria, outer wall. This fortress, held by the Hospitallers, was a major center of Crusader power until captured by Baybars in 1271.

> and whose defence you entrusted to your Brethren. They have failed you; by making them live there you destroyed them, for they have lost both the fort and you. These troops of mine are incapable of besieging any fort and leaving it able to resist them.[62]

There is no evidence here of the ideological animosity found in writings from Saladin's day. The Hospitallers were simply an enemy like any other.

Likewise, in the final struggle for Acre in 1291, the Templars and Hospitallers were not singled out for special punishment. The knights of the Temple, with many refugee civilians, had shut themselves inside their huge tower.

> The Templars [then] begged for their lives, which the Sultan [al-Ashraf] granted them. He sent them a standard which they accepted and raised over the tower. The door was opened and a horde of regulars [soldiers] and others swarmed in. When they came face to face with the defenders some of the soldiers began to pillage and to lay hands on the women and children who were with them, whereupon the Franks shut the door and attacked them, killing a number of Muslims. They hauled down the standard and stiffened their resistance.[63]

Eventually, a second offer of amnesty was made, but the foundations of the tower had been so severely undermined in the siege that it collapsed as the Mamluks were taking possession. Some members of the Orders who

were captured in the siege were executed. But the Arab sources ascribe this action not to a desire to specifically punish the Military Orders but to other reasons of war. For example:

> One reason for the Sultan's wrath against them [the Templars], apart from their other crimes [of attacking Muslims], was that when the amir Kitbugha al-Mansuri had gone up (to receive their surrender) they had seized and killed him. They had also hamstrung their horses and destroyed everything they could, which increased the Sultan's wrath against them.[64]

In telling of the final siege of Acre, Arab sources do not describe special ideological animosity towards the Orders. With the holy places of Jerusalem firmly in Muslim hands, the Military Orders no longer represented an ideological threat. For the Mamluks, the Military Orders were simply an enemy to be conquered.

Mamluks and Franciscans in the Fourteenth Century

The expulsion of the Crusaders from the Holy Land in 1291 did not end Arab relations with Western European Christians. Western monks—most notably the Franciscans—continued to live among the Muslims in the Holy Land.[65] The nature of the relations of the Franciscans with the Mamluks serves as an interesting counterpoint to earlier Arab views on the Military Orders.

Franciscan tradition maintains that in 1219 St. Francis himself obtained permission from the Sultan Al-Salih Isma'il (1245–1249) for the Franciscans to be allowed to worship unmolested in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.[66] Franciscans are also said to have been used by the sultan as ambassadors to Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254).[67] Throughout the late thirteenth century, as the Mamluks were driving the Crusaders from the Holy Land, Franciscans apparently remained on relatively good terms with the Arabs and were afforded special treatment by the sultans.[68]

After the fall of Acre in 1291, Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292), a Franciscan, begged permission from the Sultan al-Ashraf for Latin monks to be allowed to remain in Jerusalem: "The sultan granted this request of the pope and bade him send some clergy, monks, and men of peace to Jerusalem. . . . So the pope chose some discreet, learned, and faithful friars from his own order."[69] With the help of a judicious payment in 1300 of 32,000 ducats from Rupert of Sicily, the Franciscans were given the Cenacle (also known as the Upper Room) on Mount Zion as their headquarters, as well as chapels in other holy places in Jerusalem.[70] This presence of the Franciscans in Jerusalem was thus permitted by the Mamluks before it was officially authorized by Pope Clement VI in 1342, when he established the Franciscans as "Caretakers of the Holy Land" *(Terrae Sanctae Custodis)*, a position they still maintain.

Thus, within a few decades of the fall of the Crusader kingdom and the expulsion of the Military Orders, the Mamluks were permitting Western monks to visit, worship, and remain in the Holy Land. But, of course, the Templars and Hospitallers were not included in this new policy of toleration. Arab opposition to the Military Orders was thus clearly not simply antagonism towards Christianity or monasticism. Rather, their fourteenth-century patronage of the Franciscans—described as "men of peace," perhaps in specific distinction to the military functions of the Templars and Hospitallers—indicates that the Arabs were willing to accommodate peaceful Western monastic activities in the Holy Land.

Of course, the Mamluk permission for Franciscan presence in the holy places was not by any means entirely or even largely altruistic. There were many advantages that Mamluk sultans hoped to obtain from the revitalization of the Franciscan presence. In the late thirteenth century, the Mamluks continued to fear a potential alliance between the Franks and Mongols, and their accommodation with Nicholas IV over a Franciscan presence in the Holy Land may have been in part an attempt to forestall such a coalition. Granting the Franciscans control over the holy places of Palestine was also perhaps partially a mechanism to forestall future potential claims of the Military Orders to those same holy places—better a Franciscan in Jerusalem than a Templar. And, if the holy places were accessible to Western pilgrims, they might feel less inclination to attempt to retake those places by force in a new crusade. The Franciscan presence would also encourage pilgrimage from the West, which would, not incidentally, bring a nice flow of European silver into the Mamluk kingdom. Tourism, in its medieval as well as modern forms, is big business. (In this light, we should not forget the 32,000 ducats paid by Rupert of Sicily.) Finally, the Franciscans could in a sense be held hostage for future good behavior of Franks in Outremer. Saber rattling from the West could be countered with threats to close Christian holy places and expel or even execute the Franciscans. Indeed, this is precisely what happened in 1365, when Peter of Cyprus (1359–1369) attacked Alexandria. The Egyptian sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban (1363–1376) arrested and executed the Franciscans of Jerusalem. New monks were allowed to return only after peace was restored.[71]

Nonetheless, in light of the preceding two centuries of invasions and warfare and the Mamluk fear of a possible renewal of crusades in the early fourteenth century, the overall Mamluk policy toward a continued Western monastic presence in the Holy Land was remarkably enlightened. Some contemporaneous European policies showed much less tolerance towards Jews and Muslims in Spain and other parts of Europe.[72]

Fundamentally, however, following the expulsion of the Crusaders, the Arabs simply ceased to pay further attention to the Military Orders.

BYU Studies

The destruction of the Templars in France from 1307 to 1312[73] went basically unnoticed among the Arabs, although they must have received information on these events from the frequent visits of Venetian merchants to Alexandria. It seems that when the Templars were driven from the Levant, they were also driven from the historical consciousness of the Arabs.[74]

Conclusion

Muslims during the Crusades had enough intercultural understanding to be able to distinguish both between Eastern and Western Christians and between the various monastic orders of the West. Although the fundamental Islamic principle of tolerance for Christianity and monasticism was severely strained by two centuries of crusades, it was not entirely shattered. As the military threat of the Crusades waned and Muslim control of the holy places was restored, Muslims were able to maintain a clear distinction between ordinary Christian monks, such as the Franciscans, and the knights of the Military Orders. The latter were to be driven from the Holy Land; the former could be tolerated and even cultivated. Thus, in the struggle between toleration and conflict, toleration ultimately prevailed.

If the revival of Muslim toleration for Christian monks after the Crusades can serve as any type of model for the current Arab-Israeli conflict, then the hope for an eventual peace between Arabs and Jews may not be entirely vain. However, during the Crusades, Arab generosity and tolerance bore fruit only after Saladin's victories had secured the holy places of Jerusalem. Now, as then, the struggle for control of the sacred Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary), or Temple Mount, is a fundamental key to resolving this tragic conflict.[75] But, unfortunately, neither side seems able to abandon claims to this holy site without abandoning a part of their soul.

William J. Hamblin [william_hamblin@byu.edu] is Professor of History at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. in history from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in Near East History from the University of Michigan. This article was originally presented as an invited lecture for the Malta Study Center at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, on March 23, 2001.

1. The exception was Reynald de Chatillon, who was executed by Saladin for his barbarous attacks on Muslim pilgrims. See Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades,* 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951–54), 2:459–60; see also Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson, *Saladin: The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 264. For general background on the Islamic Near East during this period, see P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (New York: Longman, 1986).

2. The Military Orders were monks who, while living according to standard medieval monastic rules, were also "knights of Christ," dedicated to fighting those who were perceived as enemies of God and of the Roman Catholic Church. The literature on the Military Orders is immense. For an introduction, see Alan Forey, *The Military Orders: From the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). The two most important Military Orders in the Holy Land were the Templars and the Hospitallers, who are the focus of this essay. On the Templars, see Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a lavishly illustrated general history of the Hospitallers, with additional bibliography, see H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

3. Described by Runciman, *Crusades*, 3:53, with references to primary sources.

4. Runciman, *Crusades*, 2:465–67.

5. On the relations between the Byzantines and pre-Islamic Arabs, see bibliography and discussion in Irfan A. Shahid, Alexander P. Kazhdan, and Anthony Cutler, "Arabs," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1:149–51.

6. See references in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. A. J. Wensinck, C. E. Bosworth, and others, 2d ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954–), 8:396–97, s.v. "Rahbaniyya" and "Rahib"; see also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953), 466–67, s.v. "Rahbaniya" and "Rahib."

7. *The Koran*, 5th ed., trans. N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin, 1990); references to the Qur'an are by sura and verse.

8. This is presumably a cloud protecting Muhammad from the heat of the sun on a desert journey.

9. Ibn Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. A. Guillaume (Lahore: Pakistan Branch, Oxford University Press, 1967), 79–81.

10. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, 105–6.

11. I have slightly altered this verse. The Arabic verb translated as "invented" here is *abtad'uha*, related to *bida'*, the technical term in later Islamic theology for "innovation" or "heresy." See Wensinck, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Rahbaniyya," 8:396, for a discussion of the two differing traditions of interpretation of this passage. I here follow the interpretation that was most common during the Crusades, though it may not be the original.

12. Among the numerous passages in the Qur'an, see 2:109, 3:113, and 57:29 and sections beginning with 4:153 and 5:15.

13. Al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. 12, *The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, trans. Yohanan Friedmann (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 191. Other similar treaties are recounted therein. Likewise, Khalid ibn al-Walid's treaty with Damascus states:

> This is what Khalid b. Walid gave to the inhabitants of Damascus. He gave them security for their persons, property, churches, and the wall of their city. None of their houses shall be destroyed or confiscated. On these terms they have alliance with God, and the protection of His Prophet, the caliphs, and the believers. Nothing but good shall befall them if they pay tribute. (A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar* [London: Frank Cass, 1970], 9, quoting Ibn al-Athir)

14. For general background and bibliography, see F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* s.v. "John of Damascus" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 735–36.

15. Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbasid Socie*ty (Second–Fourth/Eighth–Tenth Centuries) (London: Routledge, 1998).

16. For general background on Egyptian monasticism, see Otto F. A. Meinardus, *Monks and Monasteries of the Egyptian Deserts,* rev. ed. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1989); the story of Baybars I appears on p. 84.

17. On the various branches of Near Eastern Christianity, see Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia,* vol. 1: *Beginnings to 1500* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992).

18. Some of the beliefs and practices of monasticism may also have influenced ideas in early Sufism (Islamic mysticism). For general introduction to Sufism, see Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000); Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1989).

19. Ibn al-Qalanisi, *Dhayl ta'rikh Dimashq,* ed. H. Amerdroz (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1908), 339.

20. On the *History of Damascus* as the first reference and on the philology of the Arab names for the Orders, see R. Stephen Humphreys, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Supplemental Volume (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), s.v. "Dawiyya and Isbitariyya."

21. Usamah ibn-Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian, Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usamah ibn-Munquidh,* trans. Philip Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 163–64.

22. The major references are summarized in Humphreys, "Dawiyya and Isbitariyya," 205.

23. Barber, *New Knighthood,* 95.

24. Barber, *New Knighthood,* 86; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin,* 139–41; William, Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea,* trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A. C. Krey, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 2:442–43.

25. Runciman, *Crusades,* 2:420; William of Tyre, *History of Deeds,* 2:443.

26. It was not uncommon for captured lords to be held for years if a suitable ransom could not be agreed upon. Reynald de Chatillon was captured and remained unransomed for sixteen years. Runciman, *Crusades,* 2:357.

27. Barber, *Knighthood,* 86 and nn. 67 and 68; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin,* 141–43.

28. For a recent summary of the differing phases and aspects of jihad during the Crusades, see Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 89–255, with a bibliography on earlier studies.

29. Ibn al-Athir, quoted in Gabrielli, *Arab Historians,* 118.

30. Ibn al-Athir, quoted in Gabrielli, *Arab Historians,* 124.

31. Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (Beirut: Dar Sader, Dar Beyrouth, 1966), 11:531; translation by author.

32. Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil,* 11:538; translation by author.

33. Barber, *New Knighthood,* 100–103; Farhad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis: Their History and Doctrines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 397–98, 420–21. For general studies on the Assassins, see Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

34. For a more detailed discussion of al-Harawi and a related bibliography, see William J. Hamblin, "Saladin and Muslim Military Theory," in *The Horns of Hattin,* ed. B. Z. Kedar (London: Variorum; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 228–38.

35. Al-Harawi, *Al-Tadhkirat al-Harawiyya fi al-Hayl al-Harbiyya*, ed. M. al-Murabit (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafah, 1972), 104; translation by author.

36. Al-Harawi, *Al-Tadhkirat*, 104–5; translation by author.

37. In this section I follow the analysis of Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 282–322.

38. See the summary of the evidence and studies in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 89–255.

39. 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, *Kitab al-Fath al-qussi fi'l-fath al-qudsi*, ed. C. Landberg (Leiden: n.p., 1888); ed M. M. Subh (Cairo, 1965), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 290.

40. 'Ali al-Harawi, *Kitab al-Ziyarat*, trans. J. Sourdel-Thomine as *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage* (Damascus, 1957), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 290.

41. Ibn Wasil, *Mufarrij al-kurub*, ed. J. al-Shayyal (Cairo, 1953–57), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 291.

42. Abu Shama, *Kitab al-rawdatayan*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1954), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 301.

43. Ibn al-Qaysarani, quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 151.

44. Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi'l-tarikh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg, 12 vols. (Leiden and Uppsala, 1851–76), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 300.

45. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 299.

46. Al-Maqrizi, *Kitab al-suluk*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst as *History of Ayyubids and Mamluks* (Boston: n.p., 1980); trans. E. Quatremère as *Historie des sultans mamlouks de l'Egypte* (Paris, 1837–45), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 305.

47. Ursula Lyons and Malcolm Cameron Lyons, trans., and J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tarikh al-Duwal wa' l-Muluk of Ibn al-Furat*, vol. 2, *The Translation* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1971), 3.

48. Ibn Zaki, quoted in Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-a'yan*, 4 vols., trans. W. M. de Slane as *Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary* (Paris, 1843–71), quoted in Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 301.

49. 'Imad al-Din, *al-Fath al-Qussi fi al-Fath al-Qudsi*, in *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. Francesco Gabrieli (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 138.

50. Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil*, 12:22.

51. R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193–1260* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 268–69.

52. Lyons and Lyons, *Ayyubids*, 5.

53. Humphreys, *Damascus*, 267–68.

54. Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (London: Croon Helm, 1986).

55. David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

56. On these issues, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

57. Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. P. M. Holt (New York: Longman, 1992).

58. Some of these can be found in Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, 323–33; see also Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*.

59. Lyons and Lyons, *Ayyubids*, 95–96.

60. Lyons and Lyons, *Ayyubids*, 95.

61. Lyons and Lyons, *Ayyubids*, 145–46.

62. Ibn al-Furat, in Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, 318–19.

63. Abu l-Mahasin, in Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, 348.

64. Abu l-Mahasin, in Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, 348.

65. For general background on the Franciscans in the Holy Land, see Sabino De Sandoli, *The Peaceful Liberation of the Holy Places in the Fourteenth Century: The Third Return of the Frankish or Latin Clergy to the Custody and Service of the Holy Places through Official Negotiations in 1333* (Cairo: Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, 1990); and, more generally, John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

66. Elzear Horn, *Ichnographiae Monumentorum Terrae Sanctae (1724–1744)*, trans. E. Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1962), quoted in F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 369.

67. Horn, quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 369.

68. Horn, quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 369.

69. Felix Fabri, *The Book of the Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, trans. A. Stewart, 2 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1971), quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 421.

70. Fabri, quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 422; Horn, quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 370.

71. Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191–1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 161–71.

72. For a general history of the relationship between Christian Europe and the Jews, see James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, a History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

73. Barber, *New Knighthood*, 280–313.

74. I have not searched all contemporary histories for possible references, but the major historians do not mention the fall of the Templars. Of course, the specific targeting of the Military Orders as special enemies of Islam continued after the Crusades in the policies of the Ottoman sultans. While numerous accommodations were made with Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and Syrian Christians and monks in conquered Byzantine provinces, the Hospitallers of Rhodes and later Malta were continually targeted as special enemies of Islam, culminating in the great sieges of Rhodes in 1480 and 1522 and of Malta in 1565. For a general discussion and bibliography on the great sieges, see Sire, *Knights of Malta*, 51–72.

75. Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount* (New York: Free Press, 2000).

Courtesy Hashim al-Tawil

Khayber, by Hashim al-Tawil (1952–). Oil and mixed media on canvas, 36″ x 60″, 1994. Khayber is an ancient city in pre-Islamic Arabia. The calligraphic lion is a famous symbol of 'Ali, the fourth caliph and cousin of Muhammad. The text of the calligraphy is a Sufi invocation to 'Ali.

Jerusalem's Role as a Holy City for Muslims

Chad F. Emmett

When Pope John Paul II made his historic March 2000 pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he did so with the hopes of building bridges and fostering peace. While in Jerusalem, he scheduled a meeting with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders to symbolize his ongoing desire for religious reconciliation. The meeting turned out to be less than conciliatory, especially in regard to Jerusalem. When Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau of Israel's Ashkenazic community praised the pope for his "'recognition of Jerusalem as its united, eternal capital,'" some audience members shouted out that the pope had not recognized Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. (The pope supports a long-standing Catholic policy which calls for the internationalization of Jerusalem so that all faiths may worship in peace). Next Sheik Taysir Tamimi, "deputy chief justice of the Palestinian Islamic courts," called for an independent state of Palestine with "its eternal capital" Jerusalem. The pope, who sat with his head in his hands throughout the speeches, responded in his prepared text by stating: "'Religion is the enemy of exclusion and discrimination. . . . Religion and peace go together.'"[1]

Peace among the religious communities of Jerusalem remains as elusive as ever as two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, battle against each other for territorial control and political sovereignty over the city. Both nations want Jerusalem as their capital, entirely or partially. The Israeli government claims the city as its "eternal and undivided capital," while most Palestinians are striving to have the Arab sectors of East Jerusalem recognized as the capital of their hoped-for state of Palestine.

These competing claims to the city are based on an intertwined presence in which both groups selectively use differing interpretations of history to emphasize the sanctity of the city and their desire to control it. Former mayor of Jerusalem Teddy Kollek describes Jewish attachment to Jerusalem as follows:

> Jews care intensely about Jerusalem. The Christians have Rome and Canterbury and even Salt Lake City; Muslims have Mecca and Medina. Jerusalem has great meaning for them also. But the Jews have only Jerusalem and only the Jews have made it their capital. That is why it has so much deeper a meaning for them than for anybody else. . . . There are some Israelis who would give up the Golan, . . . and some who would give up the West Bank. But I do not think you can find any Israelis who are willing to give up Jerusalem. They cannot and will not. This beautiful golden city is the heart and the soul of the Jewish people. You cannot live without a heart and soul. If you want one simple word to symbolize all of Jewish history, that word would be Jerusalem.[2]

BYU Studies

Palestinian historian, and native Jerusalemite, Walid Khalidi describes the equally strong ties of Muslims and Palestinian Arabs to Jerusalem:

> Without East Jerusalem there would be no West Bank. It is the navel, the pivotal link between Nablus to the north and Hebron to the south. Together with its Arab suburbs it is the largest Arab urban concentration on the West Bank. It is the former capital of the *sanjak* (district) of Jerusalem under the Ottomans, as well as of mandatory Palestine. The highest proportion of the Palestinian professional elite under occupation resides in it. It is the site of the holiest Muslim shrines on Palestinian soil. Muslims first turned to it in prayer before they turned to Mecca. Toward it the Prophet Muhammed journeyed on his mystical nocturnal flight and from it he ascended to within "two bow-lengths" of the Throne of God. . . . Within its precincts are buried countless generations of Muslim saints and scholars, warriors and leaders. It evokes the proudest Palestinian and Arab historical memories. It contains the oldest religious endowments of the Palestinians, their most prestigious secular institutions—the cumulative and priceless patrimony of a millennium and a quarter of residence. Architecturally it is distinctively Arab. In ownership and property, it is overwhelmingly so. It is the natural capital of Arab Palestine.[3]

While both groups claim the city as holy, they differ on the territorial extent of that holiness. For Jews, Jerusalem the city is holy, no matter what its boundaries. Hebrew University professor Zwi Werblowsky explains, "For the Jewish people Jerusalem is not a city containing holy places or commemorating holy events. The city as such is holy."[4] That holiness now extends to the greatly expanded boundaries of the city claimed by Israel in 1967. Muslims have a similar view of Mecca in which they view the entire precinct of the city as holy and therefore off limits to non-Muslims. For Muslims, the sanctity of Jerusalem, however, is based primarily on its sacred Islamic sites. Jordanian judge Adnan Abu Odeh writes, "In its essence the holiness of Jerusalem is an attribute of the holy places themselves" whether they be Muslim, Christian, or Jewish. He then explains how over time a certain degree of holiness has been extended to the quarters of the city which surround these sacred sites, primarily within the Old City's walls, but he feels "it is stretching the point [for Israel] to call 'holy' every building, every neighborhood and every street corner that has been built up around the walled city, extending out many kilometers in some directions."[5]

These competing claims to the extent and level of sanctity of the city prompted Palestinian philosopher Sari Nusseibah to state, "If Israelis fail to appreciate the significance of [the Palestinian] claim, I do not see how they can hope for anyone, including the Palestinians, to appreciate their equally strong spiritual claim."[6] The strong claim of the Israeli Jews to Jerusalem is perhaps more familiar to Western Christianity, but as Nusseibeh and Khalidi suggest, there is an equally strong claim by Palestinian Arabs that must be understood and considered in the final status negotiations on Jerusalem. The foundation of the Palestinian claim is also religious.[7]

This paper will thus seek to describe the less-familiar ties of Islam to the city and will place current Islamic attachments to the city within the context of the on-going Jewish-Muslim rivalries for the control of sacred space. It is hoped that a better understanding of the strong religious and historical attachments to the city on the part of not only Jews and Christians but also Muslims might result in a fair and equitable sharing of Jerusalem.

The Sacred Space of Jerusalem

In the early days of Islam, Muslims indicated their submission to Allah (God) by prostrating themselves in prayer, not toward Mecca, but toward the holy city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem's role as the first *qibla* (direction of prayer) is indicative of its holy status to Muslims, who consider themselves heirs to the prophets of Judaism and Christianity and who therefore respect the city where so many of the prophets lived and taught. Muhammad most likely was aware of the Jewish tradition of praying toward the Holy City and therefore designated it as the focus of prayer as if to invite the Jewish "people of the book" back into the familiar fold of God. There is no record of how or when Jerusalem became the focus of prayer (most likely before the *hijra,* or emigration, to Medina in 622 C.E.). There is, however, record of how its brief status as the first qibla was supplanted by Mecca, most likely within a year or two of Muhammad's arrival in Medina.[8] The Qur'an states:

> The Fools among the people will say: "What hath turned them from the *Qibla* [Jerusalem] to which they were used?" Say: "To Allah belong both east and west: He guideth whom He will to a way that is straight." . . . Now shall we turn thee to a *qibla* that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque [Mecca]. Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction. (2:142–44)

With the changing of the qibla from Jerusalem to Mecca, the holy status of Jerusalem might certainly have waned were it not for another important event—the Night Journey of Muhammad to Jerusalem—that further linked Islam to the city of its two monotheistic predecessors. The Qur'an describes the Night Journey *(isra')* in these terms:

> Glory to Allah who did take His servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque [Ka'ba in Mecca] to the Farthest Mosque [al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem] whose precincts we did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our signs: for He is the One who heareth and seeth all things. (17:1)

In Islamic tradition,[9] Muhammad was transported to Jerusalem by a white, winged horse called Buraq, who was then tethered at the Western Wall of the vacant Temple Mount. On the Mount, Muhammad led fellow prophets Abraham, Moses, and Jesus in prayer. He then ascended with the archangel

FIG. 1. Mosque of the Ascension, 1995. Built on top of the Mount of Olives, this site is revered and shared by Muslims and Christians as the place where Jesus ascended to heaven. Muslims consider Jesus to be a major prophet.

Gabriel through the seven heavens, where he met those prophets called to preside over the celestial spheres—Adam, Enoch, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, John the Baptist, Jesus, and finally Abraham.[10] Armstrong suggests that this Night Journey "symbolized the Muslims' conviction of continuity and solidarity with the older faiths" and that it also "revealed the transference of Mecca's holiness to Jerusalem,"[11] making it a holy site as well. From the beginning, it was clear that Jerusalem was meant to be another religious focal point for Muslims.

Later associations with sites attributed to various prophets have served to solidify the attachment of Muslims to the city. Muslim sacred sites in Jerusalem include these three: on the Mount of Olives, a mosque that marks the site of the ascension of Jesus (fig. 1); to the north of the city, a mosque that commemorates the burial site of the prophet Samuel; and on Mount Zion, the Tomb of David (fig. 2), which, while once a mosque, is still claimed as a Muslim *waqf* (religious endowment, pious foundation; see "Current Issues" below). In addition to these sacred sites, Jerusalem's religious landscape is marked by many other mosques and monuments. There are also numerous Islamic schools and institutions, cemeteries where generations of Muslims are buried, and significant tracts of waqf land.

While past events have imbued Jerusalem with its sanctity, future events also add to its holiness. Muslims believe that Jerusalem will be the "place of the second and final *hijra*"[12] (the first exodus being from Mecca to Medina), the site where the virtuous people of the earth will be gathered in safety. It will also be the place of resurrection. On the eve of the Day of Judgment, God will send the best of his creations to Jerusalem and its surrounding holy land. Then the *mahdi* (Messiah-like figure) will come to Jerusalem, bringing justice and bounty to the earth.[13] Those believers who pray, reside, fast, or die in Jerusalem are accorded special blessings.[14]

Historical Ties and Tolerance

The religious ties to the city are also strengthened by the long historical presence of Muslims in the city. The Muslim Arab conquest of Christian

Byzantine Jerusalem occurred in 638 C.E. While the conquerors were most likely aware of the biblical events associated with the city, the city had not yet been attributed as the destination of Muhammad's Night Journey. Nonetheless, Jerusalem was still a desirable prize. The most accepted account of the conquest tells of Patriarch Sophronius surrendering to no one other than 'Umar, the second caliph. Unlike other conquerors, 'Umar sought not to destroy. He issued a covenant in which, among other things, he promised the Christian residents of the city "the surety of their persons, their goods, their churches, their crosses . . . and the cult in general."[15] 'Umar's magnanimity was further demonstrated when he declined an offer from the patriarch to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (known to local Christians as the Church of the Resurrection) in fear that doing so would result in its becoming a Muslim shrine. Instead he walked out of the church to another location to pray. There a commemorative mosque was eventually built; its successor (fig. 3) still stands overlooking the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. 'Umar issued a charter forbidding Muslims "to pray on the steps" of the church "or to build a mosque there." He later accepted an offer to pray in the Nea Church but again ensured that the church would remain under Christian control.[16]

During his visit to Jerusalem, 'Umar visited the Temple Mount and in respect for its sanctity—due to its association with the Temple of Solomon—ordered that it be cleaned of its long accumulation of garbage. He then oversaw the building of a mosque at the southern end of the platform. The Christian pilgrim Arculf described the unassuming mosque in 680 C.E. as "an oblong house of prayer" that was "pieced together with upright planks and large beams over some ruined remains." He reported that the mosque was said to "hold three thousand people."[17] It was later replaced by

Courtesy Chad Emmett

FIG. 2. The Tomb of David (lower level) and Cenacle (upper level), 1995. Once used as a mosque, this site is still viewed by Muslims as sacred. The building is also venerated by Jews, who use the first floor as a synagogue, and by those Christians who regard the second floor as the site of the upper room where Christ partook of the Last Supper.

the al-Aqsa Mosque (see fig. 3 on p. 106).

The next monument to rise on the Temple Mount was the Dome of the Rock— the oldest and perhaps most beautiful of all Islamic monuments. It was built over the large outcropping of rock at Mount Moriah's summit, which Muslims revere as the point of Muhammad's ascension on his Night Journey into heaven and respect as the site of Solomon's temple. Caliph Abd al-Malik oversaw the building of the monument from the Umayyad capital of Damascus.

There has been much debate as to why the Dome was built. Some scholars, basing their conclusions on the ninth-century writings of Ya'qubi, have suggested that Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock as a rival place of pilgrimage to the Islamic shrines of Mecca and Medina, which were controlled by his challenger, Abdalah ibn Zubayr. However, the more prevalent view is that the mosque was built in rivalry with Christianity and in an attempt to attract Christian converts.[18] According to Muqaddasi, a medieval Arab historian from Jerusalem, splendid mosques were built throughout the region in order that Muslims would have something to admire other than the beautiful Byzantine churches. "And in like manner," he wrote, "is it not evident how Caliph Abd al-Malik, noting the greatness of the Dome of the Holy Sepulcher and its magnificence, was moved lest it should dazzle the minds of Muslims and so erected, above the Rock, the Dome which is now seen there."[19]

From the conquest of 'Umar in 638 to the conquest of Allenby in 1917, excepting the Crusader interlude, Jerusalem was under Islamic control.

Courtesy Chad Emmett

Fig. 3 Minaret of the Mosque of Omar, 1994. Omar ('Umar) prayed on this site rather than praying in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This mosque is the successor of the original mosque that was built across from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to commemorate his prayer.

However, while viewed as the third most holy city in Islam and graced with one of its most magnificent mosques, Jerusalem was never proclaimed an Arab or Islamic capital. Dynastic capitals emerged first in Damascus and later in Baghdad, Cairo, and Istanbul, but never Jerusalem. The city was bypassed even by the Umayyads as a provincial capital, with Ramla, on the coastal plain, being established to function in that capacity. Jerusalem's lack of political prominence as an Arab/Muslim capital has been used by Israel to bolster its claim to the city as its eternal capital.[20] Muslims, however, consider their treatment of Jerusalem as further evidence of its sanctity and prominence. Sari Nusseibeh explains:

> Jerusalem has always occupied a 'semi-divine' status in Islam, which explains its so-called non-centricity in the political context. . . . From the Muslim point of view, therefore, Jerusalem was never regarded as a political capital or center, not because the Arabs thought little of it, but on the contrary—because they believed that its status was sanctified.[21]

Throughout Islamic rule, Jerusalem was never viewed as being exclusively Muslim in character. Christians and Jews, as "protected minorities" *(dhimmis),* were always permitted to live in the city.[22] Relations between these three communities were not always pleasant—witness the edict from al-Hakim (ruling from Egypt) to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009—but they were at least tolerant. Examples of this tolerance span more than a millennium. As mentioned above, 'Umar willingly allowed Christians to remain in the city. Initially he forbade Jews, who had been ousted by the Byzantines, from returning to the city, but then in a change of heart, he invited seventy Jewish families from Tiberius to settle in the city near the Pool of Siloam.[23] When Saladin regained the city for Islam from the Crusaders, he allowed the Christians of the city to peacefully surrender without a bloodbath like that of the Crusader conquest, in which the Muslim and Jewish residents of the city were massacred. During the centuries of Ottoman rule, the Christian and Jewish communities of the city prospered under the *millet* system, which accorded rights to non-Muslim religious communities in the empire. It was during this regime in the 1800s that the Jewish population of the city surpassed the Arab population.

Current Issues

The once peaceful relations between Jerusalem's religious communities disintegrated with the rise of Jewish and Arab nationalisms (fig. 4) in the early twentieth century. Both sought sovereignty from the Ottomans and then both fought to oust the British. These nationalist aspirations, when combined with Jewish, Christian, and Muslim ties to the Holy City, have resulted in intense competition for control of the city (fig. 5). Based on a long historical presence and religious attachment, the Muslims of

Courtesy Chad Emmett

FIG. 4. House in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, 1994. The house was decorated to celebrate a family member performing the *hajj.* While most of the images relate to the pilgrimage, the focal point is the Dome of the Rock, which has become a symbol of Palestinian nationalism.

Jerusalem, and in fact the entire Islamic world, show no signs of being willing to relinquish their claims to control. Adding further resolution to their steadfastness are the ongoing encroachments by Israel on Palestinian territory in the city and restrictions of Palestinian ability to live and worship in the city. Since 1947, Israel has systematically diminished Palestinian-controlled lands through such policies and procedures as declaring landowners absentee, not issuing building permits, and destroying homes built without such permits.[24] For perceived security purposes, Israel often restricts Muslim access to the mosques of the city (fig. 6). Further hardship for and weakening of the Muslim and Christian communities of the city comes through the non-issuance of Jerusalem residence permits to lifelong residents of the city. Attempts by some Jews to usurp control of sacred spaces claimed by both Muslims and Jews further threaten Islamic areas of Jerusalem.

Prior to 1948, Muslims lived, not only in the traditional Muslim quarter of the Old City (see map), but in newer quarters beyond the city walls. Located within these quarters were lands and buildings designated as *waqf,* holdings that are bequeathed or endowed toward the perpetual maintenance of a family or religion. These holdings cannot be sold. Revenues gained from the rent or lease of the properties are used to support a variety of religious endeavors. For example, Islamic waqfs in Jerusalem have been used in the establishment and maintenance of mosques, religious schools, cemeteries, public baths, hostels for pilgrims, homes for the needy, soup kitchens, and orphanages. Due to its sacredness, Jerusalem during Ottoman times had more waqfs per capita than any other major Ottoman city. However, when Israel gained control of West Jerusalem in 1948 and then East

Jerusalem in 1967, many waqf holdings came under Israeli control.[25]

One of the most noted expropriations of an Islamic waqf involves competing Israeli and Palestinian claims to the Western Wall. As noted above, when Muhammad journeyed to Jerusalem, he tethered his horse at the Western Wall, which as the last remaining vestige of the temple complex—it being part of the retaining wall that supported the large platform of the temple mount—had particular sanctity to Jews. Muslims have attributed sanctity to the same site; holy, not only because of Buraq, but also because the wall was an integral

FIG. 5. Graffiti—"Jerusalem is Arab forever." This 1995 message was spray-painted in the Old City in response to the Jewish slogan stating Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel.

part of the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) where the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque are located. In 1193 C.E., the pavement in front of the wall was made a waqf. Then in 1320 C.E., a quarter for Moroccan Muslims who settled in the Holy City was established as a waqf (to support Moroccan pilgrims to the Holy City) on land located just west of the wall.

Throughout the centuries of Islamic control, the Jews of Jerusalem were allowed to pray at the wall in a narrow corridor (300 m by 4 m) abutting the Moroccan (Maghrebi) quarter. During the British era, violent conflicts arose between Muslims and Jews over ownership and use of the

FIG. 6. Exiting the Haram al-Sharif, 1997. As these Muslim worshippers leave after Friday prayer, they are watched by Israeli soldiers on the wall and on the ground. A bombing a few days earlier had led to heightened security, a reminder of the constant tension in Jerusalem.

wall. In an attempt to settle the dispute, a British commission issued a report that recognized both Muslim and Jewish sanctity of the site, acknowledged Muslim ownership of the wall, and guaranteed continued Jewish access to the wall. This "status quo" lasted until 1948, at which time the Jordanian government restricted Jewish access to the wall. In June 1967, just four days after the Israeli conquest of East Jerusalem, 650 Arab residents of the Maghrebi Quarter were evicted with only two hours' notice and their 135 houses were bulldozed to the ground by the Israeli government in order to open up access to the wall. The expansive Western Wall plaza now extends out across Muslim waqf lands (fig. 7).[26]

Rising above the Western Wall plaza is what Jews call the Temple Mount and what Muslims call the Haram al-Sharif (see map). It is holy to Jews as the site of former temples and of a future temple, while it is holy to Muslims primarily because of its association with Muhammad's Night Journey as well as its association with past prophets like Solomon and Jesus. Because of the dual nature of its sanctity, the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif is probably the most contentious piece of territory in the entire Holy Land. Muslims consider the whole enclosed platform of the Haram al-Sharif as a sacred mosque. It is therefore *haram* (forbidden) for peoples

Courtesy Chad Emmett

FIG. 7. Western Wall and plaza, 1997. The Western Wall is significant to the Muslims as the wall where Muhammad tethered his horse during the Night Journey. Both Muslims and Jews consider the Western Wall as the only remaining part of Solomon's temple complex. The plaza in front of the wall was created in 1967.
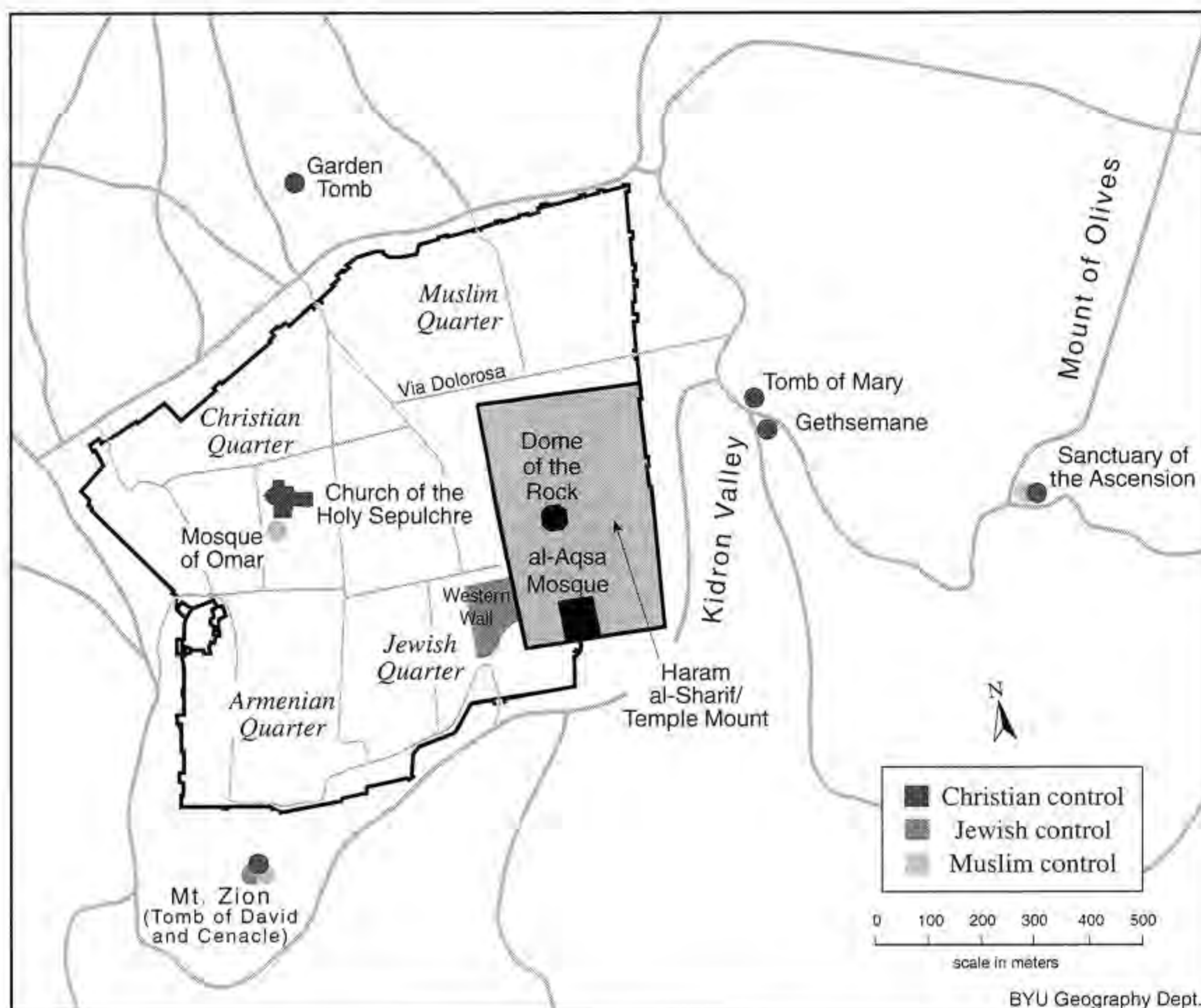
Sacred Sites in Jerusalem

of other religions to pray on the site.[27] Muslim control, which dates back to 'Umar's conquest, was challenged during the British Mandate as Zionist Jews sought to reclaim lost lands and sacred sites. In response to Jewish assertion of increased rights at the Western Wall, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajji Amin al-Husseini, stated in a 1930 memorandum to the Shaw Commission that "active widespread propaganda" was being "undertaken by the Jews with a view to influencing the London Government and other powers as well as the League of Nations in order to take possession of the Western Wall of the Mosque at Aqsa." He then asserted that this was being done so that Jews could "take possession of the Mosque of al-Aqsa gradually on the pretense that it is the temple."[28]

Whether real or perceived, Jewish attempts at taking control of the mount did not come to fruition. The British government refused to grant greater rights, and during the nineteen years of Jordanian rule of partitioned Jerusalem (1948–67), Israeli Jews were denied access to the wall and Temple Mount. All this changed in June 1967, when, during the conquest of East Jerusalem, Israeli soldiers gained control of the long-forbidden Temple Mount. Israeli control was short-lived. In recognition of its sanctity

to Islam, General Moshe Dayan had the Israeli troops take down the Israeli flags and leave Islam's third most holy site. He then restored control of the Haram al-Sharif to the Muslim waqf, which continues to administer the area. Waqf officials remain ever vigilant of Jewish designs on the Mount.

Since 1967 there has been a crescendo of Jewish efforts (sometimes supported by Christians) to regain control of the Mount in hopes that the temple can be rebuilt and the Messiah can come. These efforts only seem to strengthen the resolve of Muslims to hold onto their sacred site. A quick overview of some of these activities serve well to illustrate why Muslims now worry, as did Hajj Amin al-Husseini earlier, about Jewish encroachments and eventual control of the Haram al-Sharif. In 1969 an Australian Christian (most likely of deranged mind) ignited a damaging fire in the al-Aqsa Mosque. While his motives were unclear, Muslims viewed the arson attack as a challenge to their control. On Easter Sunday 1982, Allan Goodman, "a follower of the extremist Kach group," opened fire in the Dome of the Rock in an attempt to "liberate" the Temple Mount from Muslim control. Two were killed in the shooting, which was followed by riots "in and around Jerusalem in which at least 184 people were injured."[29]

In 1983, more than forty Jews were arrested in Jerusalem for planning to take over the Temple Mount. Four of the group were armed young men "caught trying to break through an underground passage" onto the Haram al-Sharif. The next year, Israeli security forces thwarted another attempted assault on the Mount. They found a stash of grenades and explosives smuggled onto the Mount and more arms, including mines, rockets, and high explosives, stashed outside of the city. A Christian group from the United States paid the legal fees for the first group, and it is suspected that financial backing for the second group also came from American Christians. One of the investigating officials explained the motive for the planned attacks as wanting "to obliterate the Muslim presence on the Mount so that the Messiah would arrive" for either the first or second time.[30]

In 1984 members of the Jerusalem Temple Foundation (also supported by American Christians) planned another attack on the Haram al-Sharif so that, in the words of its leader, they could "help fulfill prophecy and thus hasten the coming of the Messiah." One of the members of the group, an Israeli reserve pilot, had even talked of bombing the Muslim mosques on the Mount so that war would break out with the Islamic world and then the Messiah would bring deliverance.[31]

Knowing of these previous incursions, Muslims strongly protested the 1998 expansion of an archeological tunnel extending from the Western Wall to the Via Dolorosa in a line parallel and adjacent to the Temple Mount. The tunnel, a water passage which filled temple era cisterns, exposes Herodian era ruins and runs under the Muslim quarter and many Muslim monuments. Muslim opposition to the tunnel is based on fear that

the tunnel could be used for future attacks on the Mount and on concern for the structural damage it has caused to historical buildings above.[32]

Among Jews there are varying degrees of interest in the Mount. Many see the Western Wall as close enough and holy enough for now and are content to wait for the temple. Others, however, want to hasten the day by removing the mosques (fig. 8). Most Jews choose not to ascend onto the Mount for fear of violating the sacred space where the Holy of Holies would have been located—a location much debated but never determined. Still others are anxious to begin praying on the Mount even without the temple. In 1994, members of the Temple Mount Yeshiva, who advocate rebuilding the temple, entered the Haram al-Sharif and started to bend and sway as if praying. This angered waqf officials, who had police remove the Yeshiva students.[33] In 1997 a Jerusalem Magistrate Court judge ruled that Jews could pray on the Mount after the leader of Hai Vekayam was arrested for attempting to pray there. This prompted the Chief Rabbinical Council to reaffirm its position which forbids Jews from entering the Temple Mount—

a position which is at odds with the Committee of Rabbis from Judea and Samaria.[34] Former waqf leader Adnan Husseini repeatedly stressed that Islam will never allow Jews to pray on the Mount. They can enter the Mount as visitors but cannot pray.[35]

Preparations for the building of the Temple have included yearly ceremonies in which "'cornerstone[s] for the Third Temple'" are laid outside the Old City walls of Jerusalem;[36] rallies by members of the Movement for the Establishment of the Temple with members calling for "'No Dome of the Rock and mosques, but an Israeli flag and the Temple,'"[37] and pamphlets being thrown onto the Haram al-Sharif by members of the Kach group, calling for the removal of the mosques to Syria or Iran and the building of the Third Temple.[38]

FIG. 8. One version of the temple some Jews wish to construct on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount after removing the Muslim mosques located there. The model is displayed in a museum at the Temple Mount Yeshiva in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.

In the meantime, Muslims have moved ahead with their own plans for the Haram al-Sharif. In order to accommodate more Muslims for prayers, the vaulted area underneath the southeast corner of the Haram al-Sharif, once known as Solomon's Stables, has now been turned into the Marwani Mosque. In order to make the area more accessible and safer, the waqf administration recently knocked out a new entrance. Jews protested that this change to the Temple Mount was a violation of the status quo for holy places while Muslims believe they have the right to make changes that will safely accommodate the growing numbers of Muslims who gather for prayers.

Afterword: Prayer for Peace

And so it continues, three religions and two peoples continuously at odds over control of one city. Both peoples and all three religions have compelling claims to the city. In a spirit of justice and equality and in recognition of Jerusalem's sanctity to Muslims, Christians, and Jews, I see no other way for the city to ever know peace than through sharing.[39] No one group is entitled to exclusive control. Jerusalem must be shared. It can be shared as an international city with equal authority granted to all three of its religions as envisioned in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, or it can be shared as an undivided, shared capital of the states of Israel and Palestine.[40] As Muslims, Jews, and Christians learn to equitably share their beloved Jerusalem, it will no longer be a "burdensome stone" (Zech. 12:3) in which conflicts abound.

We are commanded to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6). We should work and pray for that peace now. We should, in the words of Howard W. Hunter, "not take sides" but instead recognize that both "Jews and the Arabs [Muslim and Christian] are children of our Father" and "children of promise" and that "the purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring about love, unity, and brotherhood of the highest order."[41] We can promote that high order by recognizing the sanctity of Jerusalem to all of Abraham's children and encouraging them to share the sacred city peacefully.

Chad F. Emmett (chad_emmett@byu.edu) is Associate Professor of Geography at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. in Secondary Education/History from Utah State University, an M.A. in International Relations from Brigham Young University, and a Ph.D in Geography from the University of Chicago.

1. Alessandra Stanley, "At Meeting of 3 Faiths, Disharmony in 3 Parts," *New York Times*, March 24, 2000, A6.

2. Teddy Kollek, "Jerusalem," *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 4 (1977): 701–16.

3. Walid Khalidi, "Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State," *Foreign Affairs* 56, no. 4 (1978): 705.

4. Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 53.

5. Adnan Abu Odeh, "Two Capitals in an Undivided Jerusalem," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 2 (1992): 183–88.

6. Teddy Kollek, "Whose Jerusalem?" *New Outlook* 33, no. 1–2, (1990): 18–21.

7. Christian Palestinians also view Jerusalem and environs as holy and have been very involved in the Palestinian nationalist movement. See Chad F. Emmett, "Nationalism among Christian Palestinians," *Arab World Geographer* 2, no. 3 (1999): 202–19.

8. F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 179.

9. From the eighth century on, Jerusalem has been the traditional site of the farthest mosque; however, some early Islamic scholars suggested that if Muhammad's ascension into the heavens was part of his Night Journey then the farthest mosque, or distant shrine, was heaven and not Jerusalem. Peters, *Jerusalem*, 183.

10. Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 224; Ziad Abu-Amr, "The Significance of Jerusalem: A Muslim Perspective," *Palestine-Israeli Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 2, no. 2 (1995): 23–31.

11. Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, 224.

12. Abdul Aziz Duri, "Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period: Seventh–Eleventh Centuries A.D.," in *Jerusalem in History: 3000 B.C. to the Present Day*, ed. Kamil J. Asali (London: Kegan Paul International, 1989), 116.

13. Duri, "Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period," 105–25.

14. Walid Khalidi, *Islam, the West, and Jerusalem* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1996), 6–7.

15. A. Fattal, *Le Statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1958), 45–46, as quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 185.

16. Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, 228–29.

17. G. Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), 89–113, as quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 195.

18. S. D. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1966), 135–40.

19. Al-Muqaddasi, *Description of Syria, including Palestine*, translated and annotated by G. Le Strange, Palestine Pilgrims Text Society 3 (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 22–23, as quoted in Peters, *Jerusalem*, 198.

20. In 1996, Israel celebrated the three-thousandth anniversary of David's establishment of the city as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel.

21. Sari Nusseibeh, quoted in Maher Abukhater, "Jerusalem Can Remain United but Should Be Shared," *Al-Fajr*, March 12, 1990, 5.

22. Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, 231.

23. Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, 233.

24. For example, of the seventy-three square kilometers that make up East Jerusalem, 34 percent has been expropriated from Palestinians for the use of Jewish settlers (population now at 170,000) and an additional 44 percent has been declared "unzoned" for Palestinian construction. Walid Khalidi, *Islam, the West, and Jerusalem*, 13. The Palestinian village of Isawiya (on the northeast side of Mount Scopus), with a pre-1967 size of 10,000 dunams, has been gradually whittled down by the Israeli authorities to just 660 dunams. Graham Usher, "Returning to the Source: The Politics of Housing in East Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, no. 1 (1998): 19–22. Between 1967 and 1987, 540 Arab homes in Jerusalem were demolished by Israeli authorities, and since the Olso agreement in 1993, over a hundred homes have been destroyed. Rashid

BYU Studies

Khalidi, "Transforming the Face of the Holy City: Political Messages in the Built Topography of Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, pt. 2, no. 4 (1999): http://www.jqf-jerusalem.org/journal/1999/jqf4/khalidi.html.

25. Michael Dumper, *Islam and Israel: Muslim Religious Endowments and the Jewish State* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Palestine Studies, 1994), 1–11.

26. *Memorandum on the Israeli Violation of the Religious Status Quo at the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1968).

27. As a Brigham Young University student in Jerusalem in 1982, I experienced firsthand this prohibition on religious activity. During a field trip to the Mount, our religion professor had us gather in the shade of the Dome of the Rock to read a few New Testament scriptures about the temple. Before long, waqf officials broke up the gathering, scriptures went back into our backpacks, and our instructor apologized for not knowing the rules. These rules against non-Muslim prayer and study evolved out of experiences at the Western Wall and the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, where allowing Jews to pray gradually led to their bringing in tables, benches, and religious fixtures, which were then utilized to strengthen Jewish claims.

28. Roger Friedland and Richard D. Hecht, "The Politics of Sacred Place: Jerusalem's Temple Mount/*al-haram al-sharif*," in *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jamie Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 21–61.

29. Bernard Wasserstein, "Trouble on the Temple Mount," *Midstream: A Monthly Jewish Review* 28, no. 7 (1982): 5–9.

30. Barbara Ledeen and Michael Ledeen, "The Temple Mount Plot," *The New Republic*, June 18, 1984, 20–23.

31. Ledeen and Ledeen, "Temple Mount Plot," 20–23.

32. Ilene R. Prusher, "A Trip into Jerusalem's Tunnel of Trouble," *The Christian Science Monitor* October 1, 1996, 1, 5.

33. Lisa Pevtzow, "Apocalypse Now," *Jerusalem Post*, International Edition, March 5, 1994, 10–11.

34. Haim Shapiro, "Etzion Held Again for Mount Prayer Bid," *Jerusalem Post*, International Edition, August 6, 1997.

35. Adnan Husseini, interview by author, August 4, 1997, Jerusalem.

36. Shawn L. Twing, comp., "Temple Mount Faithful Lay Cornerstone for Third Temple," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (January/February 1998): 40.

37. Jake Abrams, "Wanted: The Third Temple," *The Jerusalem Report*, October 12, 1998, 14.

38. Nina Pinto, "Waqf Closes Temple Mount after Kach Provocation," *Ha'aretz*, July 23, 1999.

39. The idea of sharing territory to avoid conflict goes back to Abraham. When there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of his nephew Lot, Abraham said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Gen. 13:8–9).

40. See Chad F. Emmett, "The Status Quo Solution for Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 2 (1997): 16–28.

41. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional and Fireside Addresses* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980): 32–36.

Photographs of Jerusalem, 1903

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas R. Wells

In 1903, just before the dramatic changes of the last century engulfed Palestine, Salt Lake City photographer Charles Ellis Johnson (1857–1926) found himself in Jerusalem. While not the first Latter-day Saint to visit the Old City of Jerusalem, Johnson was the earliest Mormon professional photographer to capture views of the city and its inhabitants and thus freeze a unique, peaceful moment in time.[1]

Because of religious prohibitions against making graven images, there were few Jewish or Muslim photographers in the country when Johnson visited the region. He was therefore among a select group of Europeans and North Americans to have preserved on paper and glass the people and places in the Holy Land before the Ottoman Empire lost its hold on Jerusalem in 1917.[2]

Johnson's vast glass-plate negative collection documents the street life of Jerusalem, including poor people, shopkeepers, religious pilgrims, and a host of other people who lived and worked in the Holy City. Additionally, Johnson captures in a series of stunning photographs the impressive Ottoman Turkish walls and gates that define the Old City of Jerusalem even today.

Historical Context of the Photographs

Johnson began his photographic career in Salt Lake City in time to document the completion of the Salt Lake Temple in the early 1890s. For the next twenty-five years, he was one of the most productive Mormon photographers in Utah.[3] In 1897 a mysterious woman from Palestine burst on the scene in Salt Lake City, delivering a series of spellbinding lectures on Palestine and the life of Christ. Madame Lydia Mary Olive Von Finkelstein Mamreov Mountford captured even the attention of Church President Wilford Woodruff: "I took . . . my family to the Theater to listen to Another Lecture of Mrs Lydia Mumford on Jerrusalem [sic]. Her lectures are the Most interesting of Any I Attended on the Holy Land and upon all that was spoken by the savior."[4]

In that same year, Mountford and Johnson met, beginning an association that lasted until her death in 1917. She returned to Utah in 1903 to enlist Johnson's help in preparing a photographic exhibit on the Holy Land for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. With contract in hand, Johnson traveled to Palestine with his patron, producing some two thousand images of

FIG. 1. Detail from a stereo view taken in 1903 from the Wadi Joz (Kidron Valley) east of the Old City of Jerusalem. This detail highlights the eastern retaining wall of the Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) and the Golden Gate. The Golden Gate is composed of two separate and distinct gates, visible here as two arches—Bab al-Tawba (Gate of Repentance) and Bab al-Rahma (Gate of Mercy)—and has been bricked up for nearly half a millennium. The gate remains sealed today and has acquired a profound Messianic significance even among some Muslims, who hold that Jesus will reenter the city by this gate at the beginning of the Day of Judgment. The olive groves below the gate on the western valley have been overtaken in the past century by the expansion of Muslim cemeteries. Courtesy Charles Ellis Johnson Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; hereafter cited as Johnson Collection.

Jerusalem and its environs in a "variety of formats including roll-film Kodaks and 6½-by-8½-inch field cameras, which were portable enough and fast enough to shoot hand-held without a tripod."[5] The glass-plate negative collection consists of plates measuring 7" x 5" (see figs. 1, 2) and 8½" x 6½" (see figs. 3, 4).

Some of the most impressive views in Johnson's vast collection are of the Old City's walls and gates. Left in ruins since 1219, the walls and gates were reconstructed between 1536 and 1540 by Sultan Suleiman bin Selim the Lawgiver (1494–1566). These Ottoman Turkish walls and gates were constructed on the medieval foundations, themselves erected on the ruins of walls dating from the Roman period. Archaeologists have discovered that the Ottoman Turkish builders made "use of whatever building materials came to hand—from the hewn stone of Herod's day to the ordinary rocks and stones used in earlier periods."[6] Additionally, Suleiman rebuilt the ancient gates and apparently resealed the famous "Golden Gate" at this time (see figs. 1, 2). One historian notes, "Architecturally, the restoration of the walls [and gates] of Jerusalem by Suleiman the Magnificent is considered a major feat, since there are not many places where the Turks built fortifications of this kind and took pains to embellish them with all manner of adornments."[7]

Most of the walls stand between thirty-nine and forty-six feet high and are more than five thousand yards long, with eight gates. When Johnson arrived in Jerusalem in 1903, the walls and gates remained much as they had been for nearly four centuries. While today a tourist sees the same gates and walls, the whole context of Jerusalem has dramatically shifted amidst the complexities of modernity and the upheavals that have washed across the region like a political and social deluge.

Perhaps more important than the architecture of 1903 Jerusalem are its people, and Johnson demonstrates his artistic skill as well as any other photographer of his day by recording hundreds of images of daily life in Jerusalem at the turn of the century (see figs. 5–9). His timing in this regard was also crucial: he photographed the faces of Jerusalem at a time when its demographics were undergoing dramatic change. Although Jerusalem had remained almost entirely Muslim for centuries, fifty years before Johnson arrived the Jewish presence began to increase dramatically. In 1903 the majority were Muslims, but there was a significant presence of Christians and a much smaller group of European and Sephardic Jews in the region. At a time when the population of all of Palestine was about five hundred thousand, Jerusalem had grown from a little more than fifteen thousand in 1844 to nearly seventy-four thousand just a few years after Johnson walked the streets of the Old City.[8]

FIG. 2. Detail from a stereo view taken in 1903, looking south from a Muslim cemetery northeast of the Old City. Stereo views were formed of two slightly different images placed side by side. Johnson's stereo camera had two lenses side by side so that the two exposures were made simultaneously. When seen through a stereoscope, a stereo view provides a sense of three dimensions, similar to the way our two eyes give us depth perception.

This detail highlights the Golden Gate (double gate to the left), the Dome of the Rock (the large domed building in the center), and a major section of the eastern wall of the Haram al-Sharif. The smaller dome of the al-Aqsa Mosque can be seen between the Golden Gate and the Dome of the Rock. The al-Aqsa Mosque has been the major regional mosque in Palestine for thirteen hundred years. It and the Dome of the Rock are part of the Haram al-Sharif, which is considered the third most holy site in Islam. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

Written sources substantiate Johnson's view of the daily life of the local people at the turn of the century. While certainly, as with all photographers, Johnson selected his subjects carefully and therefore in a sense edited his experiences in the Holy Land, he nevertheless provided enough images to reveal the texture of life there in 1903. As Johnson's photographs show, the vast majority of people living in Palestine at the time were poor. In the towns and cities, open sewers ran through unpaved, garbage-strewn streets. In the villages, women still drew water from wells as they had in biblical times. Bread was baked at home in outdoor ovens from flour milled by hand. The gates of the walled cities, including Jerusalem, were locked from sundown to sunrise for protection.

While Palestine had been a remote and almost forgotten region of the Ottoman Empire during most of the nineteenth century, it stood on the verge of modernization. A rail line had been completed from the port city of Jaffa on the Mediterranean to Jerusalem just a few years earlier in 1892, providing a much-needed stimulus to the local economy. It was during this crucial transitional period in Jerusalem's history that Johnson documented the daily life of the people and the places of Old Jerusalem.
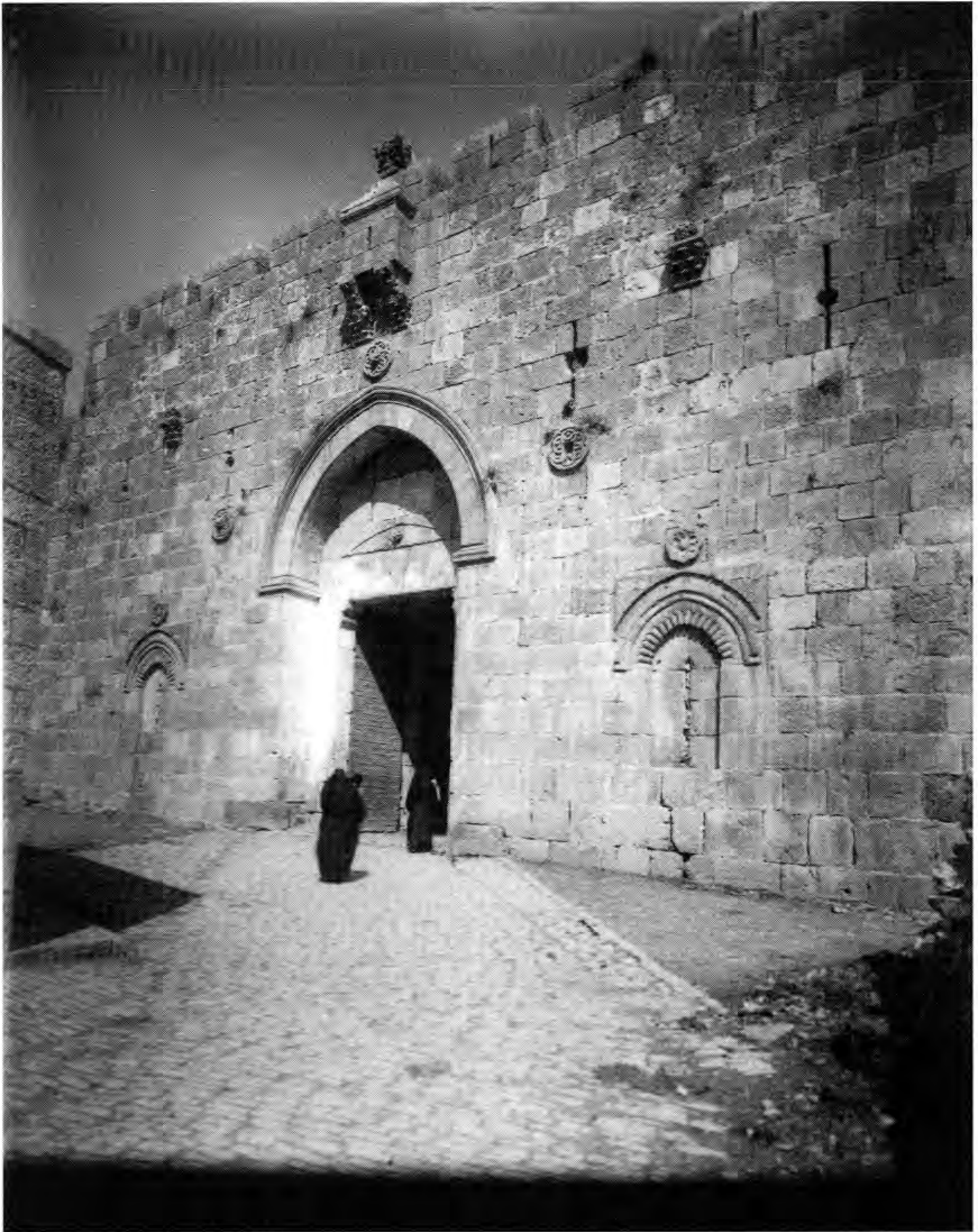
FIG. 3. A view taken in 1903 of Bab al-Nabi Daoud (Gate of the Prophet David), commonly called Bab Daoud (David's Gate) but also known to many tourists today as Zion Gate. Like the Jaffa Gate and the Lion Gate, this gate has an L-shaped corridor just inside the gate, formed by a brick wall that runs parallel to the main wall and opens to the south. This design forced invaders to make ninety-degree turns, which slowed them as they went through the gate. The L-shaped walls around the gate also prevented invaders from using battering rams because they could not get a ram past the inner wall. Defenders were in position to shoot arrows through slits in the gate. For those who have visited Jerusalem recently, this photograph preserves a view of the gate before modern armed conflict left it riddled with marks of shells dating from 1948. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

Provenance of the Photographs

Johnson left Utah for San Jose, California, in 1917 and took with him his important negative collection, including his views of Palestine. Following his death on February 21, 1926, his nephew William J. Fox transferred the bulk of Johnson's glass-plate collection to his home in southern California. There they survived the ravages of time, several moves, and at least one fire. Following Fox's death, his brother, David Fox, obtained the collection and in 1975 donated it to Brigham Young University for permanent preservation. Here they remain, basically unknown.[9]

Conclusion

While the organizers of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair eventually reneged on the contract and Charles Ellis Johnson's works were never published, Johnson preserved a slice of time when the Ottomans still ruled Jerusalem (1517–1917), a time when the Eternal City was a peaceful dwelling place for Muslims, Christians, and Jews. These photographs provide a unique perspective of the city just prior to its witnessing monumental changes in the political and social landscape of the region. Johnson seems to have intuitively known what Thomas G. Appleton noted some thirty years earlier: "As historic landscape, Palestine is full of those suggestive sites, those eloquent battlefields and homes of kings and prophets, which do not need the help of mere beauty to give them interest."[10]

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (holzapfel@byu.edu) is the Photographic Editor of *BYU Studies* and Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. Thomas R. Wells (tom_wells@byu.edu) is Associate Photographic Editor of *BYU Studies* and Photoarchivist of the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

1. A number of Church members, leaders, and missionaries, including Orson Hyde (1841), George A. Smith, and Eliza R. Snow (1873), visited Palestine before Johnson arrived in 1903. See David B. Galbraith, D. Kelly Ogden, and Andrew C. Skinner, *Jerusalem, the Eternal City* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 332–47.

2. See Yeshayahu Nir, *The Bible and the Image: The History of Photography in the Holy Land, 1839–1899* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

3. See Nelson B. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Mormons, the West, and Their Photographers* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1–11.

4. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript,* ed. Scott G. Kenney, 7 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1985), 446, February 8, 1897.

5. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone,* 305.

6. Dan Bahat, *Carta's Historical Atlas of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1986), 64.

7. Bahat, *Carta's Historical Atlas,* 66.

8. See Nachum Tim Gidal, *Jerusalem: In 3000 Years* (Köln, Germany: Könemann, 1995), 42.

9. Wadsworth provided a small sampling of Johnson's Holy Land work in *Set in Stone*, 270–317. Later, the *BYU Studies* staff provided two examples from the collection in "The Holy Land: A Premodern Photo Tour," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 4 (1997–98): 85–86.

10. Thomas G. Appleton, *Syrian Sunshine* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1877), 165–66.

FIG. 4. A view taken in 1903 southwest of the Old City looking north. This view highlights a section of the Western Wall, including the Jaffa Gate and the "Citadel" with its mosque's minaret towering over the wall. This minaret is one of the best-known symbols of the city. Johnson wrote on the original glass-plate negative, "First View of Jerusalem," probably an indication that this was the first photograph he took of the Old City. The Jaffa Gate was built in 1538 and faces onto the road to Hebron. The Arabs, therefore, call it Bab al-Khalil, "Gate of the Friend" (referring to Abraham, friend of God, who was buried in Hebron). It received its popular name, Jaffa Gate, during the nineteenth century because it opens onto the road to the coastal city of Jaffa. The road pictured here is still used today for travel southward toward Bethlehem. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

(Photographs continue on following pages.)

FIG. 5. Portrait of an elderly gentleman and a young boy taken in 1903. The damage seen on the edges is a result of improper storage of the original glass-plate negative before Brigham Young University acquired the collection. Exposure to water caused the emulsion of the glass-plate negative to flake. Nevertheless, this highly artistic photograph shows Johnson at his best in making timeless portraits. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

FIG. 6. Detail from a stereo view taken in 1903. Here Johnson captures a slice of life showing a young Arab boy having his hair cut by a man (possibly his father) while another young boy watches. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

FIG. 7. Street scene taken in 1903 highlighting the religious, cultural, and economic environment of Jerusalem at the turn of the century. Note in particular the women seated on the ground selling wood from their baskets. At that time, wood was still used in Jerusalem for cooking and heating. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

FIG. 8. Detail from a stereo view taken in 1903. Somewhere in the Old City Johnson captures a fez maker standing in front of his shop. Details in this image show a variety of elements of the typical life of a shopkeeper and those who sold their goods along the byways of the Old City. The fez maker has his hands on one of the metal molds used to form a fez. Courtesy Johnson Collection. A fez is a cone-shaped, red hat (the fez maker himself has one on) commonly worn by men in the Ottoman Empire before 1923.
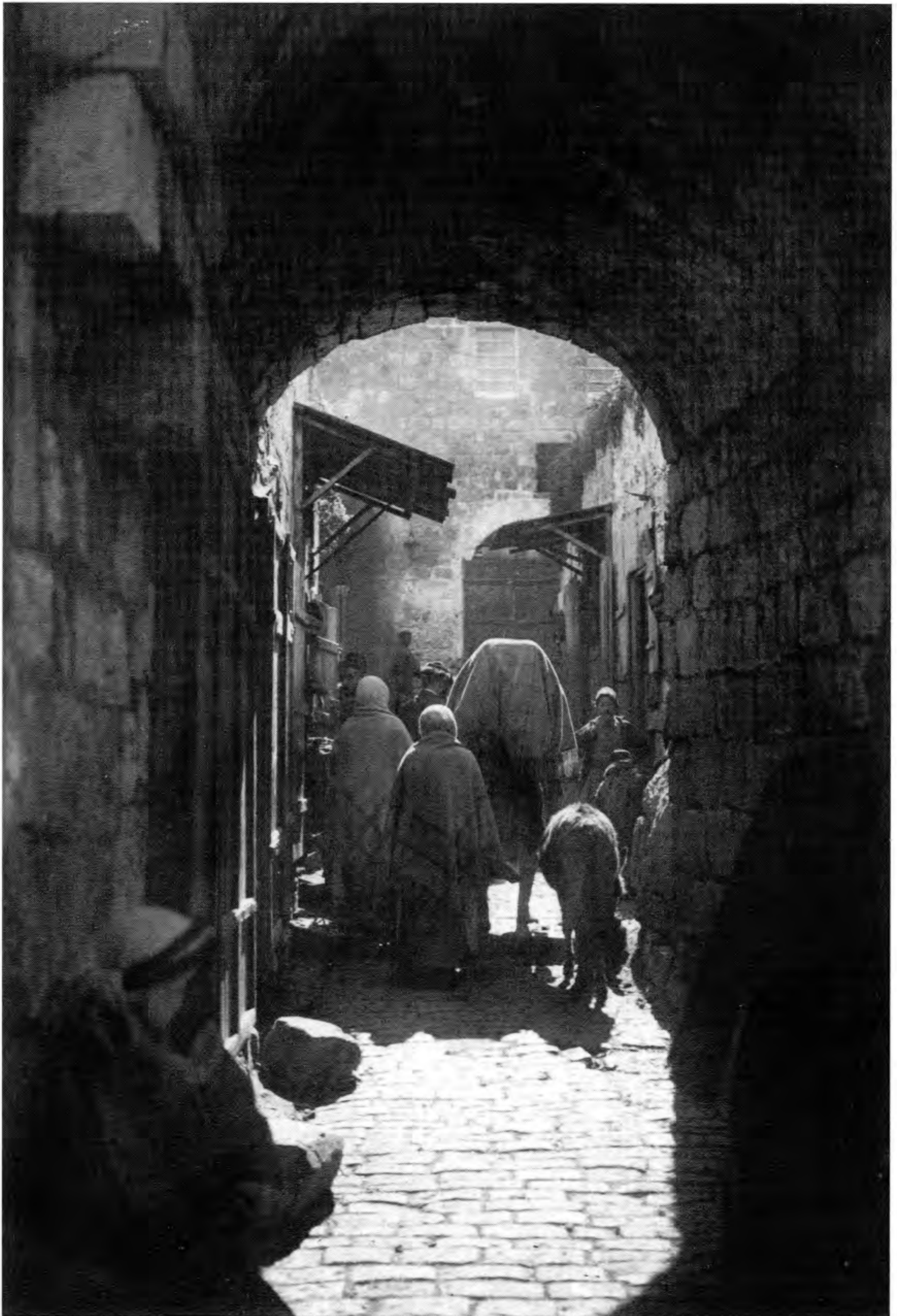
FIG. 9. Stereo view of street life in the Old City taken in 1903. This composition, created by the play of light and shadow and by using the archway as a frame, shows Johnson's skill not just as a photographic technician and photo journalist but also as a photographic artist. Courtesy Johnson Collection.

Tradition amid Social Upheaval
The Palestinian Muslim Family

Bruce A. Chadwick, Camille Fronk, Ray Huntington,
Tim B. Heaton, and Brian K. Barber

In 1994 and 1995, a research team from Brigham Young University conducted a survey of residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Motivated in part by our strong interest as Latter-day Saints in understanding and strengthening family life, we wished to study several aspects of the Palestinian family including prominence of marriage, family size, gender roles, education of women, marriage between relatives, and location of residence after marriage. By comparing our data with that of earlier surveys, we can ascertain changes occurring in the Muslim world.

Generalization from a single study of the Arab-Muslim family is difficult, given the differences among urban, village, and rural residents in the Arab world. Sufficient similarities exist, however, within Arab Islamic countries to make possible some degree of generalization from Palestinian families to Muslim families in general.[1] We surveyed several thousand Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 99 percent of whom identified themselves as Muslim. Results from our study provide contemporary images of Muslim families in much of the Middle East.

A Brief Historical Overview

In 1967, Israel's military forces clashed with the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in what is referred to by some as the Six Day War. At the conclusion of fighting, Israel occupied all land on the west side of the Jordan River, previously controlled by the country of Jordan. This area, including all of eastern Jerusalem, became known as the West Bank. In addition to the West Bank, Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, previously controlled by Egypt. With the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel assumed military governance of several million Palestinians whose families had been living on these lands for hundreds of years. After two decades of Israeli occupation of historic Palestine, Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip began a grass-roots protest movement referred to as the *intifada*. Loosely translated, the Arabic word *intifada* means to "shudder" or "shrug off" and refers to Palestinian efforts to force Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During the intifada years of 1987 to 1994, Palestinians participated in public marches, demonstrations, strikes, and violent confrontations with Israeli soldiers. Even women, whose domain had only been the privacy of their homes, were publicly involved in these activities. As a result of these events and of such Westernizing influences as modernization, the Palestinian family has been exposed to powerful forces of social change. Thus one of the purposes for our study was to describe the contemporary Palestinian family and assess whether, as a result of these social forces, Palestinians have departed from traditional family life as prescribed by Islamic teachings.

Islam and the Family

For Muslim Palestinians, family and religion are intertwined. As Strum notes, "If the Koran is the soul of Islam, then perhaps the institution of the Muslim family might be described as its body."[2] Likewise, sociologist John Williams points out that religion in the Arab world "is not part of the social structure, it *is* the structure."[3] The teachings of Islam permeate Palestinian family life. Indeed, patriarchy; kinship ties; cultural standards for inheritance laws, marriage, and divorce; and gender roles are perceived as manifestations of Allah's will.[4]

Roles of husbands and wives are defined through dogmas and teachings in the Qur'an; the hadith, or sayings, of Muhammad; and Islamic jurisprudence. For example, the Qur'an states the following: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given [men] more (strength) than [women]. . . . Righteous women are devoutly obedient" (4:34). "[Women are to] stay quietly in [their] houses" (33:33). "[Women] should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons" (24:31).

Islamic teachings influence not only family functioning but also the legal and social status of women. As Molyneux explains:

> The impact of religious orthodoxy on the juridical realm, in particular on the Family Laws . . . is a factor of the utmost significance: it is precisely within these religious codes that the position of women is defined as legally and socially subordinate to that of men. The religious influence and derivation of the codes has allowed the subordinate status of women to be legitimized in terms of divine inspiration and doctrinal orthodoxy.[5]

Islam's influence in Palestinian society, including the family, has been strengthened during the past two decades by a revival of Islamic fundamentalist groups. These organizations, such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Muslim Brotherhood Society, have heightened the impact of Islamic thought within the Palestinian family. For example, supporters of these groups have encouraged women to cover their heads with the traditional

---

Women and Worship

Women without husbands or young children sleep together in a separate section of the home. When I stayed in Gaza, I slept in that part of the house where the aged, widowed mother and a single sister resided. The men of the family had already indicated that they did not follow Muslim worship practices very often. I was surprised then to hear the single sister arise from her bed with the Muslim call to prayer in the early morning hour. She quietly washed, dressed entirely in white, and performed all the positions of prayer in concert with the official call. Her worship was conducted in the privacy of her bedroom, without any thought that I might be awake and observing. Afterward she told me that she does prayers that same way every morning, despite the fact that she must be at the hospital by 6:00 A.M. She explained that men generally pray in groups at the mosque whereas women pray alone in the solitude of their homes.

—Camille Fronk

---

hijab while in public, discouraged women from working outside the home, and criticized wedding ceremonies that were not conducted according to Islamic law.

This paper has three objectives. The first is to describe the formation and functioning of the contemporary Palestinian family. The second objective is to examine the role of women, especially wives, in Palestinian families, given the influence of modernization and the impact of the intifada. The third objective is to examine the attitudes of Palestinian adolescents toward female autonomy, as those attitudes suggest what role women might fulfill in the future.

Sources of Information

We obtained data from a self-report survey of 7,000 Palestinian families living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during 1994 and 1995. Two questionnaires, one for students and one for parents, were developed in English and then translated into Arabic by a Palestinian translation and printing business in the West Bank. Several bilingual Palestinians reviewed the Arabic versions and recommended minor changes. Finally, the revised surveys were pilot tested with a sample of Palestinian youths and adults living in East Jerusalem.

In November 1994, the research team visited all sixty-four of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) secondary schools in

the West Bank and trained the head teachers (principals) to administer the survey. Students in the ninth grade, the highest grade offered in UNRWA schools, were asked to complete the questionnaire in class and then to take one home for each of their parents. Students returned their parents' questionnaires the following day. The same procedure was replicated in Gaza, where a sampling of schools was done in spring 1995. There both UNRWA and Palestinian Ministry of Education schools in Gaza were surveyed. Unfortunately, we were unable to access nonrefugee students living in the West Bank.

Five types of Palestinian communities are represented in our sample: West Bank cities, West Bank villages, West Bank refugee camps, Gaza cities, and Gaza refugee camps. Parents in the study ranged in age from 27 years to their early 60s; fathers averaged 47 years of age, and mothers, 48.

Completed surveys were returned by 92 to 97 percent of the enrolled students (n=6,923), by 85 to 94 percent of the fathers (n= 6,253), and by 84 to 90 percent of their mothers (n=6,024). These high response rates were obtained without any follow-up or offer of incentives. Both students and parents seemed excited by the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences.

The Contemporary Palestinian Family

Of the many facets of the contemporary Palestinian family that can be studied, we hypothesized eight could be significant indicators of whether social change had occurred in the family. They are marriage rates, age at marriage, age difference between spouses, rate of marriage between relatives, location of residence after marriage, family size, marital satisfaction rates, and women's roles.

Prominence of Marriage. Since family is a dominant institution in Muslim Palestinian society, marriage is almost universal.[6] Jordanian Personal Status Law, a remnant of the Jordanian occupation era (1948–67), regulates marriage and family practices in the West Bank and Gaza.[7] This law is based on Islamic beliefs, operates within the religious sphere, and is administered by local Islamic leaders. Israel has made no effort during the past thirty years of occupation to substitute Israel's marriage laws for Jordanian law. In fact, none of the emerging political powers in contemporary Palestine, such as the Palestinian National Authority, has suggested an alteration of the Jordanian laws governing the Palestinian family.

Over 98 percent of fathers in the sample were currently married as were 95 percent of the mothers. Our sample is obviously biased toward married couples as only parents of ninth-grade students were selected. Most of the nonmarried respondents were widows or widowers. Less than one percent of the mothers and fathers were separated or divorced. One

explanation for low divorce statistics is the Muslims' obedience to a teaching attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that divorce is "the most hateful to God of all permitted things."[8] The exceptionally low number of divorces underscores the family's importance in Palestinian society.

Age at Marriage. Traditionally, Palestinian couples sign a marriage contract in a ceremony viewed as legally binding. Even though they are considered married upon signing the contract, Palestinian couples do not necessarily begin living together as husband and wife immediately after the contract signing. Palestinian women are generally married at a fairly early age to protect their sexual purity. Notwithstanding tradition, Jordanian Personal Status Law requires women to be at least 18 years to marry and men to be 19 years of age.

Judith E. Tucker studied Islamic court records in Nablus, a prominent West Bank city, for the periods of 1722 to 1729 and 1798 to 1856. She found that about 18 percent of the recorded marriages involved a prepubescent girl. She concluded that women often married around the age of fourteen.[9] In contrast, in a 1960 study of Artas, a small village near Bethlehem, Prothro and Diab discovered that the average[10] age for marriage among women was 16.9 years of age and 24.4 years for men.[11] The average age at marriage in 1982 for a sample of the West Bank population, according to Ata, was close to 20 years for women and nearly 24 years for men.[12] These studies suggest that Palestinians, especially women, have gradually extended their childhood years.

Contrary to their law, over half the wives in our study signed a marriage contract before they were 18, with over one-fourth of these women signing before their sixteenth birthday (see table 1). During interviews with Palestinians, the authors were told that marriage laws are often ignored by officials or circumvented by families. For example, young brides claim to be older or invite an older sister to represent them in the signing ceremony.

The average age at which wives in all three groups in our sample signed their marriage contract clustered around 19 years of age, with about one percent marrying after age 28. The men averaged a little over 23 years, with nearly 5 percent being over 30 when they contracted marriage.

We also examined when couples began living together as husband and wife and found that nearly 90 percent started living together the same year they signed the contract. Most commenced living together immediately after the signing or shortly thereafter. Seven percent waited at least a year, and another 4 percent delayed living together for more than two years. It appears from our data that little time expired between signing the marriage contract and living together as a married couple among this sample of Palestinian families, suggesting that the tradition of waiting several months may be eroding; increased unemployment rates made it difficult for men to wait and save for an apartment, a large dowry, or other traditional goals.

TABLE 1

Age When Marriage Contract Was Signed

Age	West Bank		Gaza Refugee		Gaza Nonrefugee	
	Men (N=2842)	Women (N=2732)	Men (N=1875)	Women (N=1846)	Men (N=1294)	Women (N=1341)
12–15	0	33%	0	25%	0	26%
16–18	13%	28	13%	28	12%	28
19–20	21	19	22	24	20	23
21–22	17	8	17	9	15	9
23–24	15	4	16	6	15	7
25–26	17	5	16	5	19	5
27–28	9	11	7	2	8	1
29–30	4	0	5	1	8	1
31–50	5	0	4	1	4	0
Average Age	23.3	19.0	23.2	19.2	23.4	19.5

Question: How old were you when you first entered the marriage contract?

TABLE 2

Difference in Husbands' and Wives' Ages

Age Difference	West Bank (N=2680)	Gaza Refugee (N=1819)	Gaza Nonrefugee (N=1265)
Wife Older	8.6%	10.4%	8.8%
Both Same Age	9.4	13.3	11.4
Husband Older			
1 year	7.1	8.5	7.0
2 years	9.0	10.4	9.8
3 years	7.8	8.9	7.9
4 years	10.3	9.0	8.5
5 years	8.9	8.5	9.8
6 years	7.6	6.1	6.6
7 years	5.6	5.4	6.3
8 years	5.4	4.4	4.7
9 years	5.1	2.5	4.1
10 years	4.9	4.2	4.7
>10 years	10.7	8.4	10.5
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average Difference (years)	4.3	4.1	4.1

Question: How old are you?

Age Difference between Husbands and Wives. Traditionally, Palestinian husbands have been considerably older than their wives. Prothro and Diab found in 1960 that husbands in Artas were, on average, nine years older than their wives.[13] Ata discovered a four-year age gap between the average marrying ages of men and women in the West Bank in the early 1980s.[14] Table 2 presents the age differences between husbands and wives in our sample.

In our sample, less than 10 percent of the wives were older than their husbands, while another 10 percent were the same age. Approximately 45 percent of the husbands were one to five years older than their wives. About 25 percent of the husbands were six to ten years older and approximately another 15 percent were more than ten years senior to their wives. Our findings agree with Ata's that husbands were overall about four years older than their wives.

Marriage between Relatives. Among Palestinians is a strong tradition of marriage between a man and his "father's brother's daughter"[15] (a form of endogamous, or "blood," marriage). This tradition includes a "cousin-right," which gives a man the right to demand marriage to his cousin. If he is unsure whether he wants to marry a particular cousin, he supposedly has the right to block her marriage to another until he makes up his mind.

Marriage between Cousins

During our study, I was invited into the home of a Palestinian man in order to interview him and several of his friends. During the course of the interview, the man's wife came into the room to serve us fresh juice and slices of fruit. As the woman served the food, I noticed a strong resemblance between her and her husband. After the woman left, I related this observation to my host. He seemed amused with my statement and then told me that it was natural that she resembled him, since they were first cousins. I knew that endogamous marriage (marriage within the close family clan) was not uncommon among Palestinians, but I had not as yet met anyone who had married his cousin. The Palestinian man told me that marriages between blood relatives were very positive and successful within their culture. "I have known and loved my cousin all of my life," he said. "Our parents arranged our marriage when we were younger, and I thank God they did, because I have been truly happy. What better choice for a wife than someone you have known since your birth."

—Ray Huntington

Blood marriage is justified on the presumption that cousins adjust to each other better than nonrelatives and thus have a stronger marriage. Also, cousin marriage retains farmland, flocks, commercial and residential property, and other resources within the patriarchal family. Support for this practice is evident in Ata's observation that a young man's family obtains a cousin bride for a significantly lower price than nonrelatives would have to pay.[16]

Although previous researchers observed that approximately 42 percent of married Palestinians espoused a relative,[17] we anticipated finding a decline in endogamous marriages in our study. On the contrary, we found that about half of the wives and husbands in our sample married a relative. A stronger evidence to refute a decline in endogamous marriages is that our respondents reported a higher percentage of blood marriage among themselves than they reported for their parents.

Residence Following Marriage. Palestinian families have traditionally been patrilocal, encouraging newly married couples to reside with, or adjacent to, the husband's parents. Prothro and Diab discovered that 48 percent of the wives in Artas in the 1960s lived their entire married life with their husband's family.[18] Five percent stated that they started married life with the husband's family and later established their own household. According to Adado-Zubi, favorable wage earning associated with modernization has allowed more newly married couples to establish their own household.[19] As shown in table 3, there is considerable support in our data for the tradition of living with the husband's family.

TABLE 3

Residence of Newly Married Couples

Residence	West Bank		Gaza Refugee		Gaza Nonrefugee	
	Men (N=2935)	Women (N=2854)	Men (N=1924)	Women (N=1827)	Men (N=1346)	Women (N=1346)
With, or very close to, groom's family	62%	42%	71%	43%	65%	42%
With, or very close to, bride's family	9	23	7	27	9	23
Other relatives	4	6	4	9	4	8
By selves	25	29	18	22	23	28
	100%	100%	100%	101%	101%	101%

Question: After your marriage, who did you live with?

Living with the Husband's Parents

While driving through a rural village in the West Bank, I noticed that many of the Palestinian homes were two and sometimes three stories high. Many one- and two-storied homes had rebar protruding from their roofs. Their appearance gave me the impression that they were still under construction. When I asked the Palestinian men accompanying me why many of the homes appeared to be unfinished, they responded with a question: "When you were married, where did you first live?" I told them that I lived in an apartment close to the university my wife and I were attending. "Did you live close to your parents?" they asked. I told them that when I married I moved out of my parents' home. "In Palestinian culture," they said, "when a man marries, his parents will often add a new floor onto the existing home for their son and his bride to live in."

With that explanation, I began to understand the Palestinian tradition of men continuing to live with their family when they marry, creating what is referred to as the *hamula,* or the extended family.

—Ray Huntington

According to husbands in our study, over 60 percent of the couples had established their first home with, or very near to, the husband's parents. Interestingly, fewer wives reported living with their husband's family. It may be that wives viewed their home as a separate residence even when it was in close proximity to their in-laws' home. An alternative explanation is that some wives may have defined their husband's family as their own family when they married. However the living arrangement was interpreted, approximately half of the couples initially lived with the groom's extended family. About 25 percent established a home independent of either family, settling in a different village, town, or city to secure employment. About 10 percent of the couples in our sample initially lived with the bride's family following marriage.

Family Size. Children, especially sons, are highly esteemed in Palestinian families.[20] Numerous children are seen as security during old age, ensuring care for elderly parents.[21] Also, many women believe that as they bear children, particularly sons, their prestige and power in the extended family increases. While Islam does not forbid contraception, birth control is rarely practiced. When we informally asked married men how many children they anticipated, they almost always answered, "As many as God gives me." The number of children reported by mothers is presented in

TABLE 4

Number of Children Reported by Wife

No. of Children	West Bank (N=2683)	Gaza Refugee (N=1758)	Gaza Nonrefugee (N=1322)
1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2	0.3	0.4	0.5
3	1.2	1.2	1.0
4	3.1	2.9	2.8
5	6.8	5.9	7.0
6	12.4	8.8	10.7
7	14.8	15.3	14.8
8	15.1	16.8	15.8
9	14.9	16.1	15.1
10	11.0	12.4	13.1
11	8.8	8.6	8.2
12	5.5	5.1	5.8
13	2.4	3.4	2.7
14	1.5	1.3	0.9
15	0.6	0.8	0.6
≥16	1.5	1.0	1.0
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Average	8.43	8.61	8.43

Question: How many living children do you have?

table 4. Since husbands' and wives' reports agreed as to numbers of children, we present only the wives' data.

Our data are biased in that childless couples were never surveyed. On the other hand, a bias in the opposite direction was introduced by our asking only about living children. Furthermore, many of the wives in our sample are still in childbearing years, suggesting the possibility of additional children. Fertility reported by these women is high: 20 percent indicated that they have ten or more living children. The average number of children per family is between eight and nine. This number is confirmed by the students' report of the number of siblings in their families.

We estimated the total fertility of a Palestinian wife by determining the number of children born to women in the sample who had completed their childbearing. Women over the age of forty-four reported having over nine living children. These findings are consistent with previous research and refute claims that fertility has declined among Palestinian couples. Our findings also show support for religion's influence on the family, since Islam encourages women to marry and bear children.

Marital Satisfaction. Ninety percent of both husbands and wives in our study were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their marriage. Less than 6 percent were "dissatisfied." The level of marital satisfaction reported by our sample is similar to what is reported in studies of Americans, who are likely to leave marriages if they are dissatisfied. The low level of dissatisfaction in Palestinian marriages is remarkable given the infrequency of divorce.

Palestinian couples do not often contemplate the degree of satisfaction or happiness in marriage. After viewing the very high levels of marital satisfaction reported in table 5, we asked a number of Palestinian husbands and wives how they felt about this type of question. Most felt marital happiness is irrelevant: honorably carrying out family responsibilities is the important issue.

TABLE 5

Marital Satisfaction of Palestinian Couples

	West Bank		Gaza Refugee		Gaza Nonrefugee	
	Men (N=2806)	Women (N=2669)	Men (N=1864)	Women (N=1815)	Men (N=1214)	Women (N=1255)
Marriage						
Very Satisfied	61%	58%	63%	60%	61%	59%
Satisfied	29	31	27	29	28	29
Mixed Feelings	4	4	4	5	4	5
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	2
Very Dissatisfied	5	5	4	4	5	5
	101%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Spouse						
Very Satisfied	60%	58%	63%	60%	60%	58%
Satisfied	30	31	29	30	30	31
Mixed Feelings	6	6	5	5	5	5
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	3
Very Dissatisfied	3	3	2	3	3	3
	100%	100%	101%	100%	100%	100%
Relationship with Spouse						
Very Satisfied	61%	58%	63%	61%	61%	59%
Satisfied	29	3	27	28	28	28
Mixed Feelings	5	6	5	5	7	6
Dissatisfied	2	2	2	2	2	3
Very Dissatisfied	4	4	2	3	3	4
	101%	101%	99%	99%	101%	100%

Questions: How satisfied are you with your marriage? Your husband/wife as a spouse? Your relationship with your husband/wife?

Palestinian Women's Family Roles

The second objective of this article is to examine the degree to which contemporary Palestinian women assume family roles consistent with those of the traditional Islamic family. In the world of Islam, the traditional family is characterized by a patrilineal and patriarchal extended household, called the *hamula*.[22] The leader of the hamula, normally the eldest man, is the primary decision maker in family issues, such as selecting marriage partners for the children.[23] The hamula residence is patrilocal, "with new member-wives and children . . . being added to the traditional Arab home."[24] The role of women within the hamula has been "defined by centuries of cultural patterns and social restrictions and justified by religious sanctions."[25] Within the hamula, the wife is considered to be under the care of her husband or her husband's father. Consequently, power and authority in the extended family typically rest with men, especially older men. Further, men are responsible to economically support the family and protect the honor of individual family members—most notably women.[26]

Women are expected to obey their husbands and perform domestic responsibilities, such as cooking family meals, cleaning the house, and caring for children. Expected to marry and rear children, these women are traditionally limited to the private domestic sphere of the home. Moreover, women experience considerable constraints on public participation, such as working outside of the home or attending a college or university after graduation from secondary school. In brief, there appear to be two worlds within Palestinian society: the world of women, where traditional roles within the home are emphasized, and the world of men, where tradition mandates the public roles of generating the family income and maintaining the family's honor and prestige within the community.

A Palestinian Woman's Duty

I spent a night with an extended Palestinian family in Gaza presided over by an unmarried man who had several younger brothers and sisters. His brothers' families each lived in a wing or floor of the multilevel family home, and his married sister lived close by in a separate dwelling. Since the eldest brother had no wife to cook for him, he required his unmarried sister (who had worked as a head nurse in Saudi Arabia) to return to Gaza to work at a nearby hospital and to cook meals for him. Even though her preference was to remain in an environment that allowed greater female autonomy, she did not hesitate in returning to Gaza. She felt her first duty was to her family.

—Camille Fronk

To ascertain changes in obligation for family roles, we collected information regarding who was primarily responsible to clean the house, care for children, discipline children, visit relatives and friends, and provide income for the family.

Housekeeping. Not surprisingly, the results of our survey found that 93 percent of married women were responsible for cleaning the home, cooking and cleaning up after meals, washing clothes, making beds, and doing general housekeeping chores. Five percent of the women indicated that housekeeping duties were shared equally with their husbands. Only 2 percent of the women surveyed indicated that their husbands were primarily responsible to care for the home. We theorized that those 2 percent were ill or in some way incapacitated, necessitating that the husband assume responsibility for housekeeping.

We tried to determine whether traditional family roles remained constant or had changed over time. We compared our results to Ata's study, which found that 89 percent of the women surveyed reported that they were solely responsible for keeping house and 5 percent reported that they were mostly responsible. Three percent reported that housekeeping duties were shared with their husbands, and only 1 percent reported that the duties were shared equally.[27] Our findings are almost identical to Ata's, confirming that modernization and political upheaval have not released women from the daily household chores that tradition has dictated they should perform. Nor have men entered this aspect of the private domain in order to assist their wives. Moreover, there is no evidence in our study that would indicate a shift in this role for either men or women.

Caring for Children. We anticipated that the responsibility to care for children rests primarily with wives in Palestinian families. However, we were surprised to find that 65 percent of the wives indicated that they and their husbands shared this family task equally. In other words, husbands were almost as involved in caring for their children as were their wives. Only 32 percent of wives said that they were responsible for caring for the children without their husbands' help. Three percent indicated that their husbands were solely responsible for child care. Our findings appear to contradict the traditional stereotype prescribing that women be the primary family caregivers.

Further, within the past two generations, a significant change has taken place with respect to this family role. For example, data from Ata's 1982 study reveal that 80 percent of the women he surveyed were solely responsible for child care within the family and 5 percent were mostly responsible.[28] Only 13 percent of the women indicated that this duty was shared with their husbands. The fact that men are significantly more involved in caring for their children in the current study than they were in Ata's study indicates a

shift from traditional expectations to a slightly more egalitarian approach between Palestinian husbands and wives.

Disciplining Children. Traditionally, Palestinian women have assumed responsibility for supervising and disciplining their children since they are at home for longer periods of time than their husbands. Consequently, we assumed that women would report primary responsibility for children's discipline. Again, we were surprised with the findings of our study. Only 16 percent of the women reported that they were solely responsible for disciplining their children. An unexpected 70 percent of women indicated that discipline of children was shared equally with their husbands. These findings suggest a shift in this family role. In comparison, Ata's 1982 study found that 38 percent of the wives were solely responsible for disciplining their children, and 12 percent were mostly responsible. Forty-five percent shared this duty in some measure with their husbands.[29]

We suggest three possible explanations to account for the increased participation of husbands in caring for and disciplining children. First, an extremely high rate of unemployment existed among Palestinian men in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the time we conducted this study. Consequently, men were probably spending more time in the home than they had in the past. Second, as Palestinian youths challenged Israeli occupation of their land during the intifada, they may have experienced a growing independence from traditional family authority. Sensing this loss of parental authority, some fathers may have compensated by becoming more involved in disciplining their children. Third, driven by forces of modernity and Westernization, men and women across the Muslim world may have become more egalitarian with respect to family roles involving their children.

Visiting Relatives and Friends. Palestinians place a great deal of emphasis upon sociability, particularly hosting in their home and visiting family members and friends. Given the patriarchal structure of the Palestinian family, men are presumably responsible for planning the visits to the homes of other family members and friends. However, our study revealed that 69 percent of women shared this activity with their husbands. Seventeen percent said their husbands were responsible to arrange visits as compared to 14 percent of the women who indicated they were primarily responsible to organize social activities with family and friends.

Since we were not able to find any previous research describing the roles of husbands and wives in this particular area, it is difficult to determine if changes have occurred in this family role. Given the sharp distinction between the husband's role in the public sphere versus the woman's role within the private domain of the home, it is possible that a shift in the role of women has taken place. However, the involvement of Palestinian women in the public sphere appears to be limited to social activities with family and close friends.

Providing the Family Income. We anticipated a clear separation between husband and wife concerning who is responsible to earn income for the family. Our study revealed that this family role conformed to traditional Islamic expectations, which mandates that men are expected to provide the family income. For example, 84 percent of wives reported that their husbands were solely responsible to provide family income, while only 4 percent indicated that they alone generated their family's livelihood. Twelve percent of the women said that they shared with their husbands the responsibility of earning money. Low percentages of women who provide family income or who share the task equally with their husbands are to be expected, since 92 percent of the women in our sample were housewives. Only 5 percent worked outside of the home, and another 3 percent indicated that they were looking for work. This percentage of employed women is somewhat lower than the 13.5 percent reported by Ata in 1982.[30]

The large gap between the percentage of those indicating they were housewives and the smaller percentage of women who reported they worked may be explained by the fact that all of the women in our sample were married and responsible for several children in the home. Thus, large family size would certainly deter women from working outside of the home or bringing outside work to do within the home.

Acquiring an Education. Traditionally, women's education has been limited in comparison to that of men. Most women in our study, 73 percent, received some type of primary, secondary, or trade-school education. We found that 21 percent of the women surveyed received no formal education, 22 percent reported at least some primary education, and 25 percent completed part or all of secondary education. Additionally, 26 percent of the women said that they received some type of trade-school experience. Only 6 percent indicated they attended or graduated from a college or university. Thus, while higher education may be available to women in the West Bank and Gaza, most have not received advanced education.

Ata found that 29 percent of women in his 1982 study had no formal education, while 30 percent received some form of primary education and 33 percent completed part or all of their secondary education.[31] Only 3 percent attended trade school, while 6 percent [attending] college or university. Thus, over time educational attainment for Palestinian women has remained consistent.

An Unexpected Finding. In summary, a surprising finding that emerged from this study was the degree to which family power and responsibilities were shared. With the exception of men working outside the home and women cleaning the home, family roles appear to be shared between husbands and wives to a remarkable degree. We expected to find that men exercised much more control over the family than was actually reported.

162   *BYU Studies*

Given the findings of this study, we may have to reformulate our notions about Arab-Muslim wives, particularly Palestinian wives. The stereotypical image of the powerless, marginalized, and oppressed Muslim wife is clearly not accurate. The wives in this study appear to function with a greater degree of power within the family than was previously assumed. However, these women have not as yet made the same strides in participating in the public domain.

Women's Autonomy as Impacted by Social Changes

Some scholars of the Middle East foresee an erosion of Palestinian Muslim family tradition as a result of societal disruptions, including political occupation and modernization. Mar'i suggests that Palestinians may be more susceptible to modernization forces than other Arab nationalities because "their dispersion and forced fragmentation" have fostered exposure to international influences such as women's emancipation.[32] Likewise, Warnock states that industrialization and education are eroding the Palestinian family's authority because schooling and working for wages take youths (boys and girls) away from the family farm or business.[33]

Conversely, other studies warn against making hasty conclusions that modernity has fostered major changes in women's liberation in Palestine. Consider a few examples. While an increasing number of young women with postsecondary training have reported marrying men of their own choosing, most young women are required "to justify their choices in rational rather than emotional terms and to obtain a family consensus."[34] Palestinian fatalities incurred in the struggle for national autonomy argue

---

The Role of Women's Education

I met a premed Palestinian student at Brigham Young University soon after we collected our data. Desiring to put real stories behind the numbers, I asked her about education in Ramallah, where she was reared. In contrast to the rigors of comprehensive final exams in the West Bank, she said BYU was easy, with the exception of learning the English vocabulary for physics. She plans to finish medical training, return to Palestine, marry, have a family, and then practice medicine only after her children are grown. She concluded, "I don't want anyone else to rear my children; being a mother is most important to me."

—Camille Fronk

for a need of larger families although the already depleted economy continues to lose ground.[35] Palestinian women still need a man's signature to receive a passport.[36] While more Palestinian women are seen working outside the home, they are typically widows, young single women, or divorced without children. Educating young women is seen as an "indulgent gamble."[37]

Attitudes of Palestinian Adolescents toward Women's Autonomy

We asked Palestinian adolescents in our sample about their attitudes toward female autonomy or liberation. Youths responded to nine parallel statements, indicating their personal view of women's role in family and society, such as "If a woman disagrees with her husband, she should keep quiet" or "A woman should be able to express her opinion if she disagrees with her husband." The first statement represents a more restrictive role for women while greater autonomy is reflected in the second.

Questions that focus on primary responsibility for various family obligations made up a second measurement of attitudes toward female autonomy in our study. Those questions ascertained the adolescents' views of their future marriage, specifically who would have the primary responsibility of earning money for the family, disciplining the children, arranging visits to family and friends, supervising their children's education, and making decisions about their children's marriages.

Palestinian girls in the study viewed the future differently from Palestinian boys. Not surprisingly, Palestinian girls expressed more liberal views pertaining to women's roles and position in society than their male peers. Both boys and girls expect an egalitarian division of authority in the home when they become parents, but a greater percentage of girls than boys expect an egalitarian sharing in every responsibility, including earning family income. Boy's educational expectations correlate with this view of women's liberation. The higher a boy's educational aspirations, the more restrictive were his views on female autonomy. In other words, education may engender a degree of intolerance on the part of young men toward women's independence and choice of less-traditional lifestyles.

Most young women in our study will eventually marry from among the group of young men whom we surveyed. If these young women maintain their hope for greater equality and independence, greater discordance in future marriages would seem likely. However, we have no reason to anticipate such incongruence between the expectations of future Palestinian husbands and wives. The findings suggest that these young women, socialized by their mothers and other women who surround them, will view their expectations for female autonomy and their future maternal role as not in opposition but as a means to build greater equality within families and the entire community. Islamic feminists have been distinguished

BYU Studies

from Western feminists by their insistence on including religion in any solution and by their commitment to "strive to create equality, not for the woman as individual but for the woman as part of the family, a social institution . . . central to the . . . maintenance of any society."[38]

The tendency of girls to favor greater female autonomy in society even when choosing more traditional family roles evidences the cultural influence of well-defined religion and corresponds with other research. Both Kaufman and Rosaldo conclude that women who live in a culture with a strong patriarchal religious base and who claim rights of female autonomy are likely to elect traditional family roles.[39] Rapoport et al. reported strikingly similar findings from their study of gender role attitudes among Palestinian adolescents living in the state of Israel.[40]

Modernization Theory

Our results do not support social theorists' claims that modernization's influence is virtually unstoppable and thereby makes every society eventually like all others—that rarely does one find a resistant culture. We discovered that this Muslim culture has largely succeeded in resisting Western philosophies affecting the family. Indeed, the results of our study do not support research conducted by other researchers, such as Rapoport et al., who suggest that liberal Western norms have influenced gender conduct, family role relations, and delayed age of marriage among Palestinians.[41]

Modernization theory asserts that education of youths will promote even greater modernity. Every youth in our study was a current student. Teachers and principals met these youths every school day, influencing them as adult role models. Girls in particular saw women working outside the home as educators and administrators, yet one third of these girls reported that a woman's place is in the home. Boys, not girls, appear to be influenced more by education's shaping of less-traditional roles. While this study included only a couple of measures of modernity, these indicators substantiate a significant resistance to modernization influences. Although these families own televisions and radios, the refugee population in our study is either only marginally exposed to liberal Western norms and value systems or is determined to reject such norms. The latter is more likely. From a Palestinian's perspective, Westernization and modernization, as reported by the media, have repeatedly failed to produce peace and equality in other parts of the world, making Islamic culture all the more attractive.

Enduring Family Traditions

Finally, findings from this study suggest that neither youths' participation in the intifada nor their immersion in a society of political unrest have

disturbed family traditions or family authority. Fears expressed to us by concerned Palestinian fathers that their sons and daughters are becoming independent of family traditions are unfounded. This finding corresponds with Hudson's suggestion that youths' involvement in intifada activities reinforces traditional gender roles rather than alters gender ideology.[42]

Youths who participated in the intifada do not necessarily desire departure from traditional family practices. While these youths expect to be more egalitarian in their family roles than traditionally observed, they anticipate that women will likely remain at home, as Palestinian women have done in the past. The data show overwhelmingly that these youths expect to manage their future homes in much the same way they have observed their parents do. Thus no major evidence indicates that future Palestinian families will differ significantly from current families in managing and maintaining the home and family.

We hypothesized that modernization, the intifada, and a society in upheaval would encourage trends leading to a departure from the traditions observed in the parents' home—especially in young women's expectations. Adolescents, however, anticipate family roles very similar to current family roles described by their mothers. We did not expect trends to be dramatic, considering the enduring traditions that family role divisions have enjoyed for generations; in spite of ubiquitous change, we did find that stability continues within Palestinian families.

Summary

To say that the family permeates Islamic society is an understatement. Muslim men and women seek marriage, with strong guidance from family members. Children are desired, and few couples use any form of family planning. Consequently, Islamic families tend to be large. The husband-father and his family exercise greater power and influence than does the wife-mother and her family. But our examination of family roles revealed that within the home the wife has considerable influence on family life.

Westerners often have difficulty fathoming the depth to which Islamic thought permeates Palestinian society and the Arab world in general. In America an emphasis on separation between church and state, between religion and politics, greatly reduces any one religion's influence on society. In Palestine essentially one religion—Islam—influences all roles in life, especially traditional family roles. Even the Jordan Personal Status Laws that govern the family are based on Islamic principles.

The Islamic family remains a strong institution in a world where erosion of the family is attributed to a variety of powerful outside forces. Outside social and political upheaval in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have not appeared to undermine Palestinian commitment to family solidarity.

BYU Studies

FIG. 1. The Faqawi family, Khan Yunis refugee camp outside Gaza City, 1997. Fuad Faqawi, the father, stands in the rear of the group, behind his wife and six of their eight children. He teaches English at a United Nations Relief and Works Agency school for girls. Brian Barber, on the right, is one of the authors of this study.

1. Albert Hourani, "How Should We Write the History of the Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (May 1991): 126.

2. Anonymous scholar quoted in Philippa Strum, *The Women Are Marching: The Second Sex and the Palestinian Revolution* (Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1992), 27.

3. John Williams, quoted in introduction to part 5 of *Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change,* ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 215.

4. Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 131.

5. Maxine D. Molyneux, "Legal Reform and Socialist Revolution in South Yemen: Women and the Family," in *Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism,* ed. Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn B. Young (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), 201.

6. Halim Barakat, "The Arab Family and the Challenge of Social Transformation," in *Women and the Family in the Middle East,* 28.

7. Strum, *Women Are Marching,* 33.

8. J. N. D. Anderson, "The Islamic Law of Marriage and Divorce," in *Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Culture,* ed. Abdulla M. Lutfiyya and Charles W. Churchill (The Netherlands: Mouton, 1970), 429–504.

9. Judith E. Tucker, "Ties That Bound: Women and Family in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Nablus," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 235–36.

10. All averages reported in our study are means.

11. Edwin Prothro and Lutfy Najib Diab, *Changing Family Patterns in the Arab East* (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1974), 46–47.

12. Ibrahim Ata, *The West Bank Palestinian Family* (London: KPI Limited, 1986), 50.

13. Prothro and Diab, *Changing Family Patterns,* 31.

14. Ata, *West Bank Family,* 50.

15. Joseph Ginat, *Women in Muslim Rural Society: Status and Role in Family and Community* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1982), 77.

16. Ata, *West Bank Family,* 61.

17. Ata, *West Bank Family,* 62.

18. Prothro and Diab, *Changing Family Patterns,* 79.

19. Nahla Abdo-Zubi, *Family, Women and Social Change in the Middle East: The Palestinian Case* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1987), 29.

20. D. F. Beck, "The Changing Moslem Family of the Middle East," in *Readings in Arab Middle Eastern Societies and Cultures,* 567–77.

21. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "Women and Modernization: A Reevaluation," in *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 51.

22. Samira Haj, "Palestinian Women and Patriarchal Relations," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 4 (1992): 763.

23. D. I. Jarrah, "Palestinian Women: The Status and Roles of Palestinian Women in the West Bank" (Ph.D. dissertation, Golden Gate University, 1990).

24. Madiha El Safty, "Use and Organization of Domestic Space in the Arab World," *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 11 (July–December 1981): 179.

25. Yvonne Haddad, "Palestinian Women: Patterns of Legitimation and Domination," in *The Sociology of the Palestinians,* ed. Khalil Nakhleh and Elia Zureik (New York: St. Martin's, 1980), 148.

26. Susan Rockwell, "Palestinian Women Workers in the Israeli-Occupied Gaza Strip," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 14, no. 2 (winter 1985): 122.

27. Ata, *West Bank Family*, 77.

28. Ata, *West Bank Family*, 77.

29. Ata, *West Bank Family*, 77.

30. Ata, *West Bank Family*, 42.

31. Ata, *West Bank Family*, 47.

32. Mariam Mahmood Mar'i, "Sex Role Perceptions of Palestinian Males and Females in Israel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1983), 15.

33. Kitty Warnock, *Land before Honour: Palestinian Women in the Occupied Territories* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 54–55.

34. Rosemary Sayigh, introduction to *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, by Orayb Aref Najjar (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 22.

35. Sayigh, introduction, 22.

36. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *In Search of Islamic Feminism* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1998), 360.

37. Susan Rockwell, "Palestinian Women Workers in the Gaza Strip," in *Haves and Have-nots: An International Reader on Social Inequality*, ed. James Curtis and Lorne Tepperman (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1994), 54.

38. Fernea, *In Search of Islamic Feminism*, 416.

39. Debra Renee Kaufman, *Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 11, 66; Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "Women, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Women, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1974), 20–21.

40. Tamar Rapoport, Edna Lomski-Feder, and Mohammed Masalha, "Female Subordination in the Arab-Israeli Community: The Adolescent Perspective of 'Social Veil,'" *Sex Roles*, 20, nos. 5–6 (1989): 266–67.

41. Rapoport, Lomski-Feder, and Masalha, "Female Subordination," 259.

42. Leila Hudson, "Coming of Age in Occupied Palestine: Engendering the Intifada," in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition, Identity, and Power*, ed. Fatima Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 128.

Aliya building a mosque out of blocks, January 2002, in the school library at Iqra' Academy, an Islamic school in Salt Lake City.

Courtesy William S. Dant

Saudi Arabia
The Islamic State

Frederick W. Axelgard

In the two decades since Iran's Islamic revolution, the rapid pace of change in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa has focused attention on the societies there that proclaim loyalty to Islam. Is Islam on a collision course with Western civilization? Can adherence to its principles be reconciled with living and governing in a modernizing world? How will extremists that speak in the name of Islam affect the future of the Middle East and neighboring regions? These and many similar questions have been debated at length. Yet, after volumes of political, social, and doctrinal analysis, the impression remains that exaggerated fears and misperceptions, rather than understanding, continue to dominate our view of Islam.[1]

The opportunity to encounter Islam in a close and immediate way came to my family by means of a diplomatic assignment to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia several years ago. This assignment provided the occasion to see and experience firsthand the personal devotion of Saudi citizens to their Muslim beliefs. At the same time, it involved looking at the Kingdom through the prism of the long-standing U.S.-Saudi relationship and the Kingdom's place in extensive U.S. interests in the Middle East. It also meant trying to assess Islam's internal social and political significance to Saudi Arabia and studying the Kingdom's role in the broader phenomenon of Islamic resurgence. Accordingly, this article seeks to shed light on Islam and Saudi Arabia by drawing on personal as well as professional perspectives.

Saudi Arabia is a remote land of insular geography, a land which is also set apart by its cultural and spiritual uniqueness. This differentness yields a great potential for distancing, misperception, and misunderstanding by non-Muslim outsiders, Westerners in particular. This is unfortunate, because there is so much at stake. The Kingdom is the birthplace and heartland of one of the most rapidly growing religions in the world. About one-fifth of the world's people turn toward Saudi Arabia to pray several times each day,[2] and they (and their governments) feel they are directly affected by what takes place here. Saudi Arabia owns one-fourth of the world's crude oil,[3] which makes the Kingdom's stability and security vital to the health of the global economy. Therefore, to begin to grasp what this country is about has far-reaching significance—and this effort inevitably points us in the direction of Islam (fig. 1).

FIG. 1. Flag of Saudi Arabia with green background and white figures. Adopted in 1973, the Saudi Arabian flag symbolizes the country's devotion to religion. The Arabic inscription reads: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." Green, thought to have been a favorite color of Muhammad, is prominent in the flags of many Islamic countries. The sword is that of King Abd al-Aziz, the national hero who fought to establish the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Jihad at Home

Jihad is a widely misunderstood and even fearsome concept to most non-Muslims, who perceive it as signifying "holy war" conducted against others in an aggressive and even military manner. But to Muslims, the primary sense of *jihad* is personal, and the phrase "jihad at home" is intended to convey the earnestness and totality of effort that Saudi society expends to put Islam first in every dimension of life. Indeed, "the term *jihad* has a number of meanings, which include the effort to lead a good life, to make society more moral and just, and to spread Islam through preaching, teaching, or armed struggle. . . . It is the lifelong struggle to be virtuous, to be true to the straight path of God."[4]

Saudi society has been configured to provide Muslims the opportunity to actualize this effort at virtually every turn and in every hour of their daily lives.

Daily Prayer. This "holy warfare" begins anew every morning in each neighborhood with the predawn call to prayer. Four more prayers—at midday, midafternoon, dusk, and midevening (fig. 2)—connect more than disrupt the flow of the day. It is a memorable experience to be on an official errand in the Saudi Defense Ministry and find a vast hallway blocked, filled with prayer rugs and kneeling figures. Similarly, personal errands, such as shopping and eating out, must all be calibrated to the rhythm of Saudi prayer life to avoid being locked in or out when the doors close for prayer time.

Religious Programming on Television. There is a conscious, official dimension to the rhythm of Saudi religious life. The Saudi government clearly tries to foster an atmosphere of public religiosity. National television stations broadcast a consistent stream of religious programming, much of it devoted to discussing the Qur'an. Night after night, television screens are alight with images of kneeling masses surrounding the Holy Ka'ba in Mecca.

This government promotion of religion has led some observers to interpret Islam in Saudi Arabia in top-down terms—as a tool in the hands of a ruling authority seeking legitimacy. This preoccupation with the "official" dimension of Islam in the Kingdom tends to discount the personal, spiritual authenticity of the faith of the people. Those who come from societies that

Courtesy James A. Toronto
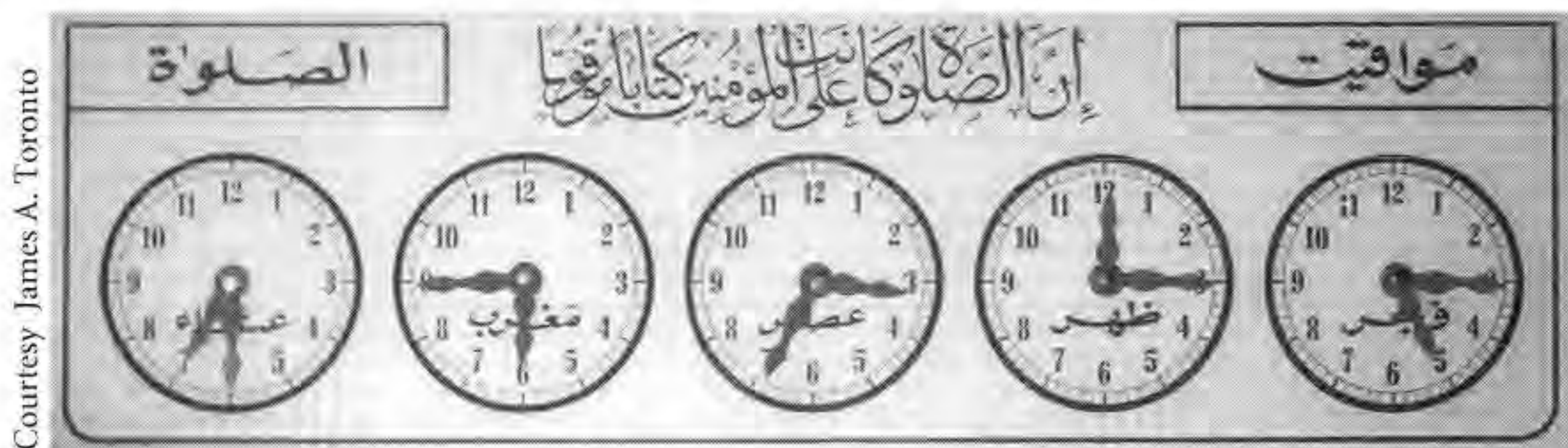
Fig. 2. Prayer clocks on wall of a mosque in Bahrain. Read right to left, these clocks indicate times of the dawn, midday, midafternoon, sunset, and evening prayers.

emphasize individual freedom as a first principle will reflexively doubt the sincerity of group devotions expressed in a society where pressures to conform are so great. But what is one to think of an inpromptu conversation with a general who beams as he speaks of taking his young son to the mosque for dawn prayers? Or the innumerable times that the subject of religion creeps into official meetings, where policy exchanges are often superseded by the basic questions "What do you know about Islam? Would you like to know more?" Such spontaneous experiences reveal a personal quality of faith alongside the outward, collective submission to Allah, and both must be appreciated to capture the depth and breadth of Islam's influence in Saudi Arabia.

Ramadan. A major milestone in the year is Ramadan. Ramadan is imposing. For one lunar month, the entire society, including children as young as eight years old, refrains from eating and drinking during daylight hours. Latter-day Saints, who have some experience and belief in fasting, can identify with the spiritual power of such an exercise. One also learns, as the month wears on, to take into account of growing evidence of personal irritability, dangerous driving just before sundown, and late-night feasting and shopping. At the same time, non-Muslims in the Kingdom are very careful during Ramadan not to eat, drink, smoke, or even chew gum in public. As I wrote in 1999,

> the images were as memorable as they were brief. The sun had barely set; it was late in the fasting month of Ramadan, and we were driving fast down a isolated road from above Tabuk, in northwest Saudi Arabia. On our left I saw a large touring bus had stopped, and seemed to be heaving in the corner of an asphalt square. The snapshot enlarged. Spreading out slowly and scattering randomly around the pavement, small groups of Muslim travelers huddled on carpets and other makeshift ground covers. Most were couples, but a few had small children. Those who had prayed were eating dates and sipping tea; others were bending and kneeling in prayer. With dusk settling, families finished prayer and broke their day-long fast. This far-off niche of sand and asphalt was softened by the easy and sure manner of these people and their

devotions. They vanished from my mirror before I remembered that strictly speaking, travelers during Ramadan are exempt from the requirement to fast.[5]

With seven to ten days left in the month, the government closes down. One professional contact after another mentions that his extended family will spend some time in Mecca toward the climax of the fasting period. Their anticipation is genuine. They want to be *there, then,* with their families.

Hajj. The other compelling milestone of the year is the month of pilgrimage, or *hajj.* Upwards of two million pilgrims come to Saudi Arabia to participate en masse in the elaborate sequence of rituals that occur in and around Mecca during the appointed days of the month of hajj[6] (fig. 3). At other times during the year, hundreds of thousands of other pilgrims visit to perform the minor pilgrimage, or *umrah.*[7] The social and political significance of these massive ceremonies of devotion is difficult to overstate. The ruling family of Saudi Arabia places the highest possible priority on ensuring that the arrival, movement, and departure of worshipers are conducted in a safe and dignified way (fig. 4). In the same way that hajj is a central pillar in the spiritual life of an individual Muslim, successful execution of the hajj is central to validating the Saudi leadership's right to administer the holiest sites of Islam.

Courtesy Information Office, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia

FIG. 3. The Ka'ba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Muslim pilgrims, and Muslims worldwide, face the Ka'ba while praying. The Ka'ba, draped in black, is believed to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael. (For a closer view of the Ka'ba, see page 182.) Because Mecca is the holiest site of Islam, only Muslims are allowed to enter and worship in the city.

I agree with scholars who challenge the view that Islam in Saudi Arabia is manipulated for political advantage by the Saudi leadership. Far from being purely a top-down phenomenon, Islam permeates the society in weblike fashion. It is the dominant feature of the common ground between Saudi society and the ruling family. It reaches out and up to shape and restrain government, rather than to license options for capricious action by those in authority.[8]

FIG. 4. A caravan of Chevrolet Suburbans loaded down with gear and supplies for the long trek to Mecca. Muslims are required to make the pilgrimage, or *hajj,* at least once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially capable of doing so. The modern caravan pictured here is making a rest stop in Khamis Mushayt, a city in the mountainous Asir Province of southwestern Saudi Arabia.

The Challenge of Reform

The Al Saud family has governed most of the Arabian peninsula for almost three-quarters of a century. King Abd al-Aziz Abdulrahman Al Saud proclaimed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia an official state in 1932. After three decades of military and political campaigning, he had effectively unified the fractious tribes of Arabia to shrug off the vestiges of Ottoman influence and drive the rival Hashemite dynasty out of Mecca and Medina.[9] The society he founded was devoted to the application of Islamic law *(shari'a)* and the Qur'an as interpreted by the strict tenets of Wahhabism, an extremely conservative strain of the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam. Wahhabism dates to the 1700s, when the Al Saud forged an alliance with the fiery reformer Mohammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab. This alliance has made Wahhabism a power to be reckoned with in central Arabia ever since.[10]

Balancing this conservative religious background against the realities of twentieth-century governance has been a constant challenge for the Al Saud. Early on, King Abd al-Aziz had to deal with resistance from his clerics to such basic innovations as the telephone and the automobile.[11] Even before formal establishment of the Kingdom, he put down a rebellion by the Ikhwan, a fanatical tribal movement that had been vital to his military success but that decried his entering into a treaty with the "infidel British."[12] Awakened to economic growth by the discovery of oil in the early 1930s and vaulted into international prominence by the oil crises of the 1970s, Saudi Arabia has gone from a destitute desert backwater to a

wealthy regional power with global influence. The changes that have made up this transition border on incredible. In just over two generations, a rural, tribal-based, and basically illiterate society has become substantially urbanized, highly educated[13] (fig. 5), and deeply enmeshed in global communications and economic infrastructures.

Economic Challenges. The changes of the past twenty years have had a particularly sharp edge, some of which can be conveyed statistically. The price of oil, a key index of Saudi economic health, declined from nearly $40 a barrel in the late 1970s to approximately $11 a barrel in early 1998. Meanwhile, the country's population doubled in size. Saudi Arabia's per capita gross domestic product is estimated to have shrunk from about $28,600 (measured in current dollars), equal to that of the United States, in 1981, to less than $7,000, not even one-fifth of that of the United States, in the year 2000. In other words, in less than two decades, Saudi Arabia has slipped economically from a high-income state with a per capita gross domestic product rivaling that of the United States to a mid-to-low income state roughly on a par with Mexico.

During the same two decades, the Kingdom's population explosion has fundamentally altered the profile of society: Fully one-half of the country's citizens are now less than eighteen years of age. And while the population has grown at an estimated 3.5 percent per year, economic growth in the past decade has limped along at about 0.8 percent, which means there is significant unemployment in a growing and potentially restive segment of Saudi society. The need for economic reform is widely recognized in the Kingdom, and Crown Prince Abdullah is spearheading efforts to bring about reform.[14] Although Abdullah is the most revered and credible senior member of the Saudi royal family, it remains to be seen whether he can bring about the efficiencies and openness needed for economic growth.

Regional Political Challenges. These economic challenges, it should be noted, evolved within a persistently hostile regional political climate. Earlier Saudi tensions with Iran continued through the 1980s, despite Iran's war with Iraq. After Iranian pilgrims had several bloody confrontations in Mecca, Iranian participation in the hajj temporarily lapsed at the end of the 1980s. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and attacks against Saudi Arabia triggered the largest crisis of all. The military dimension of the crisis is perhaps most memorable to Western minds and those outside of Islam. But almost as troubling to the Saudi leadership was the widespread criticism and vitriol from Arab and Islamic sources who rejected the Kingdom's decision to admit foreign, non-Muslim troops into the land of Islam's holiest sites. Some of this criticism came from inside the Kingdom itself, and the royal family invested considerable effort to persuade its citizens of the Islamic rightness of its decision. Those efforts included obtaining rulings *(fatwas)*

FIG. 5. Young Saudi schoolboys lined up for physical exercises and chanting the Qur'an before starting class for the day. Most are wearing the traditional *thobe,* a long gown still preferred by most men in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. Following World War II and the end of colonialism in Islamic countries, Muslim government officials have placed heavy emphasis on developing the school systems, which were severely neglected by colonial powers. Today, education is generally mandatory at least through elementary school for both boys and girls (who normally attend segregated public schools in compliance with Islamic tradition). As a result of these reforms, literacy rates have risen dramatically, as have the number of college graduates and new universities.

from Saudi religious authorities to support both the presence of foreign troops in the Kingdom and the counterattack against Iraq.[15] Nevertheless, discontent from extreme conservatives in the Kingdom continued after the war. Over the following few years, this discontent resulted in a surge of religio-political activism, which the Saudi government countered by arresting a number of influential preachers and, amid the subsequent protests, detaining a large number of the preachers' followers. Attacks against U.S. military installations in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996 arose from this dynamic.[16]

Political violence of this kind is highly uncharacteristic of Saudi political culture. For this reason, these attacks raised fears that perhaps the limits of political, economic, and social forbearance had been reached. To date, however, there have been no further incidents on Saudi soil. Instead, despite significant challenges, the Kingdom has maintained the basic contours of the shariʿa-based society King Abd al-Aziz founded. The pulse of conservatism and religiosity remains palpable. Saudi women are uniformly

Courtesy James A. Toronto

veiled and covered in black *abayas*. Saudi men are dressed almost without exception in the egalitarian white *thobe*, although younger males occasionally exchange the traditional red-and-white *gutra* for a baseball cap (worn backwards, of course). Meanwhile, ambitious *mutawwa'iin*, bearded guardians of the faith, roam at will both through the flashy shopping malls and through the mud-brick souks in their calf-length thobes to enforce the closing of shops at prayer time and bark out commands for unsuspecting Western women to cover their heads. All in all, this strange amalgam of conservative Islam, tribal culture, and immense, oil-fed infrastructure has demonstrated remarkable survivability in a volatile and rapidly changing environment.

Saudi Arabia in the Middle East

While Saudi Arabia may appear to be the epitome of Islamic belief and practice, it is by no means typical of other Arab or Muslim societies. Indeed, the Kingdom is unique even among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. One need only drive a few kilometers east, over the King Fahd Causeway into Bahrain, to feel immersed in an entirely different culture. In Bahrain, women drive themselves to work, whereas in Saudi Arabia women (including the estimated 5 percent who work) must rely on husbands, brothers, or drivers to transport them, with the women hidden behind heavily tinted windows in the backs of Suburbans, Caprices, or (increasingly rare) Mercedes. In Manama, Bahrain's capital city, offices, restaurants, and government ministries remain open during prayer time, while in the Saudi Arabian cities of Riyadh, Dhahran, and Jeddah, the muezzin's call to prayer means the end to office calls and turns thousands of downtown and neighborhood mosques into hives of activity. An evening drive in Bahrain past hotels, pubs, and bars will reveal people enjoying beer and liquor openly. Back over the bridge in Dhahran, fast-food parlors dim the lights and bolt the doors during prayer, leaving locked-in patrons to sip fruit juices and soft drinks in the dark. What is true in Bahrain also applies in large part elsewhere on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Although all the small Arab principalities of the southern Gulf are led by royal families who espouse Sunni Islam, nowhere in the Gulf area is Islam practiced with the intensity found in Saudi Arabia.

Regional Conflicts. Saudi Arabia's unique standing even within this small swathe of the Arab world is symptomatic of its singular position in the broader Middle East, where the Kingdom's politics have repeatedly placed it at odds with prevailing regional currents. Indeed, when Saddam Hussein launched troops, scud missiles, and vehement rhetoric against Saudi Arabia in 1990 to 1991, he was by no means the first regional revolutionary to threaten the Kingdom in this manner. Egypt's Gamal Abdul

Nasser, speaking in the voice of secular Arab nationalism and Arab social-ism, had targeted the conservative Saudi regime in his day. As a result, Saudi Arabia and Egypt fought a debilitating proxy war in Yemen that lasted most of the 1960s and that included Egyptian air strikes against Saudi villages and gas attacks in Yemen.[17]

The November 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran also provoked a serious challenge to Saudi legitimacy. It began with Ayatollah Khomeini's call for the overthrow of the Al Saud regime, directly challenging its right to rule in the name of Islam. Later that month, a group of Sunni extremists seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca. After two tense weeks, Saudi forces moved in and ended the crisis amid significant bloodshed. This clash was soon fol-lowed by rioting among Saudi Shi'ites in the eastern province of the King-dom, a disturbance which also had to be put down with force.[18] Although the unrest sparked by the Iranian revolution was contained, this chain of events posed perhaps the sharpest challenge in decades to Al Saud gover-nance of the Kingdom.

There is an intriguing pattern in this brief historical overview. Three of the most powerful regional figures of the postwar Middle East have seen fit to directly attack the legitimacy and security of the Saudi system. Each did so at the height of his regional influence. But each time, the threat and the demagogic figure behind it receded while the basic features of the Saudi state that had provoked each attack remained basically unchanged.

Just why Saudi Arabia has been on the receiving end of such attention is worthy of a separate discussion, but perhaps a few useful points can be made briefly here. One concise explanation of the Gulf crisis suggests that it sprang from envy of Saudi oil wealth, resentment over the perceived cor-ruption and hypocrisy of King Fahd and other Saudi leaders—the "'custo-dian[s] of the Holy Places,'"[19] and outrage that the Al Saud would admit into the country the polluting influence of foreign troops to fight against fellow-Muslim and fellow-Arab Iraq.[20] No doubt, such factors as these came into play in 1990 to 1991, but there is probably a deeper explanation as well.

Saudi Arabia has from its inception been on a different historical timetable and a different social and political wavelength than the other major powers in the region. Unlike many of the core countries in the Middle East, the Kingdom did not derive its existence or political culture from the sequence of events associated with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the creation of British and French colonies, and the nationalist movements that threw off these arrangements.[21] Instead, King Abd al-Aziz had a fifty-year head start in putting his stamp on the Arabian Peninsula before secu-lar nationalist movements began to sweep into power in the Arab world of the 1950s.[22] In the decades that followed, the Kingdom—having produced its own wealth through oil reserves—avoided those pitfalls of foreign

ideologies and economic programs and sidestepped those dilemmas of national identity and political legitimacy that, together with the demoralizing Israeli victory in the 1967 war, spelled the failure of Arab nationalism and socialism.[23] Much the same can be said of the resurgent and revolutionary Islamist movements that later spread throughout the region. While we have seen that revolutionary movements initially posed a serious challenge to the stability of Saudi Arabia, twenty years later the Kingdom appears by and large to have laid claim to the key objective—a political, social, and economic system founded on agreed Islamic principles—that has eluded so many of the national and subnational Islamic experiments that now operate in the international arena. The lethal weakness of lacking an enduring national consensus on a basic ideological direction and governing format is evident in countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Algeria, Afghanistan, and Indonesia.

Foreign Policy. Saudi Arabia's unique position is also evident in its foreign policy, where its singular history and view of its interests have often made for unique alliances and initiatives. Consider, for example, its relationship with the United States. Behind the high drama of United States intervention in the Gulf War lay a fifty-year-old relationship of remarkable consistency and trust. Whereas the Cold War, Arab nationalism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Islamic fundamentalism have at one time or another severely damaged U.S. relations with every major party in the Middle East (Israel excluded), this has not been the case with Saudi Arabia. Indeed, U.S.-Saudi relations in the twentieth century have been marked by many important milestones. These include the discovery and development of Saudi oil resources by U.S. companies in the 1930s; Franklin D. Roosevelt's historic meeting with King Abd al-Aziz shortly before Roosevelt's death in 1945; and, in a foreshadowing of the Gulf crisis, the dispatching of U.S. planes, paratroops, and a naval destroyer in 1963 to deter Egyptian attacks against Saudi Arabia early in the Yemen conflict.[24]

Close as they are, official U.S.-Saudi relations also have their limits. The Saudi royal family manages its relationship with the United States carefully, with an eye to Saudi sensitivities about the Kingdom's position in the Arab and Islamic world. Despite fifty years of close military cooperation with Saudi Arabia, active U.S. military forces had rarely played a direct operational role in the Kingdom before 1990 but had been confined to a beyond-the-horizon presence. As previously stated, when Iraq's aggression made it necessary to bring U.S. forces into a more visible role, the Saudi leadership felt compelled to seek out the public blessing of religious authorities, the *ulema,* both for troops to enter the Kingdom and for the counterattack against Iraq.[25] The Saudi leadership similarly declined to be drawn into a written agreement formalizing the terms under which these

outside military forces could operate in the Kingdom.[26] This cautious approach deepened in the late 1990s, when Saudi leaders began to describe the U.S. forces that remained in the Kingdom to help contain Iraq as United Nations forces enforcing United Nations resolutions rather than as U.S. forces operating in defense of Saudi Arabia.

Nor has the Saudi leadership hesitated to chart a course that diverges significantly from Washington, D.C.'s when Saudi interests seem to require it. This was the case several years ago, when Crown Prince Abdullah undertook to rebuild Saudi relations with Iran in the wake of President Mohammed Khatami's victory in the 1997 elections. Abdullah, who is well known for his keen appreciation of regional political dynamics, appeared eager to seize that moment as a prime opportunity to end almost twenty years of Saudi-Iranian hostility and Iran's alienation within the region as a whole.

At the time, U.S. policy struck a much more cautious note, saying that the new Iranian regime would need to prove its moderation by changing its policies on terrorism, the Middle East peace process, and the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. Under Abdullah's leadership, however, Saudi Arabia moved ahead. In a bold gesture, Abdullah accepted Iran's invitation to travel to Teheran for the 1997 summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference, thereby offering Saudi Arabia's implicit validation of Iran's importance to the international Muslim community. But in his address to the Organization of Islamic Conference, Abdullah raised a chastising voice against those who would blame the outside world for the difficulties facing Islam. He spoke specifically against parties who were causing fragmentation and sowing hatred through acts of violence carried out in the name of their Islamic beliefs. He courageously challenged those assembled that the time had come to "rearrange our Islamic house from inside" and called on the conference to dissociate itself clearly and unequivocally from those who "commit the most appalling crimes and acts in the name of Islam."[27]

Political and economic contact between Saudi Arabia and Iran has expanded in the wake of Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative. The lingering uncertainty as to whether moderate forces will gain the upper hand in Iran is troubling to the Kingdom, as it is to most other interested observers. Nevertheless, Abdullah's notion of engagement with Iran seems to have gained a listening ear in Washington and may even have influenced the United States to take its own initial steps toward renewing a dialogue with Iran. In its own quiet way, the Kingdom has thus been at the forefront of the most significant development in the Muslim world in recent years: the move to reintegrate the Islamic Republic of Iran into the regional and international communities.

Conclusion

Saudi Arabia has entered the twenty-first century firm in its role as one of the most deeply-rooted Islamic societies in the world. Its historic trend of stability stands in sharp contrast to that of most of the Islamic societies and movements that now operate on the international stage. They lack what the Al Saud family labored for more than a century to achieve: a national consensus on the objectives of an Islamic society and an acceptable governing structure under which to pursue them. Nevertheless, there is little room for complacency. The Saudi leadership faces perhaps its most difficult internal dilemmas since the Kingdom's birth. Their resolution will likely determine whether Saudi Arabia can preserve its unique, conservative way of life and still provide the needed economic and political outlets for its people—outlets commensurate with the scale of resources and the international role that the Kingdom commands. Those inclined to be pessimistic about Saudi Arabia's domestic future should bear in mind the many difficult transitions through which the Kingdom has already passed with its identity and society intact.

There are similar challenges to be faced in Saudi relations with the United States. It seems likely that many of the common economic and security interests that have underpinned these ties for the past fifty years will retain their validity. But important differences will be difficult to ignore. There are fundamental policy issues where U.S. and Saudi approaches diverge and will probably continue to do so. These issues include human rights (including women's rights), freedom of religion, and a host of other democratic values where the search for common ground has just begun. For now, one can hope that convergence in such areas might result from economic reforms that could produce more transparency in and, consequently, greater understanding of Saudi society.

The challenges to mutual understanding on a personal level are also daunting. Here, however, the key to greater understanding of Saudi Arabia by American and other non-Muslim societies can be turned by those who are willing to grant Saudi society the room to work through its national exercise in communal devotion to God, undertaken in an unstable and demanding region. Opportunities to build such understanding can always be found, with memorable results. In recent years, a significant number of U.S. military personnel of the Muslim faith who were stationed in Saudi Arabia and the surrounding countries took advantage of their time in the region to perform umrah or the entire hajj itself. The reaction to this undertaking was fascinating. It opened the eyes of the Saudis and the Americans involved to a possibility that had not seriously been considered: that their two nations share some important values, such as a belief in prayer, fasting, and devotion to family as a centerpiece of religious devotion. On the cornerstone of such recognition a future of greater understanding between nations can be built.

At the time this article was written, Frederick W. Axelgard was Counselor for Political-Military Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He received a B.A. in University Studies from Brigham Young University, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Currently, he is Senior Advisor to the Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism, U.S. Department of State. The views expressed in this paper are his alone and do not represent the official views of the United States government or the U.S. Department of State.

1. An important voice in this debate is John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

2. Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, 4.

3. As of 1999, Saudi Arabia's oil reserves were estimated at about 261 billion barrels. Estimates of global oil reserves range from 967 billion to just over one trillion barrels. Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, July 2000), 277.

4. Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, 32–33.

5. My personal experience in northern Saudi Arabia, December 1999.

6. This is an estimated figure but one which is widely accepted. See "Prayer at the Arafat Marks Haj Climax," *Arab News*, March 16, 2000.

7. Some 400,000 pilgrims from Egypt alone performed umrah during Ramadan December 1999–January 2000. See "Egyptian Umrah Traffic to Drop 60 Percent as Cairo Slaps New Restrictions," *Arab News*, October 15, 2000.

8. Among scholars whose views I share are Madawi and Loulouwa Al-Rasheed, who present similar ideas in their article "The Politics of Encapsulation: Saudi Policy towards Tribal and Religious Opposition," *Middle East Studies* 32 (January 1996): 115.

9. Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1984), 92.

10. For a good summary of Wahhabism and other relevant historical information from this period, see Ayman Al-Yassini, *Religion and State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1985), 21–32.

11. One incident of Wahhabi opposition to cars is described in Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 237.

12. Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, 237. See also pages 237–39 for a discussion of the saga of the Ikhwan, a fascinating chapter in twentieth-century Saudi history.

13. Literacy rates in Saudi Arabia, for example, have increased phenomenally since 1970, when they were among the lowest in the Middle East—15 percent among Saudi men and 2 percent among Saudi women. By 1990 these figures had climbed to 73 percent and 48 percent respectively. See Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993), 96–104.

14. This digest of the Kingdom's economic outlook is based on U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, *Saudi Arabia: 2000 Economic Trends*, February 2000.

15. James Piscatori, ed., *Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis* (Chicago: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991), 8–10. Several of these regional developments and the internal religious politicking precipitated by the deployment of foreign troops to Saudi Arabia are discussed in chapter one of this book, pages 1–27.

16. For a summary of the tensions of this period, see Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia: Guarding the Desert Kingdom* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997), 37–43. Cordesman's analysis does not include a discussion of the more lethal of the two

anti-U.S. attacks, the June 1996 assault against a residential complex housing U.S. military personnel.

17. For a uniquely Saudi academic perspective on the war in Yemen, see Saeed Badeeb, *The Saudi-Egyptian Conflict over North Yemen, 1962–1970* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1986). For a shorter summary of the conflict, see Cordesman, *Search for Strategic Stability*, 462–67. Both authors mention Egypt's use of chemical gas (Badeeb, 40–41, and Cordesman, 111, 462–64).

18. For a concise summary of these events, see Cordesman, *Search for Strategic Stability*, 231–39.

19. Piscatori, *Islamic Fundamentalisms*, 7.

20. Piscatori, *Islamic Fundamentalisms*, 6–12.

21. Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, 75, sums up the first half-century of Middle East politics in this manner, but the summary clearly excludes the experience of Saudi Arabia.

The Ka'ba in Mecca.

22. Cordesman, *Search for Strategic Stability*, 91–96.

23. For a brief discussion of the state of most of the post-1950s Arab world, see Esposito, *Islamic Threat*, 76.

24. See Cordesman, *Search for Strategic Stability*, 85–121. These pages discuss the evolution of United States–Saudi military relations. The discovery of oil is discussed on pages 92–93, and FDR's meeting with King Abd al-Aziz is on page 95. Cordesman's description of the U.S. intervention to deter Egyptian attacks against Saudi Arabia, an instructive precedent to the crisis of 1990–91, is found on page 111.

25. This Saudi use of religious authorities is discussed in Piscatori, *Islamic Fundamentalisms*, 8–10.

26. For an interesting discussion of the sensitivities and restraints affecting United States–Saudi military relations after the Gulf War, see Cordesman, *Guarding the Desert Kingdom*, 192–93.

27. For a discussion of Abdullah's address, see Saudi Press Agency, "Saudi Crown Prince Comments on Differences among Muslims," December 7, 1997, copy in author's possession.
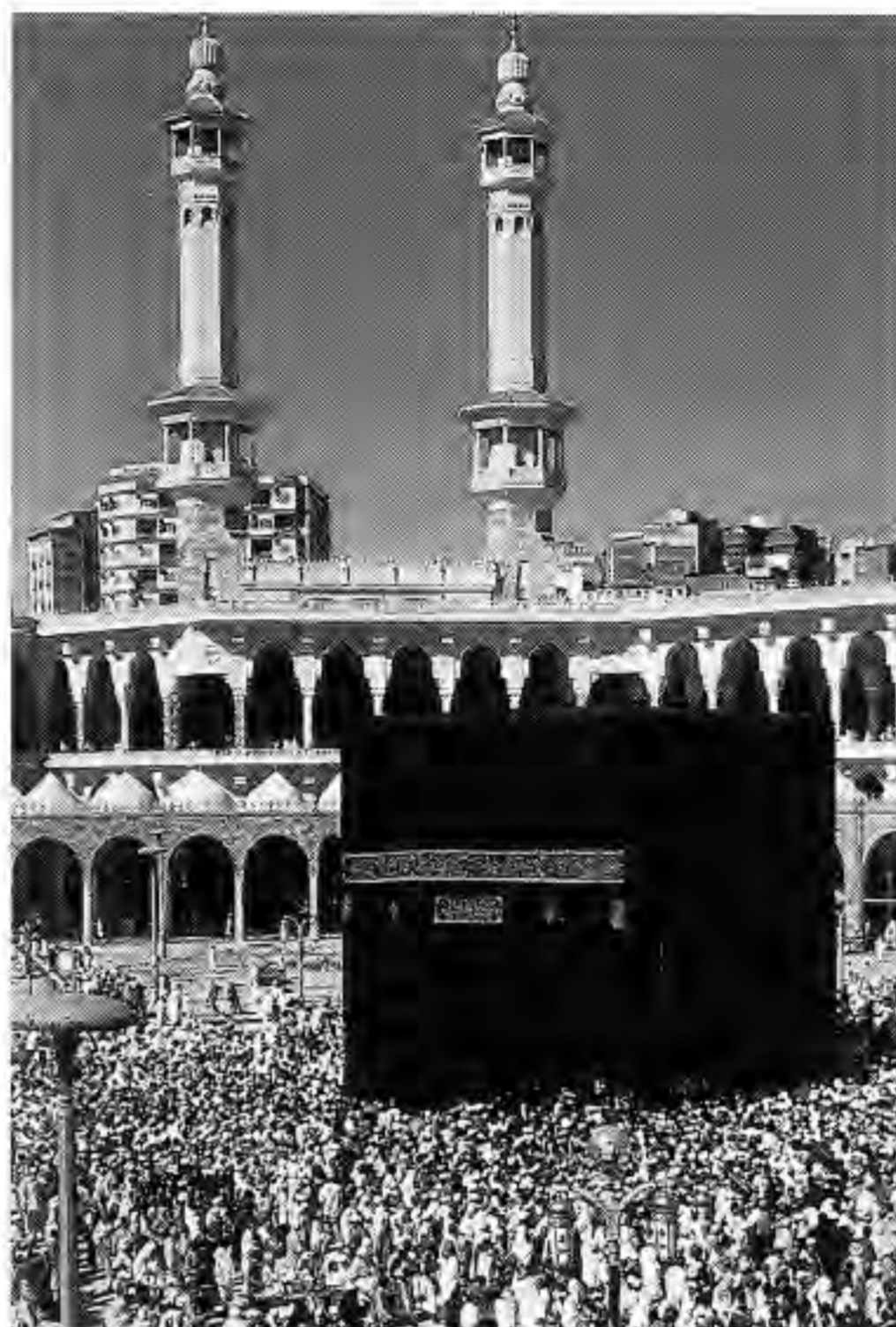
Respect for Life

Abortion in Islam and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Donna Lee Bowen

While the indiscriminate taking of life is condemned by major religions and ethical systems worldwide, killing in some well-defined situations is less clearly condemned. For example, most major religious traditions put killing in war in a separate category. Euthanasia, which the Netherlands legalized in 2000, is passionately debated. Probably today's most debated means of taking life is abortion. Although miscarriage is also known as spontaneous abortion, for the purposes of this discussion *abortion* means not the unintentional loss of a fetus but a purposeful termination of pregnancy.

Both Islam and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints forbid the indiscriminate use of abortion. However, both religions also recognize limited circumstances when an abortion may be the better of two imperfect choices. Muslim and Latter-day Saint religious leaders agree that abortion is at odds with each religion's emphasis on life, although the scriptural and theological contexts for their positions differ. However, both religions are united in three important principles: a respect for God-created life, a prohibition against killing innocent life, and the necessity of taking responsibility for sexual activity.

Today, the worldwide debate on abortion is often polarized by two camps: those who call for no restrictions on abortion and those who prohibit all abortions. Although both Muslims and Mormons are generally represented as being in the pro-life camp, they actually share a moderate middle ground. They agree that exceptions may require or permit the use of abortion under strictly limited circumstances, that the mother's life has priority over that of the child if only one can survive, and that it is crucial to consult medical authority as part of the decision-making process. Despite these commonalities, however, the two religions differ in their grounds for the general prohibition on abortion and in the exceptions they stipulate to this rule. A comparison of the two religions serves to highlight the internal consistency that underlies the position of each and to provide useful contrasts both in their doctrine and in the methods they use for determining their positions.

The moderation of the Latter-day Saint and Muslim approaches to abortion is noteworthy. Orthodox Roman Catholics and many fundamentalist Protestants oppose abortion without exception, while other faiths allow all legal abortions. Although Mormons are certainly not the majority population of the United States, the position that abortion is generally wrong but may be permitted in certain rare situations summarizes the attitudes of many U.S. citizens. Surveys carried out in the United States between 1965 and 1996 document that public opinion overwhelmingly supports abortion for reasons of fetal defect, rape, and the mother's health.[1] Data I have gathered in Muslim countries from multiple sources, including scholarly articles, newspaper articles, religious discussions, and interviews, support the conclusion that the attitudes of the majority of their citizens mirror the official Islamic position on abortion.[2]

Statistics from Mormon and Muslim Populations

Data on abortions performed are not easy to come by. Abortions tend to be underreported, which means that rates may actually be higher than are given. However, available data show that Muslims and Mormons have a relatively low number of abortions when compared to others. Worldwide, about 26 million women have abortions each year.[3] Statistics from 1997 show that Russia, Romania, and Cuba reported the highest abortion rates in the world, with 70 percent, 59.4 percent, and 58.6 percent of total pregnancies ending in abortion, respectively. By comparison, the latest statistics (1996) for Tunisia, which is over 99 percent Muslim and which legalized abortion in the 1970s, record that 7.8 percent of total pregnancies ended in abortion. The new Central Asian states with large Muslim populations—Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan—report a range of abortion rates for 1996. Kazakhstan, with the relatively high 41.3 percent of total pregnancies ending in abortion, probably reflects the easy availability of abortion in the former USSR. Turkmenistan reported abortion rates of 22.9 percent; Kyrgyzstan, 17.5 percent; Uzbekistan, 9.5 percent; and Tajikistan, only 6.2 percent.[4] The low rates in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan may reflect a Muslim reluctance to utilize abortion.

In the United States, abortion rates declined from 1995 through 1997 (which is the last year for which we have data).[5] U.S. data from 1996 allow a comparison of U.S. figures with those from the Muslim countries above: in 1996, 23 percent of pregnancies in the U.S. ended in abortion.[6]

To compare Mormon abortion rates with those of the general U.S. population, I must turn to a different data set. The 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, which reported on the pregnancies women experienced in the five years before 1995, includes Mormon women. This report stated that 13.5 percent of pregnancies in the U.S. ended in induced abortion. According to the same set of data, 5.2 percent of Mormon pregnancies ended in abortion.[7]

Overview of the Cultural and Theological Contexts

The size of the Muslim community worldwide dwarfs the ten million membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Around one billion believers follow Islam. Muslims have established communities that spread from Toronto, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City to Beijing, Djakarta, and Johannesburg. Despite—or perhaps because of—their numbers and their geographical disparities, Muslims are not united by a central leadership. In other words, there is no pope in Islam. Religious orthodoxy is maintained largely through adherence to religious obligations, precepts, and practices set out in the Muslim religious sources of the Qur'an, the *Sunna* (the example of the Prophet Muhammad), the *hadith* (written traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and his close associates), and the *fiqh* literature (jurisprudence). Most of the standards for religious praxis are set in what is described as Islamic law (*shari'a*), which is composed of learned opinions based on the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the hadith.[8] Most jurisprudence literature was composed between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. While the scripture in the Qur'an and many of the Sunna and hadith texts are considered definitive, differing interpretations can be made for issues not directly addressed in scripture. Today, both Muslim religious scholars and lay Muslims are involved in analyzing Islamic positions on matters of contemporary concern.

Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) was the "seal" (in the sense of guarantee or perfect closure) to the series of prophets God sent to his prize creation, mankind. The revelations he received comprise the Qur'an. Muslims believe that these revelations are complete and will never be supplemented or changed.

While Latter-day Saints, like Muslims, recognize prophetic scripture and the derivation of religious precepts from scripture, they differ from Muslims in following a strongly hierarchical and well-defined leadership whose power to receive prophetic revelation continues to the present day. In fact, prophetic pronouncements from a Church President are seen as equal in divine authority to scripture. Thus any formal statements by the current Church President on a subject like abortion are seen as indisputable.

Individual Muslims as well as individual Mormons may have differing positions on matters not revealed in scripture, but for both religions the tradition of remaining within the limits of revealed scripture and customary practice is strong. The following overviews are not intended as complete or official statements, but they provide a basic summary that allows comparative analysis and reflection.

BYU Studies

Latter-day Saint Teachings on Abortion

While many Church leaders have spoken on the issue of abortion, perhaps the most recent official Church statement on abortion is found in the *Church Handbook of Instructions,* a guide intended for Church leaders. The following excerpt from the *Handbook* explains the basic reasons the Church opposes abortion, the actions Latter-day Saints should avoid, the limited conditions under which an abortion may be considered, and the method for considering aborting a pregnancy.

> The Lord commanded, "Thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Members must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion. The only possible exceptions are when:
>
> 1. Pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.
>
> 2. A competent physician determines that the life or health of the mother is in serious jeopardy.
>
> 3. A competent physician determines that the fetus has severe defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.
>
> Even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. Abortion is a most serious matter and should be considered only after the persons responsible have consulted with their bishops and received divine confirmation through prayer.[9]

The emphasis in this Church policy statement is upon abortion as an action with grave implications for all "persons responsible," including the woman who undergoes the abortion, the man who participated in creating the pregnancy, and the one who performs the abortion. This policy does not state that the act of abortion is killing, but defines abortion as an action that is *like* killing. Abortion is differentiated from killing in that a person who receives or performs an abortion may repent and be forgiven for "the sin of abortion."[10]

Statements on Abortion from Church Presidents. Whenever Church leaders speak about abortion, they strongly discourage its use. Presidents of the Church have described abortion as "wrong," as a "revolting and evil practice,"[11] as "jeopardizing your exaltation and your future membership in the kingdom of God,"[12] as "unrighteous and evil acts,"[13] and as a "most serious matter."[14] Furthermore, such statements apply to both men and women. For example, serving a full-time mission for the Church is considered a privilege and an honor, one that most young men and many young women desire. However, unwed members responsible for the abortion of a pregnancy that results from their voluntary sexual activity are barred from missionary service. This consequence for abortion is made clear in a 1993 letter from the First Presidency to Church leaders worldwide: "Young men who have encouraged, paid for, or arranged for an abortion resulting from

their immoral conduct" are not eligible to serve as full-time missionaries. Similarly, women who undergo an abortion resulting from their "immoral conduct" (that is, not from rape or incest) are not called on full-time missions.[15] These negative and cautious rulings emphasize the gravity of abortion and the narrow grounds that may justify an abortion.

In an address presented at the October 1998 general conference, prophet and President Gordon B. Hinckley announced to the public the position published in the *Handbook.* In his talk, he posed the following question to himself: "What is your position on abortion?" As an answer to this question, he delineated the Latter-day Saint stance on abortion in words that closely echo those of the *Handbook:*

> While we denounce [abortion], we make allowance in such circumstances as when pregnancy is the result of incest or rape, when the life or health of the mother is judged by competent medical authority to be in serious jeopardy, or when the fetus is known by competent medical authority to have serious defects that will not allow the baby to survive beyond birth.[16]

The Health of the Mother. President Hinckley's inclusion of the phrase "health of the mother" marks a slight change from earlier public Church statements that limited abortions to preserving the life of the mother or to cases of rape or incest.[17] It also marks a significant difference between the Latter-day Saint position and that of pro-life activists who oppose abortion at any time. In particular, some pro-life activists hold that any consideration of the mother's life and health opens too large a window for abortion. For example, some of the questions that could be asked about health include the following: Does the term *health* mean only life-threatening danger? What degree of physical harm must be threatened for abortion to be allowed? Can the term also mean the mental health of the mother in those cases where physically she can bear the child but psychologically she will incur damage? The ambiguity of this term alarms anti-abortion forces, and as a result, on websites and in literature, they have labeled the Church pro-abortion. Church leaders do not attempt to answer all questions about the meaning of "health." Rather, the statement in the *Handbook* outlines the procedure to take in making a decision on abortion, not examples of cases that may prompt its use. Discouragement of abortion is the general rule; individual exceptions are to be considered as unique cases, each of which should be carefully discussed with the bishop and prayerfully evaluated.

Clearly the act of abortion poses a dilemma—two equally undesirable choices, neither of which can be fully resolved. The choice is particularly poignant when only the fetus or the mother may survive and one life must be terminated or severely compromised in order to save the other. In this case, Elder Russell M. Nelson notes that most agree that the life of the

mother should have primacy.[18] This position contrasts with that of the Roman Catholic Church, which prohibits any abortion and advocates sacrificing the mother rather than denying life to the fetus.[19]

Rape, Incest, and the Issue of Agency. Besides risk to the mother's life, another situation in which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints permits abortion is when the pregnancy results from rape or incest.[20] Church leaders have presented a doctrinal basis for this rare exception to the rule. A fundamental tenet of Latter-day Saint doctrine is agency, the right to choose and act for oneself. A woman who has been raped or exploited by incest has been denied a fundamental choice: the right to consent to sexual contact. When this choice was taken from her by an unwanted sexual attack, she also lost any voice in choosing to procreate. If a pregnancy were to result, she should then be given the choice to bear the child, which opens the option of abortion. Church leaders stress that the woman can also choose to preserve life, spurn abortion, and bear the child.[21]

In an *Ensign* article that argues strongly against the use of abortion, Elder Dallin H. Oaks lays out possible approaches a woman may take in such a case. He quotes a letter whose reasoning he shares:

> The woman's right to choose what will or will not happen to her body is obviously violated by rape or incest. When conception results in such a case, the woman has the moral as well as the legal right to an abortion because the condition of pregnancy is the result of someone else's irresponsibility, not hers. She does not have to take responsibility for it. To force her by law to carry the fetus to term would be a further violation of her right. She also has the right to refuse an abortion. This would give her the right to the fetus and also the responsibility for it. She could later relinquish this right and this responsibility through the process of placing the baby for adoption after it is born. Whichever way is a responsible choice.[22]

Church teachings on abortion show that agency is so critical that the individual's right to agency is considered more important than the denial of life to the fetus if it is aborted. Of course, the individual exercising agency will be responsible for her choice eternally.

The Question of When the Fetus Can Be Considered a Human Being. For many, the most critical point in the general abortion debate is at what point the fetus can be considered human. However, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has consistently refrained from giving an official position on this question. Two scriptural sources may shed light on this question, but neither furnishes a definitive basis for a statement of doctrine. In fact, they seem to contradict each other on the issue of when the spirit enters the body. Luke 1:44 states that Elisabeth's "babe leaped in [her] womb for joy" when Mary greeted her. Some Christians use this verse to affirm that the fetus (John the Baptist) was alive at that point in Elisabeth's

womb. However, in 3 Nephi 1:12–14, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to Nephi, announcing His imminent birth. One could argue that if the Lord could address Nephi from the heavens, He could not have been in Mary's womb the day before His birth. This point is made by those who hold that the spirit of the child dwells with Heavenly Father until the time of birth, although the birth of Jesus may have been exceptional in this respect, as it was in other ways.

Furthermore, latter-day prophets have disagreed as to when the spirit enters the body. Brigham Young taught that the spirit enters the fetus at the time of quickening: "When the mother feels life come to her infant it is the spirit entering the body."[23] On the other hand, David O. McKay taught that the spirit joins the body at the moment of birth.[24] But the reason for such differences of opinion is clarified by a more recent formal statement found in a 1970 First Presidency letter to stake presidencies: "There is no direct revelation upon the subject [of when the spirit takes possession of the body]. . . . It has always been a moot question. That there is life in the child before birth is undoubted fact, but whether that life is the result of the affinity of the child in embryo with the life of its mother or because the spirit has entered it remains an unsolved mystery."[25] Thus the question of when the spirit enters the fetus is not crucial to understanding the Latter-day Saint position on abortion.

The Eternal Context. The Latter-day Saint position on abortion rests largely on two major principles of doctrine. The first is respect for the miracle of human life that links procreation and family life for the eternities. The second is respect for agency, the individual's responsibility to choose his or her path. Agency—here the decision to engage in sexual activity—is first exercised. Taking responsibility for one's actions if pregnancy results means that one should respect the life created and not seek to destroy it through abortion.[26] Elder Dallin H. Oaks stated in 1993 that "the power to create mortal life is the most exalted power God has given his children." He went on to emphasize that abortion precludes this power:

> The ultimate act of destruction is to take a life. That is why abortion is such a serious sin. Our attitude toward abortion is not based on revealed knowledge of when mortal life begins for legal purposes. It is fixed by our knowledge that according to an eternal plan all of the spirit children of God must come to this earth for a glorious purpose, and that individual identity began long before conception and will continue for the eternities to come.[27]

For Latter-day Saints, the birth of a child is part of a much wider pattern of creation that extends backwards and forwards throughout the eternities. Furthermore, the sanctity of the family is central to Latter-day Saint doctrine. A denial of potential life therefore has grave and extensive ramifications for all concerned: the person receiving the abortion, those counselling

and supporting her in her decision, the person performing the abortion, and the individual aborted. Thus Latter-day Saint ecclesiastical leaders use strong language to persuade members that abortion is a momentous decision. Although an individual may have serious reasons for obtaining an abortion, these reasons may pale beside the eternal consequences of denying potential life. For this reason, Church leaders seek to convince individuals that transitory matters such as social convenience, employment, avoidance of personal shame or parental disappointment, and personal discomfort are not reasons that will outweigh the potential of a human life. The importance of life, they stress, should not be tampered with.[28]

Consultation with Family and Religious Authorities. When weighing whether to seek an abortion, the *Handbook* advises members to consult physicians, ecclesiastical leaders, and the Lord.[29] It cautions that members should pray for divine guidance and a confirmation that abortion is the correct course before making a decision. Considering the Church's doctrinal emphasis on the family, such advice assumes that abortion is a family matter. Wives and husbands as well as unmarried women are expected to consult with their ecclesiastical leaders and ideally with their parents and family. The fences Church leaders construct around abortion—consulting with a physician, consulting with an ecclesiastical leader, and finally, the critical step of consulting the Lord—all emphasize that this is a most grave decision with eternal ramifications.

Muslim Teachings on Abortion

The structure of Islamic law imposes a vocabulary different from that of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when one is determining Islam's position on the religious considerations of human actions. Islamic legal scholars sort human actions into five categories: (1) obligatory actions, such as prayer, the profession of faith, tithes, and fasting the month of Ramadan; (2) recommended actions, such as marriage and having children; (3) neutral actions, such as whether a man has one, two, three, or four wives and whether one prays at the mosque or elsewhere; (4) reprehensible actions, or those which should be avoided but are not prohibited, such as divorce; (5) prohibited actions, such as murder, adultery, eating pork, and drinking alcohol. When Muslims ask questions about the permissibility of a given issue, the position on the legal scale where Muslim religious scholars (*ʿulama*) rank the issue decides whether or not believers should undertake a given action. One factor, the intention behind the action, is believed to moderate each legal judgment. Thus, killing may be not prohibited, although judged a reprehensible action, when it is in self-defense or in defense of one's child. Drinking alcohol may be lightened from prohibited to reprehensible when a caravan, finding itself in the

desert several days' travel from a well, has only wine to stave off death from dehydration. Likewise, pilgrimage, one of the obligatory five pillars of Islam, would be considered a reprehensibly negative action if a head of a household impoverished his family to finance his pilgrimage to Mecca. So context may have the effect of reworking the negative onus of prohibited actions or the necessity of performing obligatory ones.

All Muslims agree that, in general, abortion is prohibited, the most negative judgment possible. I have interviewed numerous Muslim religious leaders over the past twenty-five years as well as read numerous articles and statements on abortion. All uniformly begin with the statement that Islam prohibits abortion. However, as one listens to each discussion on this prohibition, numerous subtle differences emerge in the identification of specific cases where abortion may be permitted.

Islamic Attitudes toward Children. Neither the Qur'an nor the Sunna and hadith directly address abortion. The absence of anything like a scriptural pronouncement means that jurists and religious scholars must reason by analogy from these texts in order to work out a systematic legal position. For abortion, the meaningful references are scriptures in the Qur'an that address killing children. Before the advent of Islam, the Arab tribes exposed infant girls to the elements or buried them alive to rid themselves of unwanted daughters. This practice of infanticide was common enough that it was given a specific name, *wa'd*. The Qur'an makes various references to this practice and identifies infanticide as a major sin, a prohibited killing of innocent life: "Kill not your children for fear of want, we provide sustenance for them and for you, the killing of them is a great sin" (17:31; 6:151).

The most vivid condemnation of infanticide is found in the Qur'an in a description of Judgment Day. This chapter was one of the earliest revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and is often quoted by jurists who forbid abortion. "When the infant girl who was buried alive is asked, 'For what sin was she killed?' [what will be answered by whoever killed her]" (81:8).

This verse, coupled with the warnings against killing children for economic reasons, has imbued in Muslims a horror of any threats to the well-being of children. The cautions and the strong respect for life of innocent and helpless children reflected in these verses resonate beyond the issue of infanticide. A few extremely conservative Muslims use them to rule against family planning as well as abortion.[30]

The Question of When the Fetus Can Be Considered a Human Being. Given the injunction against killing children, Muslims asked whether a fetus in the womb is "created" and is therefore human. Islam holds that men and women are created at the moment that divine spirit, or their soul, is breathed into them. According to the Qur'an, after God fashioned the first man, Adam, from clay, God breathed "[His] own spirit" into him and

gave him "hearing and sight and hearts" (32:9; also 15:29; 38:72). This verse sets out a divine role in the creation of each fetus, the time when the fetus is "ensouled."

Thus, in order to rule on abortion, Muslims must determine when in the gestation process the fetus is ensouled. Since they define abortion as the purposeful, premature, and unnecessary expulsion of the created fetus,[31] destroying a fetus can be abortion—and thereby prohibited—only if the action eliminates an ensouled life. As Muslim schools of law differ on when the fetus is ensouled, the bulk of the jurisprudence literature on abortion is addressed to solving this question.

The time frame assigned for the creation of the human (the entrance of the soul) comes from an interpretation of a scripture in the Qur'an that states:

> We first created man from an essence of clay: then placed him, a living germ, in a safe enclosure. The germ We made into a clot of blood, and the clot into a lump of flesh. This We fashioned into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, thus bringing forth another creation. (23:12–14).

Three stages are mentioned here: the germ, the clot of blood, and the lump of flesh and bones. A hadith assigns a time period of 40 days to each of the three stages, a total of 120 days.[32] Other hadith give 40 or 90 days as the total of the stages. While the majority of Muslims believe that the soul enters the fetus at conception, other schools of law believe that the fetus has not been created and has no soul until the stages are complete. Accordingly, the majority of scholars forbid abortion at any point following conception, but other authorities permit it until the point when they believe the fetus becomes a human being. Depending on the time assigned to the stages of development, this point may range from 40 to 90 to 120 days after conception. For scholars who hold that the soul enters the fetus at some point such as 120 days, abortion after that point is a "great sin, rather than the smaller sin it is considered before 120 days."[33] In others words, terminating a pregnancy is not considered "killing" until after the point at which Muslim religious scholars judge that the fetus has been ensouled.

Even for scholars who believe that the fetus is created at some point after conception (for example, after 120 days), anyone seeking an abortion before this point must still have a good reason for doing so. Muslims consider the end of a potential life, as well as an ensouled fetal life, to be of critical importance. After the 120-day window, the most often cited reason for abortion is danger to the life of the mother. Muslims believe that a mortal threat to the mother's health provides the strongest justification for abortion. Abortion in this case becomes not only permitted but recommended. When a woman's life may be endangered, Muslim religious leaders defer to the authority of the mother's physician; at this point, they believe that the

issue is no longer a religious matter, but a medical one. If the physician determines that the mother would be adversely affected by continuing the pregnancy, the abortion is permitted. Muslims prioritize the mother's life over the fetus because the mother is "the origin" of the child's life. The mother cannot be sacrificed for a pregnancy that could not have occurred without her. Abortion to preserve the life of the mother is the major exception on which all Muslims agree. When the mother's life is not endangered, but the birth would cause severe damage to her health, most Muslim religious leaders would support the abortion as well. A lesser number support abortion in the case of great financial hardship to the family.[34]

The Issue of Severely Deformed Fetuses. In the past two decades, questions have also arisen as to whether abortion is justified if the fetus faces a life with severe deformities. This "right not to be born" or "wrongful birth" issue has been treated by contemporary *fatwas* issued by legal scholars.[35] Various factions have come down on both sides of the issue. Kuwait permits abortions of deformed fetuses up to three months into pregnancy, a law that roughly follows some scholars' permission for abortion within the 120-day window before the fetus's ensoulment. Other scholars will not allow abortion of deformed fetuses beyond 40 days. Others prohibit abortion even within the first 40 days, arguing that injured fetuses may be cured while in the womb or that a child with certain deformities does not face imminent death after birth and deserves to live. The late sheikh of al-Azhar University, Jad al-Haqq, argued that abortion is justifiable only in the case of severe injuries or genetic disease.[36]

Rape and Incest. While the issues of ensoulment and deformity are not easily resolved, the case of rape is even more complicated in Muslim society. In the West, the rape victim who becomes pregnant has three options: aborting the fetus, carrying the baby to term and giving the child up for adoption, or raising the child. In the Muslim world, the woman's options are curtailed. Muslim society has tended to equate rape with adultery, and, in practice, the raped woman may be prosecuted for adultery if she publicizes her rape. If she is married, her husband may divorce her; if she is unmarried, her natal family may disown her. In any case, her chances for a good marriage will be destroyed, she will be socially ostracized, her family will be shamed, she may be jailed for adultery, and in the worst case, her life may be in danger. Few women report rapes.

Nor is adoption a viable alternative, because adoption is generally not practiced in Muslim countries.[37] As a result, the mother generally does not have the option of giving the child up for a legal adoption, although members of the extended family may take an unwanted child to raise. Thus the mother has only two options: abortion or continuing with a pregnancy that will lead to disgrace for herself and for her family. In these cases, the child of rape bears the onus of the mother's disgrace.

Rape became a prominent issue following the rapes of Muslim Bosnian women by Bosnian Serbs and the rapes of Kuwaiti women by Iraqi soldiers during the Gulf War. Women brought pressure to legitimize abortion in the cases of these atrocities, since they understood the emotional trauma and the resulting social discrimination that the mother and child would face. However, most Muslim religious scholars still hold that rape does not fulfill any conditions that would justify abortion, because the child of rape is not to blame for the sin that conceived him or her. Some scholars permit abortion in the case of rape before 120 days or for purposes of the mother's health, but even those scholars continue to pose the question, "What sin did the fetus commit that justifies its killing?"[38]

The Issue of Agency. Muslim statements do not note rape's violation of the victim's agency, and given existing statements, it is doubtful that many Muslim religious leaders would consider this violation a sufficient reason to permit abortion. That said, it is important to recognize that throughout the intellectual history of Islam, agency has been a major theme taken up in important Islamic theological and philosophical treatises. While many Muslims express a belief in determinism, the prominent theologians of the classical period mounted arguments disputing determinism and arguing for human will. Agency is implicitly referred to when Muslims discuss contraception. Family planning measures are permitted only when both the husband and the wife agree to their use—thus the parents share in the responsibility of not creating a child although engaging in sexual relations. But to this point, no religious leaders have presented a discussion of abortion that stipulates the woman as a free agent.

Consultation with Family and Religious Authorities. The Muslim texts on abortion say little about consultation between husband and wife when considering an abortion. However, it may be assumed that if spouses must consult before using contraception, both parents would consult about obtaining an abortion. Indeed, to officially obtain an abortion, most Muslim countries require the signature of both parents.

Few Muslims know of the elaborately worked-out permissibility for abortion within defined time windows. This information would be gleaned from consultation with well-educated Muslim religious leaders, not less-trained leaders in villages or city quarters. However, the legal schools' positions are reflected in some Muslim nations' laws, such as in Turkey and Tunisia, which have legalized abortion. Muslim religious leaders stress that their judgment is limited to stating the general rule, which is that abortion is forbidden (given the time constraints of the particular school of law) unless an exception exists.

At this point, abortion on demand is legal in only two Middle Eastern countries with a majority Muslim population—Tunisia and Turkey—although it is increasingly accepted in Iran. Abortion is also legal in the five

Muslim majority Central Asian countries that were once part of the Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Tunisia and Turkey refer to legal teachings of the Hanifi school that permit abortion within a 120-day window. The other Muslim countries provide for therapeutic abortions, but social or elective abortion is illegal.

Conclusion

The Church of Jesus Christ and Islam share more similarities than differences in dealing with the question of abortion. The two religions agree that abortion is akin to killing and as such it is overwhelmingly discouraged. Exceptions are determined on a case-by-case basis rather than with a uniform policy. Both religions lack an explicit scriptural reference that spells out a stance on abortion and therefore rely on a complex of references, reasoning, or statements by modern authorities to address their concern about a practice that contradicts their preeminent concern with life. They agree that the life of the mother outweighs that of the fetus and so permit abortion if the mother's life is endangered.

The major difference with regard to policies on abortion revolves around the question of when life enters the fetus. Islamic jurisprudence considers this question central to the abortion issue. The Church of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, does not consider this a factor in its policy on abortion. A second major difference is the question of agency. The Church of Jesus Christ holds that individual agency is the one constant that cannot be violated; therefore, the decision whether to abort ultimately belongs to the mother when she had no choice in engaging in sexual relations, such as in the case of rape and incest. Islamic law, on the other hand, does not automatically allow an abortion in the case of rape or incest.

Perhaps the most important point of similarity is that both Islam and The Church of Jesus Christ give strong guidelines but wisely leave space for the eventualities that human beings face in an imperfect world when confronted by difficult circumstances. By the time abortion is considered, a woman faces a choice between denying life to a child in her womb and bearing the difficult consequences if the child is born. For many women this choice is excruciating. The willingness of both religions to leave room for dilemmas to be solved on an individual basis within certain parameters is purposeful and wise, for no system of law can anticipate the infinite complications of human lives. Ambiguity can provide critical space to allow for needed actions.

Donna Lee Bowen is a Professor of Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies at Brigham Young University. She received her B.A. from the University of Utah and her

Ph.D. in 1981 from the University of Illinois at Chicago. The author wishes to thank the following for their comments on earlier versions of this article: Gary Bryner, Bill Daynes, Wade Jacoby, Stan Taylor, Jim Barnes, and the BYU Department of Political Science Tuesday Group.

1. Information is drawn from a variety of sources, including National Opinion Research Center data published by the University of Chicago and *Gallup Report* (February 1989), 16–23. Selected years of data are reported in Raymond Tatalovich, *The Politics of Abortion in the United States and Canada: A Comparative Study*, Comparative Politics Series, no. 7 (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 112. Data for 1996 were drawn from David W. Moore, Frank Newport, and Lydia Saad, "Public Generally Supports a Woman's Right to Abortion," *The Gallup Poll Monthly* (August 1996): 32.

2. Donna Lee Bowen, "Abortion, Islam, and the 1994 Cairo Population Conference," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 2 (May 1997): 161–84.

3. The Alan Guttmacher Institute publishes these figures; see http://www.agiusa.org/pubs/fb_0599.html, October 23, 2001.

4. "Global Figures for 1997, 1996, 1995," http://www.galwayforlife.ie/global_figures.html, October 23, 2001.

5. A major Salt Lake City newspaper states that the 1,186,039 abortions reported for 1997 is the lowest number reported since 1977. "Number of Abortions Drops to Two-Decade Low," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 7, 2000, sec. A, p. 5.

6. U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstracts of the United States: 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), 82.

7. Tim B. Heaton, "Social Forces That Imperil the Family," *Dialogue* 32, no. 4 (1999): 34.

8. "Islamic law" is perhaps a misleading term for the shari'a. Shari'a law comprises all areas of a Muslim's life, a wide scope that includes religious doctrine, ritual practice, personal status law, business law, the code of conduct during war, and the treatment of conquered people following war. Since Islam encompasses both religion and worldly matters, the shari'a sets standards for every area of life and seeks to address questions that Muslims pose concerning religiously correct behavior. The primary source for determining the shari'a position on a given issue is the Qur'an. The second source is the Sunna, the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his close associates. The Sunna was recorded in the hadith literature, a set of traditions of the prophet accompanied by the chain of individuals who passed down the tradition orally until it was recorded in writing. Differences in interpretation and in the degree of reliance scholars put on different sources and methods of reasoning have resulted in different schools of law. Scholars from these legal schools compiled volumes of jurisprudence literature that examine the various areas of shari'a law from their particular viewpoint, using their methodological tools.

9. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Church Handbook of Instructions*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 1:157.

10. *Church Handbook*, 1:157.

11. Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in "A Prophet Declares: Abortion Is Wrong," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, week ending March 27, 1976, 6.

12. Ezra Taft Benson, "Strengthening the Family," *Improvement Era* 73 (December 1970): 46.

13. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report* 141 (April 1971): 47.

14. Dallin H. Oaks, "Weightier Matters," *Ensign* 31 (January 2001): 14.

15. First Presidency, letter to Church leaders, March 4, 1993.

16. Gordon B. Hinckley, "What Are People Asking about Us?" *Ensign* 28 (November 1998): 71.

17. See the discussion on abortion in Lester E. Bush, "Ethical Issues in Reproductive Medicine: A Mormon Perspective," *Dialogue* 18, no. 2 (summer 1985): 48–55.

18. Russell M. Nelson, "Reverence for Life," *Ensign* 25 (May 1985): 12.

19. Roman Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Rome: Urbi et Orbi Communications, 1994), 547, 549.

20. See *Supplement to the 1989 General Church Handbook of Instructions* (1991), 1; Hinckley, "What Are People Asking about Us?" 71; Nelson, "Reverence for Life," 12; Oaks, "Weightier Matters," 14. The *Handbook* notes that even "these are not automatic reasons for abortion."

21. Oaks, "Weightier Matters," 15.

22. Oaks, "Weightier Matters," 15.

23. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 17:143, July 19, 1874.

24. See Bush, "Ethical Issues in Reproductive Medicine," 50–51. He also discusses other positions put forward by Wilford Woodruff.

25. Bush, "Ethical Issues," 51.

26. Oaks, "Weightier Matters," 13–15.

27. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign* 23 (November 1993): 74.

28. The best source for this reasoning is found in Oaks, "Weightier Matters," 15.

29. *Church Handbook*, 1:157.

30. This is the case among a minority of Mormons as well.

31. Muhammad Salam Madkur, "Sterilization and Abortion from the Point of View of Islam," *Islam and Family Planning*, ed. Isam Nazer (Beirut: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1974), 2:271.

32. For a full discussion of the classical sources, see Marion Katz, "The Problem of Abortion in Classical Sunni Fiqh," in *Islamic Ethics of Life: Abortion, War, and Euthanasia*, ed. Jon Brockopp (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002).

33. Abdul Rehman, mufti of New Delhi, quoted in John-Thor Dahlburg, "Faiths Disagree on Morality of Abortion," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1995, 5.

34. See Donna Lee Bowen, "Contemporary Muslim Ethics of Abortion," in *Islamic Ethics of Life*, and "Abortion and the Ethics of Life," *Everyday Life in the Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 169–79.

35. A *fatwa* is a legal opinion formulated by well-known legal scholars. These contemporary opinions are published in newspapers, periodicals, and booklets and may be broadcast on television or radio. Since Muslim scholars may differ on their takes on issues, they may issue fatwas with different or conflicting conclusions on the same issue. This diversity of approach helps to crystallize the issues at stake.

36. Vardit Rispler-Chaim, "The Right Not to Be Born: Abortion of the Disadvantaged Fetus in Contemporary Fatwas," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 2 (April 1999): 133–37.

37. Amira al-Azhary Sonbol, "Adoption in Islamic Society: a Historical Survey," *Children in the Muslim Middle East*, ed. Elizabeth W. Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 45–67.

38. Rispler-Chaim, "The Right Not to Be Born," 137–38.

Carrying water jars, five heavily clothed young Palestinian women gather at a town well. In a dry climate where "water is life," bringing water into the home was vital to daily life from the days of Sarah and Rebecca down to the last century. Charles Ellis Johnson, a Latter-day Saint photographer, recorded this scene in 1903. See pages 135–46 of this issue of *BYU Studies*.

Mormonism and Islam

From Polemics to Mutual Respect and Cooperation

Arnold H. Green

The world's fastest growing religion is either Islam (if considering annual growth in total numbers) or Mormonism (if considering annual growth in percentage terms). These two rapidly expanding global faiths are certain to increase interactions with each other. Already, in the minds of some clergymen, the two faiths have become associated in several ways, including Mormonism's being called "the Islam of America." While Muslim leaders have so far paid little attention to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Church's General Authorities have expressed opinions about Islam. At first, they reacted negatively to being equated with it. Later, they formulated more positive views of Islam and also found opportunities to cooperate with it toward common goals.

Although no references to Islam exist in the canonized books of scripture peculiar to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, many can be found in Mormon sermons and writings. The positions and tones embedded therein are not homogeneous—but represent sundry views expressed in a variety of circumstances over the Church's 171-year life span. Several factors help explain the attitudinal variety. Mormonism arose within a North American culture emanating from European Christian civilization, which had nourished anti-Islamic attitudes that were redirected against Mormonism even while those same attitudes were embraced by some Latter-day Saint writers. Also, Mormon thinkers engaged in analogical reasoning, applying lessons drawn from the scriptures to nonbiblical groupings—they adapted policy and doctrine to deal with religious communities like Islam. Yet the adaptations varied according to the particular eras, issues, and officers. In short, enough different Mormon associations with Islam have occurred to warrant a critical investigation into them.

Genuine Mormon-Muslim interaction (for example, Latter-day Saint estimations of Islam or cooperative efforts) can be distinguished from associations occurring in the minds of outsiders (for example, the Joseph Smith–Muhammad comparison). After briefly treating the latter category, this essay suggests patterns in the former, including a three-part periodization

schema. Based in the Midwest during the 1830s and 1840s, Mormons first echoed traditional European antipathy toward Islam ("Islamophobia"). Living mainly in western North America, in a second phase during the 1850s–1870s, they took a more benign view on grounds of scriptural precedents. Then, as the Church grew into a global faith, its posture toward Islam became even more positive and its interaction with it more multifaceted.

The Joseph Smith–Muhammad Comparison

The Joseph Smith–Muhammad analogy developed through three phases correlating with, respectively, anti-Mormon polemics, orientalism, and pseudosociology. The initial phase entailed Protestant clerics adapting, for their campaign against nascent Mormonism, a tactic that originated in Rome to malign embryonic Protestantism. Catholic spokesmen accused the Reformers of the vices attributed by medieval Christians to Muhammad, claiming that they were ignorant, devious, and violent impostors. That Luther and others were in such negative ways "like Muhammad" became known as the accusation of "cryptomohammedanism," or being secret followers of Muhammad.[1] Having been its target in Europe since the 1520s, Protestants redirected the charge of cryptomohammedanism against the Mormons in North America after the 1820s.

Anti-Mormon Polemics. The anti-Mormon subspecies of such allegations experienced substantive growth and geographic diffusion. In 1830, *Palmyra Reflector* editor Obadiah Dogberry referred to Joseph Smith's scribe and counselor, Oliver Cowdery, as "this second Mahomet."[2] The next year he modified and fleshed out the analogy somewhat by specifying that "it is only in their [Joseph Smith and Muhammad's] ignorance and impudence that a parallel can be found."[3] That basic tactic apparently diffused during 1831 to Alexander Campbell in West Virginia as well as to Pomeroy Tucker and James Gordon Bennett in Ohio.[4] In 1834, Tucker's editor, E. D. Howe, identified Joseph Smith's "extreme ignorance and apparent stupidity" as well-worn cloaks in the "ward-robe of impostors. They were even thrown upon the shoulders of the great prince of deceivers, Muhammad."[5] In 1838 disgruntled ex-Mormon Thomas B. Marsh added the facet of violence when he testified of overhearing Joseph Smith boast, "Like Muhammad, whose motto in treating for peace was 'the Alcoran or the Sword.' So should it be eventually with us, 'Joseph Smith or the Sword.'"[6]

As it spread through time and across space among anti-Mormon polemicists, the accusation of cryptomohammedanism acquired larger dimensions. Entire articles and pamphlets were devoted to it, including "The Yankee Mahomet" in *American Whig Review* (New York City, 1851) and Charles MacKay's *Mormons: The "American Mahomet"* (London, 1851). The simile soon attracted book-length treatment. MacKay expanded his

pamphlet into *History of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints. With Memoirs of . . . Joseph Smith, the American Mahomet* (1853). Two later volumes—J. F. Willing's *Mohammedanism of the West* (1906) and B. Kinney's *Mormonism: The Islam of America* (1912)—widened the Joseph Smith–Muhammad simile to the whole scope of Mormonism and Islam. But this larger superstructure rested on the original foundation: like Muhammad, Joseph Smith was an ignorant, devious, violent impostor.[7]

Orientalism. From the realm of American religious polemics, the analogy meanwhile spilled over into that of "orientalism": European scholarship about the Orient, including the Islamic religion. A few orientalists restated the comparison while undergirding it with fashionable academic concepts. Richard F. Burton (1821–1890), translator of *1001 Nights* and surreptitious pilgrim to Mecca, published *City of the Saints* in 1861 after a visit to Utah the year before.[8] Declaring that Joseph Smith had eclectically plagiarized Mormonism's dogmas and rituals from older religions, Burton pointed out superficial parallels with Islam: belief in literal resurrection, polygamy, and female inferiority.

Burton's memoir perhaps reached University of London historian D. S. Margoliouth (1858–1940), who wrote the influential *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam* (1905).[9] Versus Burton's concept of eclectic plagiarism, Margoliouth cast the similarities he observed as examples of phenomenology, the assumption that "related events" represent a common phenomenon and so merit comparative analysis. Focusing on the phenomenon of a prophet elaborating a new religion, Margoliouth noted that both Muhammad and Joseph Smith (a) had spiritual experiences after wrestling with sectarian rivalries and (b) obtained subsequent revelations piecemeal as situations required divine guidance.[10]

No doubt aware of Margoliouth's book, Berlin University professor of ancient history Eduard Meyer (1855–1930) gave the comparison its most extensive treatment in his *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Origin and history of the Mormons; 1911). Meyer's study drew many parallels between Joseph Smith and Muhammad: a phase of perplexity, angelic visitations, scriptures tailored for specific peoples, abrogative revelations, prophetic inspiration declining into "a later stage of purely fictional inspiration," the unconscious blurring of "the distinction between truth and independent invention," sensuality growing continually stronger, and seeking a national territorial base, then world domination.[11] Meyer used a pair of now discredited approaches, including "proxy research." Meyer and many other orientalists were Old Testament scholars who saw modern Arabs as constituting a living museum of ancient Semitic culture, a museum they visited mainly to learn about vanished Bible-era Hebrews. Meyer took proxy research a giant step further by examining Mormonism's

well-documented origins in lieu of Islam's sparsely documented ones. "Through comparative analysis both [religions] receive so much light that a scientific study of one through the other is indispensable," he wrote.[12]

Meyer also infused phenomenology with Hegel's idea of the *Zeitgeist*. Berlin University philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831) taught that similar historical events manifest "the spirit of the time" (*Zeitgeist*). To bridge the great temporal and spatial distances between Muhammad's milieu (seventh-century Arabia) and Joseph Smith's, Meyer asserted that frontier America was a pocket of "primitive semi-barbarism." Thus he explained that Mormonism's origin "will be comprehensible only if the reader keeps in mind the picture of very primitive ways of thinking in the midst of a culture which is highly developed in many of its other forms."[13]

Pseudosociology. After a stage of anti-Mormon polemics and another of orientalist conceptualizing, the pseudosociology stage represented a dialectical synthesis of the first two. In this century, two sociologists coated the analogy with a veneer of social science to disguise their respective polemical ends. Hans Thimme denied an intent "to criticize [Mormonism] from the point of view of Christian doctrine." Rather, he assured, "my purpose is that of comparative religion. I wish to describe this cult in so far as it shows parallels to another great religion of world-history, Islam."[14] But Thimme, a Protestant cleric whose essay appeared in a journal sponsored by a seminary that trained Christian missionaries to Muslims, betrayed his dual bias by accusing Muhammad and Joseph Smith of sharing a "low intellectual standard," espousing "the wildest superstitions," failing to distinguish "between reality and hallucination," preaching "holy war," and tending to "under-value human sinfulness" (that is, to deny original sin).[15] Thimme's "sociology of religion" thus simply masked his allegation of crypto-mohammedanism.[16]

While also professing an impartial "sociological interest," Georges-Henri Bousquet pursued a hidden agenda differing from that of Thimme. In effect plagiarizing from Meyer for his comparative studies of Mormonism and Islam,[17] Bousquet (who taught sociology at the University of Algiers) acknowledged that "we Frenchmen . . . aspire, like Islam does, to make our civilization triumph here [in North Africa]."[18] Focusing on Meyer's assessment of the two religions' "barbarity" and pointing out that Islam fails to separate theology, law, and ethics as Christianity does, Bousquet used a crude biological evolutionary metaphor as "scientific proof" for Islam's cultural evolutionary backwardness. "In mammals we find a urinary bladder, a vagina, [and] a rectum, whereas birds and reptiles have only a single, undifferentiated organ: the cloaca," he stated. "Similarly, Islamic law, the Shari'a, remained at a more primitive stage of evolution than did Christianity."[19] While Thimme's tactic represented the stock

accusation of cryptomohammedanism, Bousquet's entailed anti-Islamic French imperial propaganda that borrowed from the Mormonism-Islam comparison primarily Meyer's allegation of barbarity.

Neither disputation can pass as impartial "sociology of religion." Indeed, the Joseph Smith–Muhammad simile—throughout its cryptomo-hammedan, orientalist,[20] and pseudosociological phases—served mainly as a historical weathervane of Western anti-Muslim and anti-Mormon attitudes. Since Bousquet's time, the ebbing of the tide of references to the comparison suggests that these attitudes have begun to change.[21]

Latter-day Saint–Muslim Interaction

Genuine interchange between Mormonism and Islam has included the former's changing attitudes toward the latter, which can be sorted into three phases. In each chronological phase, the Church had a particular geographical reach, and its leaders emphasized certain scriptures when referring to Islam. Early nineteenth-century "Midwest Mormonism" reflected Christianity's tendency to regard Islam as the pagan religion of a false prophet. Late nineteenth-century "Utah Mormonism" adapted the scriptural idea of judgment to define for Islam a purgative scriptural function. Twentieth-century "global Mormonism" has scripted for Islam more positive roles by extending the concept of dispensations and by appreciating the need for interfaith cooperation on certain issues.

Midwest Mormonism's Reflected Islamophobia. Based in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois during the 1830s and 1840s, Mormonism echoed European Islamophobia. The Mormons obtained their knowledge of and attitudes toward Islam from traditional Christianity, despite—and because of—being a target of its polemical charge of cryptomohammedanism. That is, ironically, the Protestant ministers' allegation that Mormons were cryptomohammedans first brought Islam to the attention of the Latter-day Saints and shaped their initial attitudes toward it. A *Times and Seasons* article explained, "That our Elders and readers may understand a little about Turkish religion, we extract the following sketch from the 'Universal Traveler.'" The *Times and Seasons* article quotes the "Universal Traveler" as saying that Muhammad "'began to promulgate his religion, which, partaking somewhat of Judaism and Christianity, has been called a 'Christian heresy.' In successive years, he published portions of the Koran, as suited his convenience, accommodating his revelations to exigencies as they occurred.'"[22]

Probably the most influential scriptures of this era and this posture were those warning of "false prophets."[23] Such passages were no doubt the reference of an April 1844 *Times and Seasons* article entitled "The Last Hour of the False Prophet" that applauded the Ottoman Empire's decline under

pressure from European imperial expansion. That historical development was heralded by the article as an omen signaling "the speedy fulfillment of the predictions against Muhammadanism,"[24] although the article did not specify who made what predictions.

A year earlier, responding to James Arlington Bennett's mentioning him disparagingly in connection with Muhammad, Joseph Smith himself made two references regarding Islam's prophet, seemingly based on Matthew 7:15–20 ("Beware of false prophets. . . . [B]y their fruits ye shall know them"). He first cited "Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Mahomet, Bonaparte, or other great sounding heroes that dazzled forth with a trail of pomp and circumstances for a little season, like a comet, and then disappeared, leaving a wide waste."[25] Later in his reply to Bennett, Joseph Smith lamented that "the world at large, is ever ready to credit the writings of Homer, Hesiod, . . . Mahomet, and a hundred others, but where, tell me where, have they left a line, a simple method of solving the truth of the plan of eternal life?"[26] Yet, in his "Ordinance on Religious Liberty in Nauvoo" (March 1841), Joseph Smith did provide that "Catholics, Presbyterians, . . . Unitarians, Muhammadans, and all other religious sects and denominations whatever, shall have free toleration, and equal privileges, in this city."[27]

In this initial phase, Latter-day Saints responded to allegations of cryptomohammedanism—whereby Protestant clerics tried to tar them with the same "false prophet" brush long used by Catholics against Muslims and then Protestants—by distinguishing Joseph Smith from Muhammad. In other words, Mormonism rejected the half of the polemic pertaining to itself but embraced the other half pertaining to Islam.

Utah Mormonism and God's "Spoilers." These early, borrowed, negative Latter-day Saint views of Islam were at times reiterated by some voices during the Utah period. For example, arguing in 1858 that "the history of the world from the time of its commencement to the present is a scene of war, carnage, and desolation," Elder John Taylor cited Near Eastern cases: "Histories of the Crusades furnish another example, together with the power, prowess, and bloodshed introduced by Mahomet in his day."[28] Twenty-four years later, President John Taylor expressed a cognate view: "We are not placed here to use any improper influence over the minds or consciences of men. It is not for us to attempt to do what Mahomet did— to say that there was but one God, and Mahomet was his prophet, and by force compel all others to acknowledge it."[29]

But a pair of sermons in September 1855 by George A. Smith and Parley P. Pratt, together with reports by Elder Smith's fellow "Palestine tourists" (including Lorenzo Snow and Eliza R. Snow), inaugurated a fresh Latter-day Saint posture toward Islam. This new stance entailed three

departures from the earlier false prophet theme. First, Mormons acknowledged the bias and distortion in traditional Christian accounts of Islam. Elder Pratt owned that "we, as Europeans, and Americans . . . have looked upon the history of Mahomet . . . [as] a kind of heathenism, or something dreadful."[30] Elder Smith added, "All the Christian translations of Mahometan history, as well as of the Koran, should be received with a great deal of allowance."[31] This acknowledgment's implication was that Latter-day Saints could and should acquire a better understanding of Islam by making their own direct contacts. Thus, Lorenzo Snow, one of the Latter-day Saint visitors to the Holy Land in 1872, reported some positive impressions: "In visiting the Turkish mosques, we observed that there were no pictures, images, statues or altars, which universally decorate the cathedrals in Christian countries."[32] His sister Eliza added, "Considering the outside appearance of the den-like houses of the Arab Mahommedans, it is very surprising to see how neat they look . . . their religion enjoins cleanliness." She also commented on the rivalry between Christian denominations over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, "which the Mussulman very reasonably considers uncomplimentary to the Christian religion."[33]

In a second departure, Latter-day Saints moved away from viewing Islam as a variety of paganism toward situating it within the Abrahamic legacy. Typical of the late nineteenth century, that acknowledgment was often expressed in genealogical terms. According to George A. Smith, "Mahomet descended from one of the most noble families of the Koreish [tribe of Mecca]; he came direct in descent from Ishmael, the son of Abraham." Parley P. Pratt noted the same lineage and remembered that "Ishmael and his descendants were blessed by the Lord," citing scriptural promises, such as, "I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17:20).[34] Lorenzo Snow also connected Islam to the Judeo-Christian heritage by observing that, to Muslims, "Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus Christ were all God's servants in their various ages, but the greatest and best is Mahomet."[35]

The third departure entailed abandoning references to Islam as issuing from a false prophet while defining for it a historical role adapted from the scriptural principle of "judgment"—the idea that the Lord punishes his wayward covenant people by stirring up against them gentile nations (Hebrew *goyim*). Old Testament examples include Assyria's conquest of Israel and Babylon's destruction of Judah. Regarding the former, "therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. . . . And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers" (2 Kgs. 17:18, 20). As for the latter, "Jehoiakim . . . did *that which was* evil in the sight of the Lord. . . . And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees [Babylonians]. . . and sent them against Judah to destroy it" (2 Kgs. 23:36–24:2).

BYU Studies

Elders Smith and Pratt adapted the Assyrian-Babylonian "spoilers" role in the judgment process to explain the rise of Islam. Elder Smith assured his audience that Muhammad "was no doubt raised up by God on purpose to scourge the world for their idolatry."[36] Elder Pratt noted that, whereas Muslims were strict monotheists, "the Greek and Roman Churches, which have been called Christian, and which take the name of Christians as a cloak, have worshipped innumerable idols." Therefore, he continued, "Mahometan history and Mahometan doctrine was a standard raised against the most corrupt and abominable idolatry that ever perverted our earth, found in the creeds and worship of Christians, falsely so named."[37] Using biblical precedents, George A. Smith and Parley P. Pratt thus cast Islam in the role of God's "spoilers" raised up to "scourge" apostate Eastern and Roman Christianity. Of course—as Isaiah made it clear in the case of Assyria and Babylon, who, while they were God's agents, were not his covenant people[38]—being "spoilers" constituted a limited scriptural role for Islam.

In sum, along with making some direct contact with Muslims, Latter-day Saints departed after 1855 from an earlier set of attitudes that reflected traditional European Islamophobia and were based on New Testament warnings against false prophets. The emerging set of postures included becoming wary of biased Western accounts of Islam, regarding Muhammad as a descendant of Abraham and Islam as an Abrahamic faith, and adapting the scriptural idea of judgment to depict Islam as a divinely instigated scourge against apostate Christianity.

Global Mormonism and "a Portion of God's Light." In the last century, as it has become a world religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has continued to develop with respect to its interaction with Islam. By extending the concept of dispensations, Mormons have defined increasingly positive historical roles for Muhammad and Islam. Interaction has also moved beyond merely expressing attitudes. While not embracing theological ecumenism, Latter-day Saints have seen value in cooperating with Islam and other faiths to defend and to promote traditional moral values and the institution of the family. Also, the Church and Brigham Young University have devoted their resources to help preserve and to make better known Islam's rich heritage of theological and philosophical texts. Yet, while the dominant trends have been positive, some problematic issues exist.

At the very end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, some Latter-day Saint leaders—especially George Q. Cannon, B. H. Roberts, and Orson F. Whitney—extended the concept of dispensations in order to find a place in sacred history for influential ancient philosophers and for nonbiblical religious leaders. They thus articulated an

idea that may be styled "dispensations of partial truth." In 1877, Elder Cannon noted that "there have been many faithful men in all nations and among all people unto whom God has given great light and knowledge," mentioning by name Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, Alexander Campbell, Confucius, Socrates, and Plato. "Great moral truths were communicated unto them and they taught them," he declared. Elder Cannon proceeded to apply that formula to Islam. "So with Mahomet, he taught many grand truths," he affirmed.

> I believe myself that Mahomet, whom the Christians deride and call a false prophet and stigmatize with a great many epithets, was a man raised up by the Almighty and inspired to a certain extent by Him to effect the reforms which he did in his land and in the nations surrounding. He attacked idolatry and restored the great and crowning idea that there is but one God. He taught that idea to his people and reclaimed them from polytheism and from the heathenish practices into which they had fallen."[39]

Under the subtopic "The Gospel Embraces All Truth," B. H. Roberts registered his agreement in an 1892 discourse entitled "Comprehensiveness of the Gospel." He said, "We look upon the teachings of Mahomet, a mixture of good and of evil, but with more good in them, perhaps, than men are generally inclined to admit. The faith of Mahomet has done much toward redeeming a portion of our Father's children from darkness."[40] Two and a half years later, Elder Roberts reiterated this idea in stronger terms. After quoting Abraham 3:22 ("among all these [intelligences] there were many of the noble and great ones"), he explained that "God took these noble spirits and from time to time, in different ages of the world, has given them to a nation or race of men to bless them." After mentioning Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, Elder Roberts then remarked that

> [God] also remembered that branch of Abraham's family, the Arabians, the descendants of Abraham by Hagar—He raised up to them a Mahomet.
>
> And if these men [Confucius, Plato, Socrates, Muhammad] did not teach the fulness of the Gospel of Christ, they did at least teach that measure of truth that the people could receive, and it has been a benefit to them.[41]

Later, in 1910 in his *Seventy's Course in Theology*, B. H. Roberts quoted Edward Gibbon: "The Koran is a glorious testimony to the unity of God[;] . . . the liberality of Mahomet allowed to his predecessors the same credit which he claimed for himself; and the chain of inspiration was prolonged from the fall of Adam to the promulgation of the Koran."[42]

Orson F. Whitney made explicit Islam's inclusion within the concept of dispensations by discussing it in 1917 under the subheading "Many Gospel Dispensations." He observed that "if some of God's children are not worthy of the fullness of Truth, and would not make a wise use of it were it sent to them, that is no reason why they should not be given as much truth as

they can wisely use." He then cited Thomas Carlyle's "vivid portrayal of the coming of Mahomet to the Arabs, who were thus converted from idolatry, the worship of 'sticks and stones,' to the worship of one god—Allah, with Mahomet as his prophet."[43]

Elders Cannon and Roberts qualified their styling Islam a "dispensation." The former cautioned:

> Confucius, Socrates, Mahomet, Plato and the noted men of antiquity, as well as those who had live[d] in modern days, who taught truth, had not the keys of the Holy Priesthood nor the power and authority thereof to guide them in their teachings. . . . The truth which they had was not unmixed with error.[44]

Roberts added, "Still[,] Mohometanism cannot take the place of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[45] Nevertheless, while Elders Pratt and Smith had raised Islam's status from a false prophet's pagan heresy to God's "spoilers," Elders Cannon, Roberts, and Whitney in effect raised it further from "spoilers" to a dispensation of partial truth.

The formulations by Elders Cannon, Roberts, and Whitney subsequently both contributed to and were confirmed by the more authoritative declaration of the First Presidency in its February 1978 "Easter Message":

> The great religious leaders of the world such as Muhammad, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.[46]

This statement, in which the phrase "portion of God's light" conveys the concept of a dispensation of partial truth, was issued at a high level of ecclesiastical authority and contains no qualifiers about truth being "mixed with error" or about priesthood authority being absent. Of course, Latter-day Saint readers might infer such caveats from the words "portion" and "moral," which perhaps function as a mechanism to explain why, for example, the Qur'an denies Christ's divinity.[47]

Mormonism's elaboration of a perception of Islam as a dispensation of truth "not unmixed with error" roughly corresponds to Islam's depiction of Judaism and Christianity as "people of the book" (Arabic *ahl al-kitab*). Containing its own "dispensation theology," the Qur'an treats Judaism and Christianity as monotheistic religions possessing divinely revealed—but subsequently corrupted—scriptures. It characterizes Islam as the ultimate dispensation of truth by which the previous two ought to be judged. Thus the Qur'an states:

> It was We [Allah/God] who revealed The Law (to Moses): therein was guidance and light. . . . And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming The Law that had come before him: We sent him The Gospel: therein was guidance and light, . . . To thee [Muhammad, Muslims] We sent the

> Scripture [Qur'an] in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires [Jewish Bible, New Testament], diverging from the truth that hath come to thee. . . . [B]ut beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that [Qur'an] (teaching) which Allah hath sent down to thee. (5:44–49)

In this regard, Muslims see their revelation as the final one—Muhammad was *khatim al-nabiyin* (seal, last of the prophets)—so they tend to reject any and all religious figures after Muhammad, Muslim or non-Muslim, who claim prophetic experience or authority. For that reason, few if any Muslims would reciprocate Mormonism's deeming Islam a separate, new "dispensation."

"As a Church We Do Not Take Sides"

Sympathy for Islam and Muslims or Arabs seems to correlate with the efforts by some Church leaders to provide balance to traditions of "Mormon Zionism"[48] and to the traditions of explaining "gathering" largely in terms of Israelite lineage.[49] In 1933, Elder John A. Widtsoe visited Palestine, where he befriended a Muslim leader, Shaykh Ya'qub al-Bukhari, who "gave us the Arab view of the colonization of Palestine." Elder Widtsoe cautioned that immigration into the Holy Land by secular Jewish nationalists (Zionists) did not conform to the spiritual meaning of "gathering," which entails embracing the restored gospel. "It is my personal belief that the Jews will succeed in taking over Palestine fully only when they accept Christ," he said. "Until that time, bloody conflict, hate, jealousy, and fear will accompany the Jewish efforts to colonize Palestine."[50] Echoing Paul (for example, Gal. 3:24–29), Elder Widtsoe subsequently defined "the children of Abraham" strictly in nonlineage terms: "All who accept God's plan for his children on earth and who live it are the children of Abraham. Those who reject the gospel, . . . forfeit the promises made to Abraham and are not the children of Abraham."[51] Spencer J. Palmer, who later edited a book entitled *Mormons and Muslims* (1983, 2002), echoed and strengthened Elder Widtsoe's nonlineage definitions of gathering and of Abraham's seed in his *Expanding Church* (1979). "Bloodline guarantees nothing. The only criterion for receiving God's blessings is obedience to his laws," he observed. Paraphrasing Elder Bruce R. McConkie, Palmer added, "Since there is no special race or family through which all generations will attain exaltation, the great patriarchal chain is a lineage of the faithful and the righteous."[52]

In a chapter of Spencer J. Palmer's *The Expanding Church*, David M. Kennedy criticized "some Latter-day Saint members, tourists, students, editors, and teachers who speak out irresponsibly in favor of the political aims and activities of the state of Israel in opposition to the Arab countries." Like Widtsoe, Kennedy defined "covenant people" as those who live

the gospel rather than as those claiming descent from biblical patriarchs: "What we want is righteousness. We want it among the Arabs and we want it among the Jews."[53] Similarly, in a discourse entitled "All Are Alike unto God," Elder Howard W. Hunter, an admirer of Palestinian leader Musa al-'Alami,[54] counseled Brigham Young University students:

> We have members of the Church in the Muslim world. . . . Sometimes they are offended by [some] members of the Church who give the impression that we favor only the aims of the Jews. . . . Both the Jews and the Arabs are children of our Father. They are both children of promise, and as a church we do not take sides. . . . As our Father loves all his children, we must love all people—of every race, culture and nationality—and teach them the principles of the gospel. . . . Only they are favored who keep his commandments.[55]

The Issues of Conversions and Proselytizing. According to Widtsoe, Palmer, Kennedy, Hunter, and others, Muslims are potential heirs of the Abrahamic covenant who—along with all gentiles and all other descendants of Abraham—can enter active covenant status only through embracing the restored gospel. That potential-actual distinction applies in another way to the idea of Muslims becoming Latter-day Saints; in theory all are welcome to join, but in practice very few have done so. In that regard, Latter-day Saint missionaries who have conversed with Muslims have tended to validate the earlier experiences of Catholic and Protestant missionaries such as Cardinal Charles Lavigerie (1825–1892) and the Rev. Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952).[56] Although Zwemer explained the paucity of Muslim converts to Christianity largely in terms of the provision in Islamic law threatening apostates with death, several other factors have operated. These include still-powerful extended family structures, Islam's societal role as a comprehensive way of life (versus the modern Western concept of religion being a matter of individual conscience), and Middle Eastern educational curricula that socialize students towards a wary knowledge of Western Christianity's collusion in European imperialism's domination of Islamic societies.

So the Church's policy not to target them in its proselytizing efforts does not alone account for the fact that so few Muslims have embraced the restored gospel. There are patterns with respect to these few, however. First, they tend to be students or workers living in Europe or North America. Second, they are apt to follow one of four postbaptismal scenarios. One, the converts remain in the West, where, in part because local, ethnically and culturally homogenous congregations regard them as foreigners, they fall into inactivity. Two, the converts return to their homelands, where, owing largely to familial and societal pressures, they become inactive. Three, the converts stay in Europe or North America, where, in part because sensitive members befriend and nurture them, they remain active.

Four, the converts return to their homelands, where they manage to stay active. In my experience, scenarios one and two are likelier than scenarios three or (especially) four. Nevertheless, there has materialized a sufficient corpus of Arabic-speaking Latter-day Saints (a majority from Christian Arab backgrounds), however, to warrant translating into Arabic the standard works, the temple ceremony, and some instructional materials.

Another pattern entails Muslims (usually male) acquiring Latter-day Saint spouses while studying or working in the West. Such a marriage often is prefaced by the husband's pledge (consistent with Islamic law) to respect his wife's religion—perhaps even (contrary to Islamic law) to let her raise their children in it. Survey research might confirm my impression that such vows are likelier to be implemented if the couple remains abroad. If they return to the husband's homeland, familial, social, and legal pressures come to bear on the wife and her children. Perhaps also in order to acquire inheritance and/or child custody rights (against the eventuality of divorce), several Latter-day Saint women living in Islamic countries have decided to convert to Islam. In effect, Mormonism and Islam have exchanged a few converts.[57]

The issue of conversion has links to that of proselytizing, about which Mormons and Muslims tend to hold different attitudes. Although the United States's constitutional framework has not always shielded them from persecution, Latter-day Saints have retained confidence in that framework, within which the Church has flourished. Consequently, Mormons are apt to make strong connections between missionary activity and First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech. In public fora, Muslim leaders in Western societies emphasize such human rights issues as anti-Muslim violence (including police brutality), racial profiling, bias in educational and employment opportunities, and negative stereotypes promoted through the media.[58] Yet, while not placing the need to safeguard freedom of speech laws high on their own public agenda, Muslims in the West operate under these laws to proselytize. Their efforts have been particularly effective among African Americans, many of whom view Islam as a theology of liberation from their status as a minority disrespected and ill-treated by Christians of European descent.[59]

Meanwhile, inside Asian or African countries where Islam is the state religion, there are human rights advocates who promote Qur'an-based guarantees of freedom of conscience and of worship.[60] However, linking Christian missionaries with European imperialists, even such advocates tend to regard Western proselytizing as a form of alien aggression rather than of freedom of speech. The "Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" includes an article calling for the protection of the "Right to Freedom of Belief, Thought and Speech." But it contains provisos ("There shall

be no bar on the dissemination of information provided it does not endanger the security of the society or the state and is confined within the limits imposed by the Law") that vindicate the laws of many Islamic nations against proselytizing, which they are inclined to see as endangering their cultural security.[61]

Islamic Translation Series. Differing attitudes toward proselytizing constitute only part of the chasm separating Muslims from most Westerners, including Mormons. To help bridge that chasm, BYU recently launched the Islamic Translation Series, edited by BYU professor Daniel C. Peterson in cooperation with SUNY–Binghamton professor Parviz Morewedge and printed at the BYU Press but distributed by the University of Chicago Press. The series' maiden publication was the Arabic text and English translation, by the University of Toronto's Michael Marmura, of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali's *Incoherence of the Philosophers.*[62] Forthcoming volumes involve other respected scholars and universities in the project, which is therefore attracting attention.[63]

Mormon spokesmen mention potential benefits to Latter-day Saint–Muslim relations in particular as well as to Christian-Muslim relations in general. For example, Elder Alexander B. Morrison "hopes that the series, and other projects like it, will help to better relations between the Muslim world and the West. Not only will the series deepen Western knowledge and understanding of the rich civilization of Islam, it will send a message of respect from the Latter-day Saints to the worldwide Islamic community."[64] Elder Neal Maxwell adds, "We live in a world in which there is a lot of stereotyping. Muslims know what it is to be stereotyped. Mormons know what it is to be stereotyped. We are genuinely interested in bridge building, and in this case the bridge consists in part of books."[65] Also, by disseminating the whole texts of "classical-normative" Islam (many of whose cultured authors in the main enjoined tolerance and condoned religious pluralism), such projects may subtly strengthen that tolerant-pluralistic tradition, from which depart the often angry leaders of a few contemporary "popular-political" Islamic movements. Such leaders tend to read their classical works selectively.[66] At any rate, the Islamic Translation Series represents a deliberate effort by the Church to cooperate with Islam in promoting the latter's rich heritage of philosophical and theological literature.[67]

Safeguarding the Natural Family. Another example of Latter-day Saint–Muslim cooperation consists of an effort to protect traditional moral values, including the structure of the family, in United Nations agencies and other global fora. A leader in this endeavor has been BYU law professor Richard G. Wilkins. He recalls attending a UN conference which struck him as being dominated by antifamily voices. "There was little advocacy on behalf of the natural family," the *Salt Lake Tribune* quotes him as saying.[68]

Professor Wilkins proceeded to found NGO Family Voice, later renamed the World Family Policy Forum (WFPF), to coordinate a worldwide effort to safeguard and to promote traditional family values (fig. 1). As it pursued this objective, the WFPF cultivated a formal alliance nationally with the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society (Rockford, Illinois) and an informal alliance globally with UN representatives from Islamic countries. The WFPF, the Howard Center, and the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints co-sponsored the World Congress of Families II held in Geneva in November 1999. A large contingent from the Organization of Islamic Conferences attended the congress, and Egyptian Muslim Jehan Sadat was a featured speaker.[69] The Relief Society general president was—along with Professor Wilkins—a member of the planning committee of that congress. So it might have been an appropriate forum to consider that, besides needing protection from a variety of moral dangers, the natural family can be strengthened and children benefited from efforts like those of the Relief Society to eradicate illiteracy among women in developing countries.

Courtesy James A. Toronto

Fig. 1. Muslim guests attending a luncheon held in their honor by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (July 2000) during the annual meeting of the World Family Policy Forum. In the center, perusing a volume from the Islamic Translation Project, is the famous Syrian scholar Dr. Saeed Ramadan Al-Bouti. Other guests (*left to right*), include Dr. Iqbal Hossein, president of the Islamic Society in Salt Lake City; Mr. Khaled Mahjoub, Syrian businessman; Dr. Al-Bouti; Dr. Mouffak Daaboul, vice-president of Damascus University; and Mrs. Ruweida al-Bahra (Daaboul).

Summary and Conclusions

Mormonism was associated with Islam in a campaign by some Protestant clergymen to redirect medieval European Islamophobia away from themselves and onto the Latter-day Saints. Originating with these charges of cryptomohammedanism, the Mormonism-Islam comparison subsequently experienced orientalist and pseudosociological phases. Ironically, the allegation that Mormons were cryptomohammedans became a main source of information about and of attitudes toward Islam among early nineteenth-century Midwest Latter-day Saints, who justified deeming Islam a pagan heresy by citing New Testament warnings against false prophets. During the 1850s–1870s, however, Utah-based Mormons began to make direct contacts with Islam and to formulate a new stance toward it. This entailed recognizing bias in Western accounts of Islam, situating Islam within the Abrahamic legacy, and explaining Islam's rise in terms of the scriptural idea of "judgment"—that is, characterizing it as divinely raised up to scourge apostate Christianity. As Mormonism became a global religion, subsequent generations of Church leaders further upgraded Islam's status by extending the concept of dispensations; Muhammad was described as having, in the First Presidency's words, received "a portion of God's light" and "moral truths." The qualifying words "portion" and "moral" may provide to Mormons an explanation of why the Qur'an, if in general divinely inspired, denies such a cornerstone of Latter-day Saint theology as the divinity of Christ.

Dissimilar historical experiences with European imperialism and with constitutional systems have shaped Mormons and Muslims to think differently about issues like proselytizing. While Latter-day Saints may agree with Muslims (as with several other faiths) to disagree about doctrinal matters, the rising tides of secularism and of hedonistic trends inimical to traditional moral values have induced Church leaders to cooperate with Muslims in such ventures as disseminating worthy Islamic texts and safeguarding the natural family. Once compared negatively for polemical reasons by outsiders, Mormons and Muslims can now respect each another's beliefs and practices while working together toward worthwhile common goals.

Arnold H. Green (arnold_green@byu.edu) is Professor of History at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. from California State University at Los Angeles in 1965, an M.A. from BYU in 1967, and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1973. He is currently (2002) serving as Director of BYU's Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies.

1. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism: Lectures on Its Origin, Its Religious and Political Growth, and Its Present State* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 18.

2. *The [Palmyra] Reflector*, series 3, no. 4, June 1, 1830, 28, quoted in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University, 1959), 50. For the now preferred transliteration "Muhammad," nineteenth-century English works used alternatively the terms "Mohammed" or (from French) "Mahomet."

3. "Gold Bible, No. 2," *The Reflector*, series 1, no. 11, January 18, 1831, 84, quoted in Kirkham, *A New Witness*, 67.

4. See Alexander Campbell, "Delusions," February 10, 1831, quoted in Kirkham, *A New Witness*, 104–9. "Delusions" was later published as *Delusions, an Analysis of the Book of Mormon* (Boston: Benjamin H. Greene, 1832), 5. The *Painesville Telegraph*, with which Pomeroy Tucker was associated, quoted an anti-Mormon: "There was no more evidence to confirm the Book of Mormon than the Koran of Mahomet." M.S.C., "Mormonism," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831, printed in Kirkham, *A New Witness*, 84. See James G. Bennett, "History of Mormonism," *Hillsborough (Ohio) Gazette*, October 29, 1831, 1.

5. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled; or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present* (Painsville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 12.

6. Marsh is cited in Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 3:167 n. (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). Orson Spencer defended Joseph Smith against Marsh's charge: "I can assure you that neither Mr. Smith, nor any other intelligent Latter Day Saint, ever intends to make one convert by the sword." Orson Spencer, "Letter of Orson Spencer," *Times and Seasons* 4 (January 2, 1843): 57.

7. "The Yankee Mahomet," *American Whig Review* 13 (June 1851): 554–64; Charles MacKay, *The Mormons: or Latter-day Saints. With Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the "American Mahomet"* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851). This pamphlet was later expanded and published as *History of the Mormons: or Latter-day Saints. With Memoirs of the Life and Death of Joseph Smith, the "American Mahomet"* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1853); Jennie Fowler Willing, *On American Soil; or, Mormonism the Mohammedanism of the West* (Louisville: Pickett Publishing, 1906); Bruce Kinney, *Mormonism: The Islam of America* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912).

8. Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and across the Rocky Mountains to California* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861; reprint ed. by Fawn M. Brodie, New York: Knopf, 1963). See also Fawn M. Brodie, *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

9. D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905; New York: Dodd, Mead, 1912, 1978).

10. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 135–37.

11. Eduard Meyer, *The Origin and History of the Mormons: With Reflections on the Beginnings of Islam and Christianity*, trans. Heinz E. Rahde and Eugene Seaich (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1961), 52, i, 56, 31, 100. Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschchte der Mormonen: mit Exkursen über die Anfänge des Islâms und des Christemtums* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1912). Meyer's reputation rested on such works as his *Geschichte des Altertums*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche, 1884–1902); his *Julius Wellhausen und Meine Schrift die Entstehung des Judenthums* (Halle, 1897); and his *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, 3 vols. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlich Buchsellschaft, 1962). See also James K. Lyon, "Mormonism and Islam through the Eyes of a 'Universal Historian,'" in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

12. Meyer, *Origin and History*, 44.

13. Meyer, *Origin and History*, v.

14. Hans Thimme, "Mormonism and Islam," *The Moslem World* 24 (April 1934): 155.

15. Thimme, "Mormonism and Islam," 156, 161, 167. The phrase "between reality and hallucination" is quoted from Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen* (Halle, 1912), no page number given.

16. Thimme, "Mormonism and Islam," 155–67.

17. During 1935–36, Bousquet devoted three articles to Mormonism: "Le Mormonism contemporain," *Outre-mer* 7 (1935): 150–71; "Une theocratie economique," *Revue d'âeconomie politique* 50 (1936): 108–45; "L'eglise mormonne et ses livres sacres," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 130 (1936): 219–55. He also discussed the Mormonism-Islam comparison in "Observations sociologiques sur les origines de l'Islam," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1945): 61–88. He later consolidated these articles into a book, *Les Mormons* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949).

18. Georges-Henri Bousquet, *L'Islam maghrebin: Introduction a l'etude générale de l'Islâm* (Algiers: Maison des livres, 1941), 22.

19. Georges-Henri Bousquet, *La morale de l'Islam et son ethique sexuelle* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1953), 12–13.

20. Notwithstanding Margoliouth's seemingly genuine intellectual curiosity.

21. In his treatment of the rise of Islam written to replace Margoliouth's half-century-old volume, H. A. R. Gibb complained that Muhammad had previously been viewed by Westerners "as an epileptic, as a socialist agitator, [or] as a proto-Mormon." H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 23.

22. "Mohometanism," *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 782. The Library of Congress catalog contains two possibilities for the source of this article. A periodical, *The Universal Traveler*, appeared in Philadelphia during 1825 to 1832. Also, John Galt (1779–1839) published a book entitled *The Universal Traveler, Containing the Popular Features and Contents of the Best Standard Modern Travels, in the Four Quarters of the World* (London: Whittaker, 1824).

23. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matthew 7:15. See also Matthew 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; 2 Peter 2:1; and 1 John 4.

24. "The Last Hour of the False Prophet," *Times and Seasons* 5 (April 1, 1844): 487.

25. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:57.

26. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:77, reprinted from Joseph Smith, *Times and Seasons* 4 (November 1, 1843): 373–74.

27. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:306.

28. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 7:120–21, January 10, 1858.

29. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 23:261, October 8, 1882. Earlier, John Taylor had objected to Joseph Smith's being styled a "second Mohamet." See Brother Taylor, "Baptism," *Times and Seasons* 4 (October 15, 1843): 362.

30. Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:39, September 23, 1855.

31. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:35, September 23, 1855.

32. *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists, Comprising a Series of Letters by George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1875), 191.

33. *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 178, 259.

34. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:31; Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:40.

35. *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists,* 191.

36. George A. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses,* 3:32.

37. Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses,* 3:38, 40.

38. See, for example, Isaiah 47–48.

39. Jerreld L. Newquist, ed., *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon,* 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Zion's Book Store, 1957), 1:308–10.

40. B. H. Roberts, "Comprehensiveness of the Gospel," in *Collected Discourses, Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others,* ed. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. (Burbank: By the editor, 1989), 3:67.

41. B. H. Roberts, "What Is Man?" in *Collected Discourses,* 4:236. Also citing Confucius, Buddha, and the Protestant reformers, Roberts said, "I can understand now why it was that among the Arabians, descendants of Abraham, a Mahomet was raised up to take the people from worshipping images of wood and stone and lead their minds to greater heights, to better conceptions of God and His attributes." B. H. Roberts, "The Spirit of the Gospel" in *Collected Discourses,* 5:138.

42. B. H. Roberts, *The Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year, the Doctrine of Deity* (1910; reprint, Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 109–10. This point is further developed in Robert's 1927 treatise on theology (not published until 1994) *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology,* 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), 152; see also pages 140–42 for a more specific discussion of Islam.

43. Orson F. Whitney, *The Strength of the "Mormon" Position* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1917), 28. See also Orson F. Whitney, *Saturday Night Thoughts: A Series of Dissertations on Spiritual, Historical and Philosophic Themes* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1921), 268.

44. Newquist, *Gospel Truth,* 309–10.

45. Roberts, "Comprehensiveness of Gospel," 67.

46. Statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 15, 1978. This statement was sent to stake presidents and bishops and was reprinted in Spencer J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), v; also in Spencer J. Palmer, "World Religions (Non-Christian) and Mormonism," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1589.

47. "O people of the book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of Allah" (4:171). "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only, Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him" (112). 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, trans., *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary,* rev. ed. (Brentwood, Md.: Amana, 1989).

48. Many Latter-day Saint writers have seen Zionist immigration to Palestine, culminating in the state of Israel's creation (1948), as fulfilling scriptural prophecy. Early examples include "The Zionites," *Millennial Star* 58 (August 6, 1896): 510–11; George Q. Cannon, "The Zionist Congress," *Millennial Star* 59 (October 14, 1897): 644–65; J. M. Tanner, "The Zionist Movement," *Improvement Era* 3 (November 1899): 1–8; "Logic of Zionism," *Millennial Star* 64 (September 11, 1902): 582–83; and J[an] M. S[jodahl], "Prophecies Being Fulfilled," *Millennial Star* 77 (March 4, 1915): 136–38.

More recent pro-Zionist Latter-day Saint pronouncements include LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954); Eldin Ricks, "Zionism and the Mormon Church," in *Herzl Yearbook: Essays in Zionist History and Thought,* vol. 5, *Studies in the History of Zionism in America, 1894–1919,* ed. Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl, 1963), 147–74; W. Cleon Skousen, *Fantastic Victory: Israel's*

Rendezvous with Destiny (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967); Daniel H. Ludlow, "Israel—Prophecies Being Fulfilled" (summer devotional address given at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, August 8, 1967); Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Future of the Holy Land," *Ensign* 2 (May 1972): 96–103; Howard H. Barron, *Judah, Past and Future: LDS Teachings concerning God's Covenant People* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1979); Truman G. Madsen, "The Mormon Attitude toward Zionism" (faculty lecture given at Haifa University, Haifa, Israel, May 1981); and Michael T. Benson, "Harry S. Truman as a Modern Cyrus," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 1 (1994): 6–27. See Arnold H. Green, "Jews in LDS Thought," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994–95): 137–64.

49. See Arnold H. Green, "Gathering and Election: Israelite Descent and Universalism in Mormon Discourse," *Journal of Mormon History* 25 (spring 1999): 195–228.

50. John A. Widtsoe, *In a Sunlit Land: The Autobiography of John A. Widtsoe* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1952), 215.

51. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations: Volumes 1-2-3* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 400.

52. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 13–15, quoted in Spencer J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church*, 26–28. Palmer's language in chapter 3, "Building Brotherhood," of *The Expanding Church* seems to have influenced some of the ideas and language of a general conference discourse by Howard W. Hunter, "The Gospel—a Global Faith," *Ensign* 21 (November 1991): 18–19. Spencer J. Palmer, ed., *Mormons and Muslims: Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations*, The Religious Studies Monograph Series (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1983; reprint forthcoming).

53. David M. Kennedy, "More Nations than One," in Palmer, *The Expanding Church*, 76, 77. Born in Randolph, Utah, David M. Kennedy became an influential banker in Chicago, then served as President Nixon's secretary of the treasury from 1969 to 1977. He was then named by the First Presidency to serve as a special ambassador to nations throughout the world. For Kennedy's life, see Martin Berkeley Hickman, *David Matthew Kennedy: Banker, Statesman, Churchman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987).

54. During a luncheon at Brigham Young University, I once asked Elder Hunter (my stake president until 1960) what had sparked his interest in the Middle East generally and in Jerusalem particularly. He replied that he had been greatly impressed by the personal integrity and insightful wisdom of Musa al-'Alami (1897–1984), who—as an official in the government of mandatory Palestine (1920–47)—articulated Palestinian Arab concerns. Al-'Alami's integrity and wisdom can be seen in his book written in response to the Palestinians' defeat in Israel's "War of Independence" (1948). *'Ibrat filastin* (The lesson of Palestine) (Beirut: Dar al-kashshaf, 1949). See Geoffrey Furlonge, *Palestine Is My Country: The Story of Musa Alami* (New York: Praeger, 1969). See also the treatment of Musa al-'Alami in Nasser Eddin Nashashibi, *Jerusalem's Other Voice: Ragheb Nashashibi and Moderation in Palestinian Politics, 1920–1948* (Exeter, England: Ithica, 1990).

55. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," in *1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 35–36.

56. For Cardinal Lavigerie, who spent most of his career in North Africa, see Richard F. Clarke, ed., *Cardinal Lavigerie and the African Slave Trade* (London: Longmans, Green, 1889); L'Abbe Félix Klein, *Le cardinal Lavigerie et ses oeuvres d'Afrique* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1898); Georges Goyau, *Un grand missionaire: Le cardinal Lavigerie* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1925); J. Dean O'Donnell Jr., *Lavigerie in Tunisia: The Interplay of Imperialist and Missionary* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979); and François Renault, *Le Cardinal Lavigerie* (Paris: Fayard, 1992).

Protestant missionary Samuel M. Zwemer labored mainly in Arabia and Egypt where he helped establish the American University in Cairo. He also served as editor of the quarterly journal *Moslem World,* which began in 1911 and which contains many of his articles. His views of Islam can be inferred from the titles of some of his many books: *Islam, a Challenge to Faith* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1907); *Studies on the Mohammedan Religion and the Needs and Opportunities of the Mohammedan World from the Standpoint of Christian Missions* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1901); *The Disintegration of Islam* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916); and *The Law of Apostasy in Islam: Answering the Question Why There Are So Few Moslem Converts and Giving Examples of Their Moral Courage and Martyrdom* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1924). For an analytical approach to the general subject, see Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

57. As a rule, the exchange's pattern consists of a few young Muslim men becoming Latter-day Saints while living in the West and a few Latter-day Saint women becoming Muslims after accompanying their husbands to reside in the Middle East. An exception can be found in the case of Lloyd Miller, who spent much of his youth in Islamic Iran with his Latter-day Saint family. See the memoir by his mother, Maxine Adams Miller, *Bright Blue Beads: An American Family in Persia* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1961). Lloyd Miller found Islamic culture so appealing that he became an accomplished performer and scholar of Islamic music, took a Muslim name (Ali ibn Yusef/Ali son of Joseph), and compiled a manual that syncretically makes a case for the two religions' essential similarity. The book explains that each faith respects Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, and that Islam's "Five Pillars" (profession of faith, prayer, alms, Ramadan fast, and pilgrimage to Mecca) have close equivalents in Mormonism (testimony, prayer, tithing, fasting, temple attendance). Ali Ibn Yusef [Lloyd Miller], "Mormonism and Islam" (unpublished, 1970). Lloyd Miller has written several works on Persian music, most recently *Music and Song in Persia* (Surrey, England: Curzon, 1999).

58. See, for example, the testimony of Dr. Laila Al-Marayati to the hearing of the United States congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Religious Intolerance in Europe Today," September 18, 1997. The testimony of Dr. Al-Marayati and others is posted at http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/relfree/nationprofiles/europe/csce091897.html.

59. See Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

60. Several Qur'anic passages are often marshaled in support of religious tolerance, for example, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256), "Let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice" (5:9), and "O ye that reject Faith! . . . To you be your way, and to me mine" (109:1, 6).

61. "The Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights" (London: Islamic Council, 1981), XII, d. Found at http://www.alhewar.com/ISLAMDECL.html. Some of these church-state relations have been explored—mainly with respect to Eastern Europe but also with respect to the Middle East—by Brigham Young University law professor W. Cole Durham Jr., who has served on the executive committee of the International Academy for Freedom of Religion and Belief and on the board of the International Religious Liberty Association. See Noel B. Reynolds and W. Cole Durham Jr., eds., *Religious Liberty in Western Thought* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996). See also Mohamed Talbi, "Religious Liberty: A Muslim Perspective," in *Religious Liberty and Human Rights in Nations and Religions,* ed. Leonard Swidler (Philadelphia: Ecumenical, 1986); and Khalid Duran, "Muslims and Non-Muslims," in *Attitudes of Religions and Ideologies*

BYU Studies

toward the Outsider: The Other, ed. Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes (Queenstown, Ontario: Edwin Mellen, 1990).

62. Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1997). For a review of this translation, see pages 263–68 in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

63. See Al-Ghazzali, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998). See pages 269–70 in this issue of *BYU Studies* for a brief notice about this translation. Forthcoming translations include works by Islamic philosophers 'Umar al-Suhrawardi (A.D. 1145–1234) and Nasr al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274). Giles H. Florence Jr., "Making Sense of the Incoherence," *Brigham Young Magazine* 52 (spring 1998): 26–29; "United Nations Dignitaries Praise BYU Islamic Translations," press release, Provo, Utah, February 15, 2000, found at http://unicomm.byu.edu/news1/mynews/releases/archive00/feb/islamic.htm.

64. Florence, "Making Sense," 29.

65. Neal A. Maxwell, quoted in "BYU Islamic Translations." For more information on the Islamic Translation Series at Brigham Young University, see D. Morgan Davis, "Medieval Texts for a Modern Audience: The Islamic Translation Series at BYU in Light of Two Early Antecedents," in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

66. See Alexander S. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds., *Islam and Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 4th ed. (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998); and Fawaz Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

67. Less "deliberate," in the sphere of education, has been Brigham Young University's tradition of welcoming Muslim students, some on institutional scholarships from Jordan and Palestine. Muslim BYU graduates now perform governmental, commercial, and educational roles in several Middle Eastern countries. While attending BYU, the community of several score Muslim students organizes itself into an "Islamic Club" and uses a room in the student center as a mosque on Fridays.

68. Brooke Adams, "BYU President Endorses a Pro-Family Forum," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 13, 1999, A7.

69. Besides listening to individual presentations, the World Congress of Families II composed the "Geneva Declaration," which, *inter alia*, defined the "natural family": "the natural family is the fundamental social unit, inscribed in human nature, and centered on the voluntary union of a man and a woman in the lifelong covenant of marriage." See the Geneva Declaration at the website of the World Congress of Families, located at www.worldcongress.org.

Courtesy James A. Toronto

Two women dressed in the traditional *'abaya* in front of the main prayer niche, or *mihrab*, in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria. Muslims often visit the mosque between official prayer times to rest, meditate, read the Qur'an, and offer personal prayers. These women are pausing at the mihrab because it is a site in the mosque considered to have special sanctity and connection to Deity.

Mormonism and Islam through the Eyes of a "Universal Historian"

James K. Lyon

In 1912 the internationally known German historian Eduard Meyer published a book that ranked as a curiosity among his writings to that point. In it this remarkably prolific scholar, who in the previous thirty years had published a monumental five-volume history of the ancient world and 274 other books, treatises, and articles,[1] explored two topics that were so alien to the mainstream of his previous work that it baffled his learned peers. Those topics were Mormonism and Islam. Entitled *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen, mit Exkursen über die Anfänge des Islâms und des Christentums* (The origin and history of the Mormons, with excurses on the beginnings of Islam and Christianity),[2] it remains a curiosity even today. Besides being generally inaccessible (it is available only in a single, limited-edition English translation produced in 1961[3]), almost nothing is known by most people today about its author and contents. Who was Eduard Meyer, and what prompted him to examine a nineteenth-century American religion and a seventh-century Mideastern one, both of which were chronologically far removed from his historical writings about the ancient world?

Eduard Meyer—the Man and His Work

Born in 1855 in Hamburg, Germany, Meyer was a prodigy.[4] At five he was composing poetry in German; at six he could write Latin; at twelve he authored a five-act tragedy entitled *Brutus, oder die Ermordung Cäsars*. By age seventeen, he had completed the elite Johanneum preparatory school, where his father was a professor, and had begun studying at the University of Bonn. Disappointed with his professors there, he abandoned classical philology and went to the University of Leipzig, where he turned his attention to the field of *Orientalistik* (the rough equivalent of what we today call Near Eastern Studies), which included Egyptology, Sanskrit, Hebrew, and the ancient language and history of Egypt, Palestine, and surrounding cultures.

A polyglot, Meyer displayed a remarkable gift for learning language. As a boy, he had acquired a solid grounding in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at the Johanneum, where he also began studying English and Arabic. At the University of Leipzig, he devoted his energies almost exclusively to further language learning—of the forty courses he took in five semesters, thirty-five

dealt with philology or direct work in a foreign tongue. Besides continuing his studies of Arabic, he immersed himself in learning Sanskrit, Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, and Turkish. Following the custom of the day, Meyer learned these languages by studying original documents. It was probably here that he first read the Qur'an in Arabic. His ability to read languages established the basis for his career as a historian and later earned him the reputation of a *Universalhistoriker*, the German term for a historian who studies a multiplicity of cultures. His prodigious intellect allowed him to finish a doctorate degree in 1875 at age twenty with the grade of *summa cum laude*—a distinction rare in German universities—with a dissertation on the Egyptian god Set-Typhon.

For the following two years, Meyer worked as a private tutor for the children of Sir Francis Philip, the British ambassador to Constantinople, where he experienced Muslim culture firsthand, observed history in the making in these crucial years during the disintegration of the Osmanic Empire, and learned to read, write, and speak English fluently. After Sir Philip's unexpected death in 1876, Meyer moved with the family to England. His yearning to return to "uncivilized Constantinople" is an early mirror of the ambiguity he felt toward Islamic culture. While in England, he paid special attention to English religious and political life before finally going back to Germany for the so-called voluntary (actually obligatory) year of military service, which he completed in September 1878. During that year and the months immediately following, he wrote and submitted to the University of Leipzig his "habilitation," the *magnum opus* that was expected to surpass the doctoral dissertation in scope and quality and was required of all scholars planning to enter the academic world. In 1879 at the remarkably young age of twenty-four this "Habilitationsschrift" was accepted, and he began a career as a historian. Teaching first at the universities of Breslau and Halle, he soon established himself as the ranking historian of antiquity in Germany, based in part on his five-volume *History of Antiquity*, written between 1884 and 1902. In 1902 he received a call to teach at the most prestigious center of historical studies in Germany and, arguably, in all the world at the time—the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin.

Trips to America and Expanded Awareness of the "Mormon" Religion

In an 1877 letter to his mother, the twenty-two-year-old Meyer observed that for one who is interested in ancient history, as he was, America must not be dismissed: "Just think of the great, remarkable religious movements, e.g. the Mormons."[5] In subsequent years there is, as far as we know, never a hint that he knew or thought about them again. But in March 1904, at the invitation of the University of Chicago, he made his first trip to America, where he lectured at Cornell, the University of Chicago,

Berkeley, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, and Columbia (in that order). During this time, the University of Chicago awarded him an honorary doctorate of law, and when Harvard duplicated the honor in 1909, their laudatio noted that, as a classical historian, Meyer was "unsurpassed by any living man."[6] In brief, he was an international star when he first came to the United States.

America fascinated Meyer. He took every opportunity during this and his subsequent trip in 1909–10 to explore its far reaches. While traveling from Illinois to California for his lecture at Berkeley, he stopped in Salt Lake City—probably March 28, 1904—for a one-day visit, where, he claims, "I received a number of, though not entirely adequate direct impressions" of Mormonism.[7] When he returned in September 1909 for a semester as a visiting professor at Harvard, he immediately started collecting books, articles, and bibliographical references and read extensively about the Mormons. The topic quickly moved onto his research agenda, and it seems probable that among his many public lectures and paper presentations during this semester (at Harvard, the American Historical Association, Yale, Bryn Mawr, and the University of Pennsylvania) he began to lecture on the Mormons. On January 12, 1910, David G. Lyon of the Harvard Semitic Museum wrote a letter that suggests Meyer had already spoken on the Mormons in some public forum, for the writer obviously considers him to be very knowledgeable: "This is to introduce you to Dr. H. H. Haynes, who wishes to ask you some questions about Mormonism. I hope you can give him an interview."[8]

Meyer, who had not written on Islam at any length in his earlier works (it did not fit into his field of ancient history) and would not write a book on Islam until some years later, nevertheless knew enough about it that his readings on Mormonism led him to discover what he thought were "analogies" (his term) between this American religion and Islam. Soon he began to go public with them. His first documented lecture on this topic, delivered at Cornell University sometime between February 8 and 10, 1910, had an English title—"Origin and Development of Mormonism Compared with the Beginning of Islam"—that foreshadows his 1912 book. His ten-page, English-language text, with two additional pages of citations has been preserved among his papers, as have extensive other notes and bibliographic references on the topic—all in Meyer's almost microscopic hand-writing.[9] Scholars often use lectures to launch a trial balloon for new ideas, which is what Meyer seemed to be doing, so he possibly repeated this lecture, or a variation of it, elsewhere in the United States. He gave well over two dozen more lectures at eleven more American universities before returning to Germany in late April.[10] But two more years elapsed before he turned again to the topic and finally completed his manuscript, which appeared in print before the end of 1912.[11]

Meyer's Approach to Mormonism and Islam: Qualifications and Limitations

Despite his brilliant mind, encyclopedic knowledge, and undisputed contributions to the field of ancient history, Meyer, like every historian, had his limitations. A 1966 volume issued by the University of Berlin to commemorate its past rectors (a position Meyer held from 1919 to 1920) lauds his "universal breadth of knowledge" but tactfully observes that his "extreme conservatism and his unscientific theories (cyclical theories, theories of race) have diminished the value of his extensive historical writings. More recent research has justifiably criticized many specific conclusions of his history of antiquity *and other works*."[12] In perhaps none of his writings did his limitations become as problematic as in his 1912 study of Mormonism and Islam, which one scholar rightfully calls a "foreign body" *(Fremdkörper)* in his overall scholarly production.[13]

A marked product of his times, Meyer's Eurocentric thought reflects a cultural arrogance typical of scholarship in imperial Germany at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Educated in an intellectual tradition that saw the Germans as the only legitimate cultural heirs of the Greeks,[14] he continually returned in his writings to Greek civilization as the apex of human achievement in the ancient world. Whether in religion, art, philosophy, or architecture, Greece was superior to any ancient culture. Logically, then, non-Greek cultures, though still of considerable interest for him, were repeatedly measured against Greece and found to be inferior. In none of his writings did this cultural superiority complex cause more problems of methodology and ideology than in his writings about Mormonism and Islam.

Methodological Problem. At least one methodological problem arises from Meyer's common practice of using analogy or parallel features to describe and compare societies.[15] Historians and thinkers today realize that it is possible to prove almost anything by analogy, for an analogy can be used as a blunt instrument if one is determined to make objects similar. But what seem to be analogies or parallels are usually far too complex to endure more than superficial scrutiny. As one observer has noted, "Few *different* objects or ideas are essentially the *same* to more than a superficial observer or thinker."[16] Indeed, Meyer's treatise on Mormonism and Islam has been criticized precisely for its superficiality.[17]

Ideological Problems. Meyer's approach to Mormonism and Islam poses another problem. He subscribed to the neo-Kantian notion that "history deals with the particular rather than the universal."[18] But in using Mormonism as a comparative basis for an examination of Islam, which was his announced goal, he contradicted that premise. In effect, he tried to

argue that Joseph Smith and Mormonism had common traits and in many ways duplicated some features of Islam, or vice versa. Here it seems he was asserting at least implicitly that some universals connected these two religions and their leaders.

Another ideological impediment to a balanced assessment of Joseph Smith and Muhammad has to do with Meyer's rejection of Hegel's notion of "world historical individuals" as the moving force in history. Though he recognized that such great men had existed, he felt that—taken together—the free will of individuals in a society and the battle of ideas this inevitably caused; the force of any society's public and private institutions; and the role of chance were far more significant in determining the course of history than any individual's thoughts, experiences, or actions. In his introduction to *Origin and History of the Mormons*, he repeats this well-known position as it relates to Joseph Smith:

> In all ages there have been inspired persons of the type of Joseph Smith—thousands of them, among all peoples and religions. . . . Occasionally they generate extensive, lasting results, which, in a few cases, can be world-historical and last for millennia . . . but as in all historical life, this [position] is based only in part on their unique traits. They might surpass all others in individual worth . . . but more decisive are the historical impulses at work in an epoch, how they [these men] seize or resist these, and how they, caught up in this conflict . . . are able to achieve their own goals and channel these currents in a certain direction.[19]

Not only did Meyer not want to see Joseph Smith or Muhammad as "world-historical individuals," but he consciously attempted to denigrate them. As a twenty-one-year-old, he labeled Muhammad a "fanatic and swindler"[20] *(ein Schwärmer und Schwindler)*, and in 1912 he applied similar labels to Joseph Smith, whom he categorized among mentally ill "enthusiastic mystics," "visionaries and dreamers," and "seers and miracle workers."[21] He belittles both men: "Neither Joseph Smith nor Muhammad were towering personalities. One would hardly place them in the line of the great figures among the Old Testament prophets, or with Zoroaster, or with countless similar Christian or Buddhist saints."[22] In a footnote, he nevertheless asserts that "Muhammad stands much higher" than Joseph Smith, "as we shall see, to say nothing of Zoroaster or perhaps Mani or Bab,"[23] but this note does not mitigate his unrelenting derision of both men and of their religious experiences. Although he ranks these men as less significant than the Old Testament prophets, he does not have much regard for those earlier prophets either. For most of the Old Testament prophets, he has the same outlook as he has for Joseph Smith—whom he sees as a man of honest conviction, mingled with self-delusion and outspoken deceit; he dismisses them, too, as delusionists. Jeremiah's prophetic

utterances are "simply a pretext," and "Ezekiel is in reality no prophet at all, but one who assumes this mask for his theological speculations."[24]

Part of this dismissive pattern probably arose from Meyer's own negative view of religion generally (except for Greek religions). Though raised a Lutheran, his antitheological, "enlightened" stance left him little sympathy for Christianity or Islam. In the 1912 treatise, Jesus is not only *not* the son of God, but, according to Meyer, he was also not a prophet and certainly not the founder of a church.[25] Meyer further speaks of modern Judaism and the Parsi religion (and of course Mormonism) as "sects."[26] As seen above, he demeans Old Testament prophets by classifying them generally as persons lacking any sense of the boundary between the physical and spiritual world and "consequently of truth and reality in the sense that it is present in normal humans"; for some, he believes, this lack "can develop into conscious fraud."[27] In short, his approach to Mormonism and Islam was void of the detached, unbiased stance that one might hope for in a world-class historian.

Problematic Research Practices. A final limitation that makes Meyer's treatise problematic is his lack of access to reliable primary and secondary source material on the Mormons and his failure to gain access to materials that were readily available. Acknowledging that he relied primarily on the holdings of the Harvard library and the collection of anti-Mormon literature at the University of Wisconsin by A. T. Schroeder, "an opponent of the Mormons,"[28] Meyer regretted being unable to look at New York Public Library's collection of Mormon historical documents, the largest of its kind in the United States at that time. He also admitted that he was unable to make firsthand acquaintance with a number of important primary documents, such as Brigham Young's sermons, Lucy Mack Smith's book on her son, and Church newspapers—all of which he knew only through "excerpts [found] in other works." Though he studied the Doctrine and Covenants thoroughly, he confessed he had "not been able to read the complete *Book of Mormon.*" Nevertheless, he comes to the surprising conclusion that "I believe to be sufficiently well-informed about the most important facts to be allowed to risk an independent treatment of the subject."[29]

To some extent, Meyer might be excused for this breathtakingly desultory approach to primary and secondary sources. B. H. Roberts's documentary history of the Church, for example, would not appear until nearly five decades later. On the other hand, Roberts's series of essays, later published as *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* had already begun to appear in 1909 in monthly installments in the American Historical Society's periodical *Americana,* and any serious scholar of Mormonism could have consulted this respected journal.

It seems that Meyer's own biases intruded so conspicuously in his choice of material that he was uninterested in presenting a balanced picture.

By his own admission, he granted that the Mormons had produced a considerable amount of literature about themselves. But his unabashed prejudice against all material written by them or writers friendly to the Mormons is evident when he admits to only superficial familiarity with Edward W. Tullidge's *History of Salt Lake City* (1886) and Orson F. Whitney's three-volume *History of Utah* (1892–1904). After praising the rich collection of materials he found in Bancroft's *History of Utah*, he discounts it, too, and warns that it should be used with caution. In a statement reflective of his general bias against any favorable portrayal of the Mormons, he dismisses Bancroft's opus by noting that "under the guise of impartiality, [it] gives a slanted, thoroughly one-sided portrayal [of Mormon history] in their favor."[30] He goes on to lament his lack of access to E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834) but stresses the importance of the apostate John Hyde's *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (1857) and John D. Lee's *The Mormon Menace* (1905) for his own work.

As his most important sources, Meyer lists W. A. Linn, *The Story of the Mormons* (1902), and I. W. Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism: A Psychological Study of Joseph Smith* (1903). Though Meyer asserts that Linn attempts to take an impartial historical stance, in his view Linn fails to represent the Mormon position from the Mormon perspective and therefore judges them as any patriotic American would, that is, negatively—a curious judgment, given Meyer's own less-than-positive approach. Riley's work, he asserts, makes no claims to be a history but instead "treats the prophet Joseph Smith as an example of abnormal psychology."[31] In his earlier writings, Meyer had repeatedly eschewed psychological analysis of history, but for his 1912 treatise, he accepted and employed it. The psychology of religion enjoyed great popularity on the continent and in America at this time, and Meyer found it fascinating as a possible means of reading history.[32]

With all these limitations in mind, let us turn to a brief examination of some of Meyer's essential arguments and comparisons in his attempt to link Mormonism with Islam.

Comparisons and Analogies between Mormonism and Islam

Meyer's account of the origins of Mormonism echoes almost all the well-worn clichés from the anti-Mormon literature of his day. Subscribing to Riley's diagnosis of Joseph Smith as an epileptic and psychopath, Meyer sees Joseph's visions and revelations as examples of a self-deluded deceiver who lies and falsifies in order to manipulate others. Meyer denies categorically that the gold plates ever existed, insists the Three Witnesses were duped, and maintains that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon himself. Repeatedly he emphasizes Joseph Smith's low educational level, what he views as Joseph's general ignorance, and the setting of religious

fanaticism and mysticism as well as the "semi-barbaric" circumstances in which the Prophet grew up. In brief, Meyer's historical account reports nothing new or original about Joseph Smith or the origins of Mormonism. What Meyer apparently considered to be unique is his comparison between Mormonism and Islam. What follows is a synopsis of five of the major points of analogy he makes between the two religions and their founders.

At the outset, Meyer announces his project to be a study of the origins of Mormonism as a new, unique "religion of revelation," which, he claims, did not begin as a sect. Its development, he asserts, reveals surprising analogies with Islam and generates significant information that can be useful in understanding Muhammad and his religion. He quickly, however, qualifies his apparent praise by saying that "among revealed religions it [Mormonism] is one of the crudest, indeed intellectually the lowest of them all."[33] This, he asserts, is the basic factor underlying the Mormon attempt to rule the world *(Weltherrschaft)*.

1. World Domination. Meyer asserts that *Weltherrschaft* was the intent of Mormonism as it was for Islam. He notes, "For Mormonism has in fact always sought to rule the world. Even if, unlike Islam, it has not achieved this, nevertheless it has been able to establish a theocratic empire with a unique culture in the mountain west."[34] In describing the Church's government in Missouri, he elaborates on this initial assertion:

> Mormonism was to be a new religion for the entire world, which appeared at first *in* and for America. . . . A fully independent theocratic organization . . . was the goal, a church-state. . . . Other churches were to make way for him [Joseph Smith] and his group, just as other sects were set aside by Muhammad and Islam to be, at best, allowed to continue as merely tolerated subjects of the divine kingdom.[35]

Among other things, this analogy overlooks the fact that Mormons never embarked on military campaigns to propagate the faith or attempted to establish the type of political hegemony that marked the first century of Islam's growth. Meyer ignores or overlooks the simple distinction between building the kingdom of God through peaceful missionary efforts and resorting at times to armed confrontation to establish political rule.[36] Though he qualifies his analogy by noting that by 1912 Mormonism had lost the original momentum that could have made it a world religion at that time and that it had sunk to the level of a sect, his original assertion about Mormonism's attempt to rule the world reveals the oversimplification and contradiction also inherent in some of his other analogies.

2. Joseph Smith and Muhammad as Prophets. Throughout his account of the rise of Mormonism, Meyer repeatedly interjects comparisons to Muhammad and the origins of Islam. Though he disdains that prophet, too, he views him somewhat more favorably than Joseph Smith.

One passage gives a flavor of many comparisons sprinkled through the text. After speaking of the cunning, manipulative, controlling behavior of both men, he summarizes:

> We find these traits, sometimes less developed, sometimes more developed, in countless saints and miracle workers. Here, too, there is a pervasive sameness between Muhammad and Joseph Smith. But with Smith it appears in more grotesque raiment. His manner is more cynical so that here the prophet cannot be distinguished from the charlatan. That is because he belongs to a much lower [social] sphere than the Arabian prophet, and that despite the external veneer of civilization, his environment stood on a much lower level than the knightly-thinking aristocrats of Mecca who moved in loftier circumstances.[37]

3. Sacred Books. At one point, Meyer says that, without exaggeration, one can call Mormons "the Muhammadans of America."[38] He again uses analogies to reinforce his assertion, the most obvious being the existence of and the two people's relationship to their sacred books. If God in his infinite mercy gave his revelations to Jews and Christians in the form of a Bible, how could he leave "the noble Arab people in ignorance and consign them to Hell?" The answer is that each prophet responded with revelations for their own people—Muhammad with the Qur'an, Joseph Smith with "A Bible for America"—the Book of Mormon.[39]

Meyer appears fascinated by Joseph Smith's cunning in creating the "fiction" that the Book of Mormon was written on metallic plates, which Meyer knew were common in ancient Mideastern cultures, but he does not pursue the matter. Instead, he addresses the relationship between believers and their holy books by deprecating the literalness with which Muslims and Christians alike and, by implication, Mormons, take the word of God as revealed to them there.[40] He also finds an analogy in the claims by both prophets that their enemies had altered their words, in Joseph Smith's case with the missing 116 Book of Mormon manuscript pages given to Martin Harris, in Muhammad's case with "biblical" citations that were not found in the Bible.[41]

Meyer also finds negative stylistic similarities between the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Qur'an, each of which he finds tedious and difficult to read. Again he reveals slightly more sympathy with Muhammad because the Islamic prophet was more literate. But the Qur'an, like its Mormon counterparts, also bores him. Claiming the style of the Book of Mormon to be "clumsy, monotonous in the extreme, repetitious . . . incoherent as one would expect it from a totally uneducated man who dictated it in a state of half-sleep," he calls the book *ein Machwerk*—an untranslatable German word for a very bad book that can be a fraud, a concoction, a fiction, or a botched effort. He concludes this assessment by

saying that the Book of Mormon ranks "far below the *Koran,* which is already bad enough in terms of monotony and triviality. No human, except a believer, could find the strength to read the whole thing [the Book of Mormon]."[42]

4. Receiving Revelation. Acknowledging that the Book of Mormon does not profess to contain revelations to Joseph Smith, Meyer later shifts his analogy to the Doctrine and Covenants, which he calls "the prophet Joseph Smith's *Koran.*"[43] Its revelations serve Meyer as another major parallel between the two religions. Both prophets gave vivid accounts of the process by which they received them—Muhammad, among other means, by divine dictation from the angel Gabriel, Joseph Smith primarily by angelic instruction or personal inspiration from God. Meyer downplays Joseph Smith's description of the type of personal revelation described in section 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants and claims it is "nothing more than that which we all experience with any effort of the mind *(geistige Arbeit)*." It is, he says, "the same processes of the soul" *(dieselben seelischen Vorgänge)* experienced by Zoroaster, Muhammad, Jeanne d'Arc, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and "countless others" who cast what arose from the depths of their souls into words that gave the appearance of coming from God.[44] Meyer finds another analogy in the fact that each of the prophets saw their revelations as a continuation of those emanating from Old Testament prophets. He notes that "both Muhammad and Joseph Smith considered their revelations to be in perfect agreement with the older ones, which they were only continuing and supplementing—all being 'the word of God.'"[45]

In his determination to compare and equate the phenomenon of divine revelation in both men, he sometimes makes startling analogies. His assertion, for example, that Joseph Smith's first vision, in which both God the Father and His Son appeared to Joseph, "is similar to" the appearance of an angel to Muhammad as recorded in Qur'an 53 and 81.[46] Although both experiences involve the appearance of a heavenly being, Meyer's analogy is nevertheless an example of Procrustean stretching and lopping to fit a preconceived template. Besides the obvious point that an angel is different from God the Father and the Son, Joseph Smith went to God with a specific inquiry, to which he received an answer. According to Meyer, Muhammad, who did not approach God and had no specific question in mind, was not even sure for a considerable period of time that he had seen or heard an angel. Only later, claims Meyer, through conversation with others, did he finally accept his experience as a divine manifestation.[47]

Repeatedly within his analogies, Meyer contrasts Joseph Smith's unwavering certitude at what he experienced in seeing the Father and the Son or the Angel Moroni or other heavenly messengers with Muhammad's uncertainty,

his self-doubt, and his periods of depression as he attempted to find expression for what he had experienced. Meyer does not like Joseph Smith's certitude, and when he weighs both prophets in the balance, it is no surprise that he finds Joseph Smith wanting, just as he does Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Muhammad is Meyer's kind of prophet because he is so human, so beset with doubt, despair, and emotional struggles. After his first vision, Muhammad told his wife that he feared he was either possessed of the devil or had become a soothsayer or jinn-inspired poet, things which he detested.[48] These struggles stand in marked contrast to the steadfast certitude Meyer sees in Joseph Smith.

At one point, Meyer cites almost the entire ninth section of Doctrine and Covenants (his own translation) to illustrate how Joseph Smith received revelation. From it Meyer concludes, "Probably never has a visionary or prophet portrayed so vividly what goes on within him as it happens in this halting but completely intelligible language."[49] This comment, however, is in no way a compliment, since Meyer rejects the divine origin of this and any other of Joseph Smith's revelations. They arose from within the soul of the writer, who in turn passed them off as having divine origin. Though he claims that Muhammad's revelations developed in the same manner, he ranks them higher than Joseph Smith's because in his view, they are of somewhat higher poetic quality, despite what Meyer sees as their repetition, monotony, and triviality.

5. Polygamy, Sensuality, Revelation. Meyer uses a simplistic form of psychoreligious analysis to deal with polygamy in Islam and Mormonism. In brief, he sees its basis in his belief that as Joseph Smith and Muhammad grew older their sexual drives became increasingly stronger. They responded to these urges by declaring the practice of plural wives to be a revelation from God: "It is well-known . . . how the sensuality of their sex lives grew increasingly stronger, and how the means of satisfying it then manifest itself as a divine commandment."[50] Calling Doctrine and Covenants 132 (the section on plural and eternal marriage) a "confused flowing together" of various biblical elements,[51] Meyer analyzes it at length and then finds a curious and not totally coherent analogy between Joseph Smith's revelation and Muhammad's justification of polygamy:

> Thus he activated the revelatory apparatus for his marital crises and his sexual needs in the same way as Muhammad did when justifying his favorite wife Aischa against the suspicion of adultery and put an end to the gossip by imposing a punishment of 80 stripes for the accuser if he could not produce four witnesses.[52]

Meyer continues with a curious justification for the views of the two prophets on plural marriage. They were not conscious deceivers or swindlers, he claims, for they truly believed that their secret thoughts and

feelings were grounded in divine revelation and that the revelatory apparatus was available to them to declare their thoughts as coming from God:

> As cynical as was the shamelessness with which Muhammad and Joseph Smith took care of their personal needs and their most intimate affairs of the heart, nevertheless it is not psychologically accurate in these and similar crass cases to speak simply of public deception and conscious fraud. For both it was self-understood that precisely their innermost thoughts and stirrings of the heart were based on divine inspiration. Through long familiarity with it, the apparatus of revelation stood ready for use by either of them.[53]

Accounting for Differences in Mormonism and Islam

In his pursuit of analogies like those above, Meyer often fails to elaborate on or, in some cases, to mention differences at all. Singularly absent from his account, for example, is at least one striking dissimilarity that makes his analogy between polygamy in the seventh-century Arabian peninsula and that in nineteenth-century America problematic. Revelations to Muhammad, who was living in a polygamous society, built on an established practice of his own time and society. On the other hand, Joseph Smith's revelations on the subject not only flew in the face of the institution of marriage as understood and observed in America—they radically challenged a view that had prevailed in Christianity for nineteen hundred years. Thus Muhammad conformed to the prevailing social norms of his day, while Joseph Smith found himself in diametrical opposition to many of them. This is only one of many significant differences that Meyer either ignores or fails to recognize.

Intriguingly, Meyer acknowledges at the end of a chapter entitled "Excursus: The Origin of Islam and the First Revelations of Muhammad" that "there are nevertheless many particular differences" between the two religions.[54] He briefly lists more than a dozen of them,[55] many of which, if explored in depth, might have modified the analogies he sees. His list of practices and principles found in Mormonism but not in Islam registers, for example, the belief in continuing revelation for the Church through Joseph Smith and later prophets; the concept that personal revelation is accessible to all Mormons; the acceptance of the Book of Mormon as a piece of scripture equal in status with the Bible; his observation that commandments found in latter-day revelation are sometimes given more weight by Mormons than commandments in the Bible; the commonplace nature of visions, healings, and other miracles or spiritual manifestations, which may be experienced by any member in daily life; the distinction between Joseph Smith's seeing God the Father in a vision and Muhammad's seeing an angel; and the difference between Joseph Smith's possessing the gold plates, translating them by means of the seer stones, and

returning them to an angel, as opposed to Muhammad's never possessing the book but writing only what the angel dictated to him from it. Using this latter difference, Meyer again emphasizes that Muhammad's revelations, "despite their monotony," are on a higher level than Joseph Smith's because "at least in the older suras, we sense something of the strength of a conviction, occasionally even poetic verve, that had been sorely won by intense mental effort."[56]

Meyer concludes his catalogue of dissimilarities with another analogy in which he compares the men whom Joseph Smith attracted to his new religion with those Muhammad initially won for his cause. The former, Meyer claims, "almost without exception belonged to the dregs of society. Many of these, especially the first disciples, would later abandon him and be cut off from the Church." By contrast, Muhammad won over "intellectually prominent men of high social position such as Abu Bekr and Omar, whom he was able to bind to himself in unshakable devotion." In terms of intellectual stature and strength of character, claims Meyer, Brigham Young could not hold a candle to Omar, just as Joseph Smith could not remotely measure up to Muhammad.[57]

This summary of dissimilarities reveals one of the major weaknesses of Meyer's methodological approach to Mormonism as a basis for understanding Islam: increasingly his work becomes a study in differences. To the degree that the dissimilarities disallow, outweigh, or severely qualify and modify the perceived analogies, one must ask how relevant the analogies are in the first place and what, if any, valid conclusions can be drawn from them.

Conclusion

Arnold H. Green and Lawrence P. Goldrup examine two problems common among the many writers who push analogies between Joseph Smith and Muhammad or between Mormonism and Islam. They conclude that such analogies almost invariably result in either gross simplifications or outright errors. Meyer figures prominently in their analysis.[58]

Though well-disposed to Meyer, the historian Albert Henrichs also points out that from a contemporary perspective, Meyer's use of historical analogy is too restrictive and that it gives an "inadequate total picture" of the subjects under consideration.[59] He believes that Meyer might have found a more meaningful analogy in the life and works of Joseph Smith and the revelatory religion of the third-century prophet and seer Mani, the founder of Manicheanism.[60] Another religious movement that offers analogies perhaps more fruitful and meaningful than those with Islam would be the sixteenth-century Anabaptists in Meyer's homeland. For whatever reasons, none of these seized his attention. As was the case for many

before and after Meyer, the lure of finding analogies between Mormonism and Islam was too seductive. As a result, he overextended himself in a book dubbed a "bibliographic curiosity" among his writings.⁶¹ It ranks as a curiosity in the study of Mormonism also because Meyer is the only world-class historian who devoted a full-length book to the study of that religion and to a comparison between Mormonism and Islam.

Lacking in originality, flawed in theory and methodology, dated, and oversimplified or simply wrong in many ways, Meyer's *Origin and History of the Mormons* could be conveniently viewed as playing an insignificant role in historical circles. For studies of Islam, this appears to be the case. In contrast to studies by other German scholars of the period, whose works are still used and cited today, Meyer's book made no impact on Near Eastern or Islamic studies at the time it appeared. Today it is rarely cited in Islamic studies and has been all but forgotten. Conversely—and inconsistent with their dismissal of this work for purposes of Islamic scholarship—researchers in German-speaking countries today continue to cite this work as an authoritative source on Mormonism. This derives in part from his stature as a historian, in part because of the paucity of reliable studies of Mormonism in Europe. But the disparaging tone of this work, its conclusions based on inaccuracies and oversimplifications, its failure to consult adequate or relevant secondary literature, its blatant biases, and its flawed theoretical and methodological approach have become a model for treatment of the Mormons that persists to this day in German-speaking countries.⁶² In Europe, at least, Meyer's legacy lives on.

James K. Lyon (James_Lyon@byu.edu) is Professor of German at Brigham Young University. He received a B.A. (1958) and a M.A. (1959) from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. from Harvard University (1963). He has taught at Harvard, the University of Florida, the University of California–San Diego, the University of Augsburg (Germany), and Brigham Young University.

1. Albert Henrichs, "Alte und neue Propheten als Stifter von Offenbarungsreligionen: Der Ursprung der Mormonen nach Eduard Meyer," in *Eduard Meyer: Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers,* ed. William M. Calder III and Alexander Demandt (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1990), 183.

2. Eduard Meyer, *Ursprung und Geschichte der Mormonen, mit Exkursen über die Anfänge des Islâms und des Christentums* (Halle, Germany: Max Niemeyer, 1912).

3. Eduard Meyer, *The Origin and History of the Mormons: With Reflections on the Beginnings of Islam and Christianity,* trans. Heinz F. Rahde and Eugene Seaich (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1961). While this is the only English translation available, it is so faulty and incomplete as to make it virtually useless. Beginning with the title, for example, the word "Exkursen" is rendered as "Reflections," which is not the meaning of that word. I have used the legitimate English term "excurses." In all English citations from Meyer in the body of my article, I cite page numbers from this translation

so that readers might refer to it if they wish, but I have reworked the translations to correspond more closely to the original German.

4. Much of the biographical information presented here is drawn from Christhard Hoffmann, "Die Selbsterziehung des Historikers. Zur intellektuellen Entwicklung des jungen Eduard Meyer (1855–1879)," in *Eduard Meyer*, 208–54.

5. Cited from a letter republished by Christhard Hoffmann as a supplement to his article "Die Selbsterziehung des Historikers," 252.

6. Cited in Mortimer Chambers, "The 'Most Eminent Living Historian, the One Final Authority': Meyer in America," in *Eduard Meyer*, 110. I have drawn much of the biographical information on Meyer's trips to America from this source.

7. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, iii.

8. David Lyon to Eduard Meyer, January 12, 1919, Das Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgisches Akademie der Wissenschaften (listed in earlier sources as the Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR), Signature 128, under "Manuskripte."

9. Lyon to Meyer.

10. Chambers, "'Most Eminent Living Historian,'" 128–31.

11. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, foreword.

12. *Die Rektoren der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, ed. Universitäts Bibliothek (Halle [Saale]: Max Niemeyer, 1966), 184; italics added. The historians who wrote the essays in *Eduard Meyer. Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers* cited above tend to take a somewhat less critical, almost adulatory stance in regard to Meyer's contributions.

13. Henrichs, "Alte und neue Propheten," 183.

14. For an excellent account of this view, see E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry over the Great German Writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Centuries* (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1958).

15. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, viii.

16. William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard, *A Handbook to Literature: With an Outline of Literary History English and American* (New York: Odyssey, 1936), 18; italics in original.

17. Arnold H. Green and Lawrence P. Goldrup, "Joseph Smith, an American Muhammad? An Essay on the Perils of Historical Analogy," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (spring 1971): 46–58.

18. J. Mansfeld, "Greek Philosophy in the *Geschichte des Alterums*," in *Eduard Meyer*, 255–56.

19. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, ii.

20. Eduard Meyer to Richard Pietschmann, November 8, 1876, cited by Hoffmann, "Selbsterziehung des Historikers," 236 n. 73.

21. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, ii.

22. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, ii–iii.

23. This footnote, which should be found on page ii of Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, was not translated in that edition.

24. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 37, 38, 52.

25. Stated in a footnote missing from the *Origin and History of the Mormons* translation. The note should appear on page iii. See also Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 37 n. 1.

26. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, i.

27. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, ii.

28. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, iii.

29. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, iii.

30. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, iv.

31. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, v.

32. William James classified Joseph Smith and Muhammad as examples of an "exalted sensibility" in whom inspiration had become second nature. While there is no evidence that Meyer knew or read James, he clearly did not treat his subjects with the detachment or sympathy James showed. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London: Longman, Greens, 1952), 467–72.

33. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 1.

34. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, i.

35. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 64; italics in original.

36. Islam's growth in its first two centuries can be attributed only in part to military conquest. More peaceful, gradual means of propagation and expansion also played a very significant role. The issue involves a complex interplay of historical, political, social, and theological factors. See James A. Toronto, "Many Voices, *One Umma*," in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

37. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 37.

38. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 44.

39. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 52.

40. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 13–14.

41. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 33.

42. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 24.

43. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 51.

44. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 32.

45. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 54.

46. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 48.

47. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 49–50.

48. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 45. According to Islamic tradition, the jinn are invisible beings created from fire who sometimes assist and sometimes cause trouble for human beings. The English word *genie* is a derivative of *jinn*.

49. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 32.

50. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 37.

51. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 116.

52. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 119.

53. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 120.

54. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 54.

55. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 54–56.

56. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 56.

57. Meyer, *Origin and History of the Mormons*, 56.

58. Green and Goldrup, "Joseph Smith, an American Muhammad?" 53–56. See also Arnold H. Green's discussion of Meyer in "Mormonism and Islam," in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

59. Henrichs, "Alte und neue Propheten," 206–7.

60. Henrichs, "Alte und neue Propheten," 203.

61. Henrichs, "Alte und neue Propheten," 191.

62. For a notable recent exception, see Christian Gellinek, *Christus in Amerika? Mormonentum als christliche Religion in vergleichender Kirchengeschichte* (Münster: Agenda, 1999). Gellinek consults and lists a far larger numbers of reliable Mormon and non-Mormon sources than any of his predecessors.

The Day the "Brave Sons of Mohamed" Saved a Group of Mormons

David P. Charles

On March 13, 1899, a small number of Latter-day Saints visited the Armenian cemetery of Aintab (modern Gaziantep), a then-provincial town in what is today southern central Turkey. In this group were two American missionaries, Philip S. Maycock and Joseph W. Booth, and several Armenian converts. Many of the area's Christians were observing Shrove Monday (the first day of Lent), and the cemetery, following Armenian tradition, was crowded with people picnicking and commemorating the loss of loved ones. Recognizing the situation as an opportunity to preach the gospel, the Saints gathered with some friends in a small ravine nearby, where they could discuss matters of faith in an undisturbed setting. Within minutes, however, the little gathering drew the attention of large numbers of curious onlookers. Initial acts of mischief grew more serious, and before long, stones were flying. A group of Muslim soldiers, patrolling the grounds to ensure peace among the festive crowds, intervened and began to defend the Mormons. The battle continued until the Saints were escorted home under the guards' protection. (See pp. 251–54 for Booth's March 13th journal entry.)

The events just described took place in the near-final days of the Ottoman Empire. In an atmosphere of international tug-of-war and local ethnoreligious conflict, dozens of Protestant missionary groups labored among the empire's Eastern Christians, promoting education and seeking converts. These missionaries focused their efforts primarily on the Armenians living in Constantinople and the peninsula of Asia Minor. The field was already heavily contested when the first Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in the 1880s. Yet their presence added a different and confusing element to the already diverse constellation of religions. The Protestants did not appreciate competition from these newcomers with strange doctrines, while the Mormons did not appreciate the Protestants' dissemination of anti-Mormon propaganda. Amid the struggles of building a Mormon congregation among the Armenians, several Latter-day Saint missionaries—Joseph W. Booth especially—found unexpected friends in the followers of Islam. Drawing on contemporary diaries and correspondence, this essay will search for the reasons behind the stone-throwing episode. In the process, it will also seek to illuminate the specific patterns of interaction between Protestants, Mormons, Muslims, and Armenian Christians.

The Turkish Mission and Joseph W. Booth

Mormon missionary work in the Ottoman Empire began in Constantinople on the last day of 1884.[1] Early scattered efforts in Constantinople, Egypt, and Palestine resulted in a few baptisms among the German colonies of Palestine and among various ethnic groups in the cosmopolitan Turkish capital.[2] But the mission lacked focus and struggled without success to establish a body of committed converts anywhere in the region. In fall 1888, the president of the Turkish Mission, Ferdinand F. Hintze, set out on an eleven-month, three-thousand-mile journey. After taking a boat from Constantinople to Samsoun, on the southern shore of the Black Sea, he traveled southward through Asia Minor toward Palestine.[3] In each of the twelve towns he visited, Hintze found the Armenians (the largest Christian group in Asia Minor at the time) to be the most receptive to his message. He felt particularly welcome at Aintab, where "the people flocked around me by scores, and from early morning until late in the evening asked questions concerning the Gospel."[4]

As a result of this exploratory journey, Hintze decided to move the mission headquarters eastward, from the empire's capital to the towns of Asia Minor. He rented a house in Aintab, which served as the Church's base

Selected Turkish Mission Sites

Courtesy E. Leon Stubbs

FIG. 1. Joseph W. Booth (1866–1928). Booth served three missions in the Middle East: as an elder, 1898–1902; as president of the Turkish Mission, 1903–09; and as president of the Armenian Mission, 1921–28.

of operations from 1889 until 1907. Initial progress was slow; seven years after the house contract was signed, church attendance at Aintab still numbered, on average, only twelve. But conditions improved over the next several years, with the adult membership of the Aintab branch increasing to around sixty by 1898.

One of the greatest difficulties of the Turkish Mission—at Aintab and elsewhere—was poverty. Unemployment ran high among the Armenian population of Asia Minor, and converting to Mormonism made it even more difficult to find and retain employment.[5] Throughout the duration of Latter-day Saint missionary activity in the Middle East, mission leaders sought to form a self-supporting "colony" of Saints. As a step toward this goal (which was never realized), President Hintze and the elders organized a small weaving business for the Armenian members. At Aintab the enterprise—later known as the LDS Weaving Works—was started in January 1899, with sashes as the main product. Up to eight male weavers worked in a small shop with five looms. The shop was also intended to be a place where conversations about the Church could take place.[6]

The month of January 1899 also saw the arrival of Joseph Wilford Booth (fig. 1) at mission headquarters in Aintab. A graduate of the Brigham Young Academy, Booth worked as a schoolteacher in Alpine, Utah, and Montpelier, Idaho, prior to being called to the Turkish Mission in 1898. His extensive journals record in great detail the life of a missionary in the Middle East, where he served three missions over a thirty-year period.[7] Booth was a skilled writer and speaker; his prose is lucid and rich and combines detailed description with opinionated commentary.

Although Booth described the cemetery incident in some detail, his account leaves one question entirely unanswered; in fact, it is never raised. Given the elders' sympathetic attitude toward the Armenian people and the fact that they were accompanied by several local Armenian converts, it is surprising that their presence should cause such antagonism. Their intentions and actions were entirely peaceful; for what reasons did the

crowd—or certain elements of it—react with such hostility? The answer appears to lie in the composition and structure of Turkish society at the end of the nineteenth century. Underlying the interaction of daily life was a delicate balance of ethnic, religious, and political forces. This balance could easily be upset, and when that occurred—as when Mormons established a presence in Aintab—the disruption often resulted in violence.

The Ottoman *Millet* System and Western Missionaries

By the end of the nineteenth century, the region around Aintab had long been home to diverse and competing political and religious powers. Antioch, where Jesus' followers were first called Christians, lies near both Aintab and Aleppo (a large town south of Aintab that also became a center of Latter-day Saint missionary activity). Muslims conquered the area in the seventh century and subsequently settled there among the Jews and Christians. The following centuries, marked by the Crusades and a host of other complex factors, brought changing fortunes to each of the region's three monotheistic faiths. In 1453, Constantinople was captured by the Ottomans, who proceeded to establish a vast Islamic empire, reaching at its height from Budapest to the Black Sea and from the Caspian Sea to North Africa.[8]

Following earlier Muslim Arab practice, the Ottoman Turks recognized Christians and Jews as *ahl al-kitab,* or "people of the book." This status afforded these minority groups a degree of protection and self-governance. Non-Muslim subjects of the sultan were subjected to "discrimination but by and large without persecution."[9] In practice, this came to mean that each religious community *(millet)* enjoyed relative autonomy in civic and religious affairs. Millet status was conferred upon three groups—the Jewish, Greek, and Armenian Orthodox communities—in the early years of Ottoman rule. The head of each community answered to the Turkish authorities. Jurisdiction extended to a large number of activities, including betrothal, marriage and divorce, wills and inheritance, education, and church property. The millet system kept each social group in its place and thereby facilitated the functioning of a society as diverse as that under Ottoman control. It also led to a stratification and formalization of religious and social patterns.[10]

Both the millet system itself and the social order it was meant to maintain were challenged by the arrival of Western missionaries. From the seventeenth century, Roman Catholics proselytized among the Oriental (or non-Chalcedonian) churches, seeking to bring converts into the Roman "Mother Church." Inroads were made among each of the Oriental churches; those who broke away formed "Uniate" churches (that is, churches in union with Rome).[11] Because the millet system generally did not distinguish between civic and religious affairs, conversion posed a serious problem.

The Armenians who formed an alliance with Rome obviously no longer wished to be under the jurisdiction of the Armenian Orthodox Church leaders. This situation led, in 1830, to the recognition by the Ottoman government of the religious autonomy of the Armenian Catholic community. There were now two separate millets for the Armenians: one for the traditional, Orthodox Church, the other for the Armenian Catholic churches.[12]

The Catholics were not alone in seeking converts among the Armenians. Indeed, as the nineteenth century progressed, Protestants (overwhelmingly from America) became the dominant missionary force among the Armenians and in the Middle East in general. This period was, as historian K. S. Latourette famously called it, the Great Century of Missions.[13] By the end of the nineteenth century, "every nominally Christian country and almost every denomination had begun to take its share in the support of the missionary cause."[14] Of the missionary societies founded during this period, one is of particular importance here: the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, established in 1810 and composed primarily of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. This organization sent the largest number of Protestant missionaries to the Middle East.[15] Early hopes of success among Jews, Muslims, and Christians faded within a decade of the arrival of the first missionaries in the Levant. By 1830, the Protestants focused almost exclusively on the Eastern Christians.

American Protestants and the Oriental Churches

American Protestantism at the time took a strongly negative view of the state of Oriental Christianity; the latter was considered degenerate, corrupt, and "Christless."[16] Accordingly, the missionaries' task was to "restore the Oriental churches to their original purity and vitality."[17] Until a "spiritual renovation" of Eastern Christianity had been accomplished, it was argued, there could be no hope that Muslims would convert.[18] Yet opinions differed as to how to bring about this "spiritual reconquest" of the "lost provinces of the Church."[19] While early missionaries sought friendly cooperation with the Oriental churches and their leaders and specifically avoided establishing a new church, this approach was later challenged by Rufus Anderson and other leaders of the American Board.[20] Anderson defined the "leading object" of the Board's missions as raising self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing churches with permanent congregations. The missionaries lost the struggle for control over the mission's direction; in the future, success would be measured in terms of the number of converts won and of new churches established.[21]

Although the missionaries had struggled from the beginning to avoid a split with the Armenian Church, the Board's new, more aggressive approach made a break inevitable. In 1846 the Armenian patriarch, who

had for years been warning his congregations to avoid "fellowship with such heretics," issued a bull of excommunication against all Evangelical Armenians. ("Evangelical" and "Protestant" were used interchangeably.) Because of the combined civil-ecclesiastical structure of the Armenian millet, this move essentially denationalized them. Ten days later, forty Armenians formally organized the Evangelical Armenian Church. In 1850, operating under pressure from Western powers, the sultan issued an edict officially confirming the Protestant community as a separate millet.[22]

The 1850 edict *(firman)* increased the pace of Protestant expansion. By that date, around ten Protestant congregations had already been founded with a total of over two hundred members. One of these early churches—the first formed in the highlands of Asia Minor—was established at Aintab in 1848 with eight members. This location, with its large Armenian population (about ten thousand), was among the mission's most fruitful fields. A permanent station was set up in 1849, and two decades later, membership had grown from eight to 350. The missionaries later referred to the work there as a "wonder."[23] With the geographical expansion of the Armenian mission largely completed by 1870, other developments began to claim the missionaries' attention. Education remained an important aspect of the Protestants' presence throughout the Middle East. In 1874 the Central Turkey College was founded at Aintab, the first of several Protestant colleges established in Asia Minor.[24] Medical missionary work was also conducted in Turkey in the 1870s, initially on a small scale. A hospital was built in Aintab, which is still in use today (though under state ownership).[25]

The numerical success of the Protestant mission among the Oriental churches was accompanied by troubling and paradoxical consequences. The shift in the Board's approach toward the establishment of Protestant Armenian churches led to a rupture of the initially cooperative relationship between Protestants and Eastern church leaders. The ideal of partnership gradually faded into mutual denunciation and a fierce battle for Armenian souls. The Board's original goal for the Middle East had been, *"first,* to revive the knowledge and spirit of the gospel among [the Eastern Christians]; and *secondly,* by this means to operate upon the Mohammedans."[26] By the end of the nineteenth century, however, *both* of these goals were overshadowed by present realities and abandoned (or at least deferred). The missionaries conceded that the conversion of "the Mohammedan race" was still a distant goal toward which little progress had been made. The spiritual "reform" of the Oriental churches had likewise not come to pass; all efforts were now placed on conversion.[27]

The grim effects that Protestant (and, earlier, Catholic) expansion had on the Eastern churches are summarized in the following observation:

> In the end, by an ironic turn of events, it was from these Eastern Churches that almost all the Eastern Protestants were to be wrested, so that the great

mission aimed at the conversion of non-Christians was not only diverted from its objective, but it even contributed to the still further weakening of the ancient Churches which it first had wished to support.[28]

This was understood by the early Protestant missionaries: to establish an Evangelical Armenian Church and encourage conversion would—because of the combined civil-ecclesiastical nature of the Armenian millet—necessarily have far greater consequences than a mere realignment of an individual's religious affiliation. Indeed, many were "under the impression that they would cease to be Armenians, Greeks or Assyrians if they became Protestants."[29] The foreign churches intended to divide what had previously been a dual but integral Armenian identity, grounded in the nation and the national church. Even those sympathetic to the lasting benefits of the Protestant presence—such as increased educational opportunities and improved relations with the West—had to admit that it contributed to the "enfeeblement of the nation."[30]

The Ambiguity in the Legal Status of LDS Missionaries

In 1830 the Armenian Catholics became the fourth millet in the Ottoman Empire, and in 1850 the Protestants became the fifth. Vigorous missionary activity by the Catholics resulted in the conferral of millet status on a number of Uniate churches, so that by 1914 the total number of millets had risen to over fifteen.[31] One confessional group, however, was never granted millet status: the Mormons.

Being outside of the protection offered by millet status was a severe hindrance to missionary work. Quite early in the history of the Turkish mission, Hintze lamented:

> We have no rights, and one being baptized is liable to imprisonment and banishment indefinitely; taxes are also increased. . . . We need to get upon sure footing as soon as possible. About the first question asked by the natives is, "Have you a government license?"

He later added:

> All churches in the empire must be recognized by the government, otherwise they are put to endless inconvenience, even in the burying of a dead person, which is all done under church direction. If a man's church be not recognized he finds no 2x6 for his dead easily.[32]

Other aspects of the "endless inconvenience" experienced by Latter-day Saint missionaries included restrictions (usually temporary) against public preaching, traveling, publishing books or tracts, and holding public meetings.

The failure of the Mormons to achieve millet status reflects their condition of legal and theological ambiguity among the religions in the empire. The Latter-day Saint missionaries could not comprehend why they

of all religions should be denied government recognition. The Ottoman government, on the other hand, could not understand why the Mormons kept pressing for recognition, which in effect would have meant millet status of their own, separate from the otherwise unified Protestant community. On one occasion, Booth's *tezkera,* or local travel passport, was confiscated because it contained the word "Mormon," which the officials did not recognize as a legitimate confessional category. Booth was informed, he wrote to the *Millennial Star,* that he could not "have it back unless I strike out the word 'Mormon' and insert therein the name of some other sect"—which, of course, he was not about to do.[33]

All these difficulties could have been avoided years earlier when F. F. Hintze learned, after some investigation, that the empire's entire Protestant community was legally represented by one Mr. Boyadjian, the president of the Bible House in Constantinople. Hintze was informed that he could apply for the Mormons to be grouped among the Protestant community. Should he wish to do so, Boyadjian told him, then "we must investigate your faith and if it is so that we can embrace it in our code, all right"— meaning that henceforth The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would be officially recognized as part of the umbrella of Protestant communities (unless the bid was rejected, as it was for the Seventh-Day Adventists). Hintze gave the matter some thought and sent a carefully worded response a few days later:

> Rev. Sir. . . . Upon mature thought of the whole subject upon which we talked a couple of days ago, I feel convinced that we should not ask you to be numbered in your community as Protestants. We are not Protestants, we are a distinct church differing from all others in many points of doctrine. We are protestants only in this, that we are not Catholics. I have arrived at this conclusion upon a thorough consideration of what you said to me. That is that you would have to be personally responsible for the doctrines and religious practices of all who are numbered as protestants. I therefore conclude it unfair to ask you to do that which you cannot do for us consistently.

The price for government recognition being too high, Hintze chose legal limbo over security and protection. He rejected the implications and consequences of sharing Protestant millet status, despite the enormous benefits this might have had on his publishing and other mission efforts. Hintze did not end the letter on a note of rejection, however:

> But if [he continued] we can enter upon some understanding whereby we may be relieved of unfair taxation and other grievances of which our people complain, I should be very much gratified. That we may the better understand one another and be tolerant toward one another as Christians ought to be, and that you may fully know our doctrines, I ask you respectfully for an interview with the committee of which you spoke that we may not be

misunderstood nor misrepresented. Thanking you in advance for this favor I remain, Very Respectfully, Yours Obediently, F. F. Hintze.[34]

There is no record that the proposed meeting ever took place.

The Aintab Cemetery Incident

The foregoing considerations help illuminate the cultural and religious milieu of Asia Minor at the end of the nineteenth century. When the Mormons moved their headquarters from Constantinople to Aintab in 1889, they joined an already complex *mélange* of ethnic and religious identities. In the course of their missionary activity and travels in Asia Minor and other areas of the Middle East, they crossed paths with a large and bewildering variety of peoples: Jews, Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Armenian Protestants, Maronites, Copts, Coptic Catholics, Nestorians, Chaldaean Catholics, Latin Christians, as well as Protestant missionaries from a number of different persuasions.

The cemetery incident of 1899 can be understood only in the context of this intricate "religious tangle in the Middle East at the turn of the century."[35] For Protestants worldwide, this was "the golden day for missionary expansion." Many believed in the literal fulfillment of a popular slogan of the time, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation."[36] In distant Turkey, the goal to spread Protestantism meant fierce competition for converts from the Armenian and other Eastern churches. Furthermore, feelings of mutual mistrust existed between Muslims and Christians, Catholics and Protestants, between the now-divided groups of Armenians, and between different Protestant groups. Armenians of all denominations continued to be persecuted by the Turkish government, and foreign missionaries were suspected of seditious and treasonous activity (their educational work contributed, if unwittingly, to the Armenian nationalist cause).[37]

How might one explain the crowd's unruly behavior toward the peaceful Mormon gathering? Several possibilities seem plausible in consideration of the factors discussed thus far. Assuming that the "Christian mob" was composed exclusively of Armenians, the agitators might have been one of these groups: Armenian Orthodox objecting to the threat posed by Western missionaries and their divisive influence on the Armenian Church and Armenian people; Protestant Armenians incited by anti-Mormon rumors circulating at the time; a mixed crowd simply protesting against these Mormon trespassers (because burials were under the jurisdiction of each millet, cemeteries generally were segregated according to religion); or any combination of these.

In spring 1899, only four Mormon missionaries served in the entire Turkish Mission. (The number fluctuated between one and ten; four was

Courtesy Elaine Bons

FIG. 2. Members and missionaries of the Aintab Branch, September 28, 1903. The male Latter-day Saint missionaries are all wearing white shirts, suits, and ties. President Joseph W. Booth is at the far right edge of the photo in front of the door. Elder Reno W. Vance, wearing a fez (Turkish hat), is in the middle of the group. Sister Reba Booth, her face shaded by a large hat, is directly to the viewer's right of Elder Vance. A mustached Elder Alma J. Holdaway sits to the viewer's right of Sister Booth. President Albert Herman is to the viewer's left of Elder Vance, looking away from the camera. Nersis Pilavjian, Armenian member and future president of the branch, wears a fez and a light-colored mustache and stands partially obscured behind President Herman.

typical.) The year before, Elder Hintze had returned to Turkey (with Apostle Anthon H. Lund) to investigate the condition of the mission. Hintze remained for two years, working mostly in Constantinople on administrative matters.[38] The mission president at the time was Philip S. Maycock, who had come to Turkey from the Swiss and German Mission along with Andrew L. Larson.[39] The fourth missionary was Joseph W. Booth (fig. 2), who had been in Aintab just over two months when the stone-throwing episode occurred. With him in Aintab was President Maycock; Elder Larson was in Aleppo and Elder Hintze was traveling between Alexandretta and Smyrna, on his way to Constantinople.[40]

Six years after the cemetery incident, Booth, again in Aintab, returned to the Armenian cemetery with his wife, Reba. He described the event in his journal:

> Reba & I took a walk through the Cemetery where there were multitudes of People. I estimated them at from 15,000 to 20,000 people. [See fig. 3 for a related scene.] We . . . wandered around through the tombs and met many friends and held conversation with some of them. . . . What a difference of

feeling among the people towards us from what there was about 6 years ago when Elder Maycock and I were driven from these grounds under a shower of stones. Now we have hundreds of friends among them. During the day a number of Friends called to see us.[41]

It is a tribute to Booth and his fellow missionaries that this "difference of feeling" had come about. Booth was known as a "very congenial person who impressed all those who came in contact with him as a Christian and gentleman of the highest character."[42] Years of constructive interaction with leaders and members of other faiths led to much-improved relations between the denominations. The Latter-day Saints, it would appear, had become an accepted feature on the heterogeneous religious landscape of Asia Minor.

David P. Charles (dpcharles@hotmail.com) received a B.A. in Comparative Literature from Brigham Young University. He also holds an M.St. in the Study of Religion from Oxford University, where he is currently a graduate student in Social Anthropology.

1. See James A. Toronto, "Early Missions to Ottoman Turkey, Syria, and Palestine," *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 339–62; David P. Charles, "'You Had the Alps, but We the Mount of Olives': Mormon Missionary Travel in the Middle East (1884–1928)," *Mormon*

Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU

FIG. 3. Throughout the Middle East, people of differing faiths follow the time-honored custom of visiting the graves of loved ones and esteemed religious figures. Photographer Charles Ellis Johnson, 1903.

Historical Studies 1 (spring 2000): 93–126; and Rao H. Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Near East, 1884–1929" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958).

2. See F. F. Hintze, "Abstract of Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 50 (September 17, 1888): 603–4.

3. See F. F. Hintze, "The Turkish Mission," *Deseret Weekly*, September 28, 1889, 418; George Teasdale to Elder F. F. Hintze, July 7, 1887; George Teasdale to President F. F. Hintze, July 26, 1888; and Journal of F. F. Hintze, June 20, 1887, and August 21, 1888. Typescripts of Hintze's journals, as well as all the cited letters that were written by or addressed to him, are in the author's possession.

4. F. F. Hintze, "Abstract of Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 51 (January 14, 1889): 28.

5. See Anthon H. Lund, "More from the Turkish Mission," *Millennial Star* 60 (May 5, 1898): 278–79; and Journal of F. F. Hintze, December 12, 1898.

6. On the weaving enterprise, see Philip S. Maycock, "Abstract of Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 61 (March 23, 1899): 189–92; A. L. Larson to F. F. Hintze, January 20, 1899; Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, January 30, February 3–6, May 24–26, June 30, July 2, 1899; J. W. Booth to F. F. Hintze, April 14, 1900; Journal of F. F. Hintze, March 21, 1898, January 9, January 21, May 15, June 3, 1899; A. H. Lund to Elder F. F. Hintze, December 27, 1898; Philip S. Maycock to F. F. Hintze, January 18, 1899; A. L. Larson to F. F. Hintze, January 20, 1899; [P. S.] Maycock to F. F. Hintze, January 25, 1899; Anthon H. Lund to Pastor F. F. Hintze, March 10, 1899; J. W. Booth to Elder F. F. Hintze, July 18, 1899; J. W. Booth to Elder F. F. Hintze, November 27, 1899; Lorenzo Snow to Elder F. F. Hintze, December 13, 1899; and J. W. Booth to F. F. Hintze, April 14, 1900. The journals of Joseph Wilford Booth are kept in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

7. See Lindsay, "A History of the Missionary Activities," 72–74; and Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, January 5, 1899.

8. See Jason Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons: A History of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Vintage, 1999).

9. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, "Introduction," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Brande and Berhard Lewis, 2 vols. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982), 1:3.

10. W. H. C. Frend, "Christianity in the Middle East: Survey down to A.D. 1800," in *Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict*, ed. A. J. Arberry, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 1:256. The exact origins and early development of the millet system are not clear. It appears, at this point in the scholarly debate, that the system was not, as has often been assumed, a uniform system of Ottoman practice. The term *millet* held a variety of meanings over the centuries, and only in the nineteenth—as it came to mean a nation and no longer a religious community *per se*—does it seem to have settled into its modern meaning. In previous centuries, Ottoman relations with its non-Muslim subjects varied widely according to time, place, government, and community. See the essays collected in Braude and Lewis, *Christians and Jews*, especially chapters 1, 3, and 8.

11. See Robert Brenton Betts, *Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study* (Athens: Lycabettus, 1975).

12. K. V. Sarkissian, "The Armenian Church," in *Religion in the Middle East*, 1:499. On the Roman Catholic missions, see Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2d ed. (London: Penguin, 1986), 151–78.

13. Latourette applied this phrase to the period 1800–1914, "the age of the most extensive geographic spread of Christianity." Others have the "Great Century" beginning as

early as 1792. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity,* 7 vols. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1938–45), 6:1. Elsewhere he has written, "The ninety-nine years from 1815 to 1914 formed a distinct period in the history of mankind and of Christianity. . . . Because of a combination of geographic expansion, inner vitality, and the effect upon mankind as a whole, they constituted the greatest century which Christianity had thus far known." Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present,* 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), 2:1063.

14. Neill, *A History of Christian Missions,* 214–15.

15. See Clifton J. Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World: The First Half Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810–1860* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1969); and William E. Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Foreign Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim, 1910).

16. Julius Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 67, 415.

17. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 72.

18. "Objects of the Missions to the Oriental Churches, and the Means of Prosecuting Them," *Missionary Herald* 35 (1839): 39–44, in Kamal Salibi and Yousef Khoury, eds., *The Missionary Herald: Reports from Ottoman Syria, 1819–1870,* 5 vols. (Amman: Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies, 1995), 3:160–61.

19. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 73.

20. See Peter Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen: Ursprung und Anfang der Amerikanischen Mission unter den Nationalkirchen Westasiens* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1958), 364–424; Thomas Otakar Kutvirt, "The Development of the Mission to the Armenians at Constantinople through 1846," *Armenian Review* 37 (winter 1984): 39; and Salibi and Khoury, *Missionary Herald,* 3:162.

21. Kutvirt, "The Development of the Mission," 38–44, 50–51. See also A. L. Tibawi, *American Interests in Syria, 1800–1901: A Study of Educational, Literary and Religious Work* (Oxford: Claredon, 1966), 107.

22. Kutvirt, "The Development of the Mission," 45–46. The Protestant millet, affirmed by imperial decree in 1850, appears to have included Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, and members of other communities. See James Thayer Addison, *The Christian Approach to the Moslem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 87 n. 6. See also Salahi Ramsdan Sonyel, *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy* (London: K. Rustum and Brother, 1987), 5–6 (Sonyel's work, though unbalanced, is well researched and contains much useful information); and Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen,* 496–501. For the Plan of Church Organization for the Evangelical Armenians, the Confession of Faith, and the Discipline, see Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen,* 633–39.

23. Kawerau, *Amerika und die Orientalischen Kirchen,* 499–501; Addison, *The Christian Approach,* 87; Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 125; Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810–1927* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 15.

24. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 131, 157; Addison, *The Christian Approach,* 90, 131; Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy,* 26. See also George Miller, "Aleppo College: Failure or Fulfilment?" *Muslim World* 57 (January 1967): 42–45; and Frank Andrews Stone, *Academies for Anatolia: A Study for the Rationale, Program and Impact of the Educational Institutions Sponsored by the American Board in Turkey, 1830–1980* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984).

25. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 133; John A. De Novo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900–1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 259.

26. Salibi and Khoury, *Missionary Herald*, 3:160; italics in original.

27. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions*, 412.

28. Jean-Michel Hornus, "The Lutheran and Reformed Churches," in *Religion in the Middle East*, 1:537.

29. Hornus, "The Lutheran and Reformed Churches," 1:549.

30. Malachia Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia*, ed. Terenig Poladian, trans. G. Marcar Gregory, 2d rev. ed. (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1955), 72. Other Armenian writers were far less certain about the supposed benefits. See, for example, Abel Abrahamian, *The Church and Faith of Armenia* (London: Faith, 1920).

31. Kamel S. Abu Jaber, "The Millet System in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Muslim World* 57 (July 1967): 214. See also Lootfy Levonian, "The Millet System in the Middle East," *Muslim World* 42 (April 1952): 90–96.

32. F. F. Hintze, "The Turkish Mission," *Deseret Weekly*, September 28, 1889, 418; F. F. Hintze, "Letter from Elder Hintze," *Deseret Weekly*, December 7, 1889, 763.

33. Joseph Wilford Booth, "The Gospel in Syria," *Millennial Star* 66 (July 28, 1904): 477–78.

34. Journal of F. F. Hintze, April 22–26, 1899.

35. Aziz S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1968), 218.

36. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 91, 99.

37. The historian John Joseph has written two highly interesting monographs on the complex tensions between religious groups in the Middle East: John Joseph, *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), and *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East: Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

38. Lindsay, "A History of Missionary Activities," 68–72; Journal of F. F. Hintze, March 27, 1898.

39. "Releases and Appointments," *Millennial Star* 59 (August 26, 1897): 542; and "Releases and Appointments," *Millennial Star* 62 (June 28, 1900): 409.

40. Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, January 5, 1899; Philip S. Maycock, "Abstract of Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 61 (March 23, 1899): 189–92; A. L. Larson and Philip S. Maycock, "Abstract of Correspondence," *Millennial Star* 61 (April 20, 1899): 245–46; and Journal of F. F. Hintze, March 12, 16, 1899.

41. Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, May 1, 1905.

42. Kevork A. Sarafian, *A Briefer History of Aintab* (Los Angeles: Union of the Armenians of Aintab, 1957), 76.

Appendix:

Account by Joseph Wilford Booth, March 13, 1899

Mon 13 […] It was the first day of the Great 50-day fast of the Armenians, that is for that length of time they abstain from meats and oil.[1] While we were at our reading Bro. Garouch[2] came in and told us of the event and called our attention to the multitudes of people out among the tombs on the hillside south of the city, and winding their way to the top of the gently sloping elevaton on the summit of which stately stands the residence [>& school] of the late Mr. Moiten.[3] Frequently we glanced through our windows and over the flat roofs of ruder and moor humble dwellings than our own,[4] to watch the motly crowd far out in the distant hills, but little dreaming that ere the sun went down we would be the center of attraction for all that mighty host, and not only this but the very objects of their ignorant and wicked redicule.

Soon after noon we "spruced up" a bit and first made our way to the Shop where the brethren were at work and there held a lengthy discussion with a number of callers among whom were some we had before talked with.

A number of the brethren left their work and accompanied us out through the semetery where people could be seen in all directions, singly and in groups seated around the grave of some loved one ~~whith~~ with bowed heads and, I suppose weeping hearts for some of their ~~cry~~ cries and moans were piteous to hear as we passed along.

But we had scarcly entered the "City of the dead" before the people from all sides began to set the gaze on us appearantly forgetting, for the time, those over whose ashes they had come to utter their lamentations and pour their tears of mournful rememberances.

---

1. It is the first day of Lent, a six-week period followed by Holy Week (culminating in Easter Day). Together, these seven weeks constitute the forty-eight-day "Paschal abstinence"; during this time, "only nourishment of a vegetable kind is permitted, for everything which belongs to the animal kingdom is regarded as meat diet; honey is the only exception." Altogether there are 160 days of abstinence each year. Ormanian, *The Armenian Church*, 155–64. See also N. Adontz, "Les fêtes et les saints de l'Église arménienne," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 26 (1927–28): 74–104, 225–78.

2. Garouch Bezjian belonged from the start to the Aintab weaving business. He and his wife, Dudu, were members of the Aintab branch, and Booth was a frequent guest at their home. See "Discourse By President F. M. Lyman," *Millenial Star* 61 (March 23, 1899): 189–92; Journal of F. F. Hintze, January 7–9, 1899; and Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, January 12, 1899, April 28, 1899, and May 25, 1899.

3. Identity unknown.

4. In March 1898, a house was rented in Aintab from a Mr. Vartan Nuraderngian[?]. It included "4 rooms in the upper story & 4 rooms in the lower story with

Higher up the hill side and beyond the main ~~party~~ part of the necropolis could be seen groups here and there seated around their meal boards enjoying picnic, such as it was, and as we passed along we were frequently invited to dine with them which we declined with thanks. Reaching near the top of the hill which is perhaps ~~fine~~ five or six furlongs from the edge of the city, we met a number of friends with whom Bro Maycock[5] had conversed before and who now desired to hear more of our doctrine. It had been suggested [>before] that we hold a meeting and preach to the people but some of the local brethern deemed it not wise and so it pass on. Now came a opportunity to present the gosple to a few of our friends and in order to attract as little attention as possible we repaired to a spot a few hundred yds. away from the great ~~mu~~ concourse of people and there quietly sat among the rocks and little ledges of a small ravine. Our presence was soon detected and one after another, & group after group came stringing along until we were entirely surrounded by a army of bright red caps[6] beneath which grim, dusky, dirty, as well as fair and smiling faces greeted us in every direction.

The Conversation began mindly between Bro Maycock and his friendly antagonests . It waxed warmer and warmer though not reaching undue excitement. By request of Pres. M,[7] Bro Samuel[8] arose and taking his

---

kitchen and out house conveniences." The elders and some of the Saints lived there for around two years. When Booth decided to move to a different building, Vartan "made strong objections and claimed that we were bound by an agreement of Bros Hintze & [Apostle Anthon H.] Lund to remain here three years longer." The dispute was eventually settled in court, where "one officer said to Vartan, 'We have great confidence in Americans for their truthfulness. They may steal, commit adultry, murder and rob, but they will not lie and we can not be trusted like them.'" Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, March 14, September 7, 1900, February 11, 1901, April 6, 1901, May 15, 1901.

5. Philip S. Maycock, president of the Turkish Mission.

6. Booth refers here to the fez, once a common sight throughout Turkey. This red hat is "the traditional Turkish headgear, which took its name from [the city of] Fez in Morocco. It is a brimless red felt cap shaped as a truncated cone, with a flat crown to which a tassel is often attached. It was abolished by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1925." E. Van Donzel, comp., *Islamic Desk Reference* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 101.

7. President Maycock.

8. Samuel [or Shamuel] Küchük Keorkian [or Kevorkian], a member of the Church at Aintab. Booth described in detail the funeral of Samuel's young daughter, who died shortly after Booth's arrival at Aintab. Samuel apparently moved to Aleppo afterwards. He is rarely mentioned in Booth's journal until the spring of 1901, when Booth wrote:

> A very sad event occured during the night and the news came to us early and filled our hearts with sorrow. For several months our Brother Shamuel . . . has been on the wayward track and many are the pityful stories of his

position on the edge of little precipice began his discourse. Interruptions soon followed and ere long he was pushed off from his rock rostrum which created a roar of laughter.

Resuming his position he continued a few minutes when the mobish listeners?[9] drew the attention of Mus[>s]ulmen[10] soldiers who werr out to keep peace among the great gathering.[11]

They [>rushed up &] dispersed the crowd, but on learning that we were only indulging in a peacable meeting they gathered about and bade us proceed.

The crowd returned with increased numbers and Bro. Samuel continued his remarks but with difficulty as the soldiers themselves were unable to keep the rabble in order.

Soon small stones began to light about him, tossed by some from the outter rings of the crowd, and the opposition soon grew to hatred.

shouts of derision came from the throats of the maddening throng and the officers perceiving the situation again despelled them and warned us to go while they were there to protect us. The tumultous roar of all those hundreds as we moved away was interesting to say the least. We were closly followed by these impious servents of satan but the mussulmen kept them from touching us. Larger stones were hurled over our heads and several struck us but with no harmful effect.

---

disobedience that have come to us from Haleb [Aleppo]. We have talked to him much and at times he would exhibit a good spirit . . . and brighten our hopes. Some 10 days ago he came to Aintab on business and has been here since in town but calling very little on us. Now we hear that during the past night while in a drunken state he drew his pistle and shot a man, whose recovery now is doubtful. Shamuel has escaped but the officers are on the watch for him. The affair places us and the church here in a very embarassing condition as our enemies are glad to make it appear that the church is responsible. (Journal of Joseph Wilford Booth, January 7, 24, 1899; February 12, April 9, 20, 1899; March 15, April 14, 1901)

9. The midsentence insertion of question marks is a regular feature of Booth's journals, a rhetorical gesture meant to highlight a blatantly ironic word or phrase.

10. Muslim.

11. Both Booth and Maycock make special mention of the fact that the cemetery guards were Muslim. Assigning Muslim guards was common practice throughout the empire. This practice was both a visible demonstration of Turkish authority and a preventive measure against the very real possibility of hostility among Christians. Christian holy sites, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, were also guarded by Muslim soldiers. See Maycock's letter, "Shows the Gospel Plan," *Millennial Star* 61 (April 20, 1899): 246–47. Elder Joseph M. Tanner wrote in 1886 during a visit to Jerusalem:

It is a sad comment on Christianity when the Turkish government is forced to put guards in some of the churches held as common property by different

The brave sons of mohamed returned the compliment for us, and though their aim was poor the size [>of the stones] and [>the] force with which the missils were sent flying at our persecutors told of the earnestness of those who freely offered their service in our defense. What a picture to see the followers of the great founder of Islam guarding a few humble advocates of "Peace and good will" from the desperate attacks of a Christian ? mob. No wonder the intolerant wretches are designated as "dogs"[12] by their more liberal & high minded superiors,[13] whose religeon,[14] though less elevating in its precepts, is still lived up to more closely by its adherants. I am afraid these poor self righteous pharisaical bigots when they come into that "blessed rest"—that house of many mansions will find themselves crowded into the basement longingly looking up the cellar steps at their mohamedian[15] friends enjoying the comforts of the first floor. If their treatment of us to day is any criterion on which to base a conclusion I am not far wrong in my decission. Through the curious crowd we made our way home while all along the way we were the center of attraction of thousands whoop[>ing] and yelling like a hoard of heathens [>just] let loose from prison.

The officers accompanied us to the door for which we thanked them and gave tham a "backshish"[16] for their troubble. The city is in an uproar over the affair and we rejoice in the fact that "This sect is every where spoken against" We trust that a few honest souls at least will be lead to further investigate the truth and that our days outting will not be in vain.[17]

Christian denominations to keep riots down and preserve peace. No wonder the Mussulman looks with contempt upon the hypocrisy of modern Christianity. (J. M. Tanner, "In Syria," *Millennial Star* 48 [May 24, 1886]: 333–34)

12. Ethnic and religious groups used a variety of epithets to characterize one another. Christians were often called "dogs." See Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions,* 414.

13. The Turks.

14. Islam.

15. Muslim.

16. A small amount of money given as a gratuity for services provided or as an alm to the sick and the elderly. (The line between gratuity and bribe was very thin.) See Charles, "'You Had the Alps, but We the Mount of Olives,'" 96 nn. 23–28.

17. While the events of the day certainly made the Mormons better known in Aintab, Booth does not mention any direct results of the occasion during the month that followed.

Medieval Texts for a Modern Audience

The Islamic Translation Series at BYU in Light of Two Early Antecedents

D. Morgan Davis

Since the publication of its first volume in 1997, the Islamic Translation Series at Brigham Young University has gained recognition as a significant academic endeavor. From a historical perspective, however, the series, which seeks to make available to a new audience texts from the medieval efflorescence of Islamic civilization, is hardly unprecedented. Indeed, when compared with past undertakings, it is quite modest. This essay traces the outlines of two earlier translation movements, one centered in Baghdad from the mid-eighth to the tenth centuries C.E., the other in Spain during the twelfth century. These movements resulted in the transference and augmentation of scientific and philosophical ideas across cultural and linguistic boundaries as civilizations in transition sought to harness the knowledge of their predecessors. As will be seen, both movements are, in a sense, intellectual ancestors of the scholarly enterprises being carried out today at Brigham Young University.

The Translation Movement at Baghdad

The Syriac (Christian Aramaic) tradition was an early source of translations from Greek into Arabic. During the centuries prior to the rise of Islam, there had been a movement among the Christian (mostly Nestorian and Jacobite) communities of Palestine to translate Greek Christian texts into their native Syriac. In the process of translation, Christian scholars became interested in classical Greek philosophy, which they saw as a discipline that would aid them in the interpretation of their own scriptures.[1] Accordingly, translations were made of these non-Christian texts as well.

After the initial Islamic conquests of the Middle East, non-Christian Greek material was translated again, this time from Syriac into Arabic (a relatively easy step because the two languages are cognate). These translations allowed Arabs, who were already becoming interested in the Hellenistic sciences, some of their first exposure to the texts. But this was only a foreshadow of what was to come as political developments within Islam intersected with cultural influences from still another quarter—the former empire of Persia.

In 750 C.E., conflict between rival factions under the first Islamic dynasty culminated in the so-called Abbasid revolution. The Abbasids established a new dynasty and founded a new capital at a small village called Baghdad on the banks of the Tigris River.[2] Anxious to establish their legitimacy, the rulers of the Abbasid empire embarked on a vigorous program of public works and palace building, channeling their wealth toward the development of the burgeoning city. At the same time, they improvised, then formalized, a system of imperial administration to maintain control of their vast domains.

The new administration was largely entrusted to elite families of Sassanian Persian background, whose culture the Abbasid elites much admired for its own imperial accomplishments and its achievements in astrology and other courtly sciences of the period. The Sassanian tradition was an ancient one with a well-established translation movement and ideology. During the previous century, the Sassanians had overseen the translation of a large body of texts from Greek and other ancient languages of science and culture into Pahlavi.[3] With the decline of the Sassanian empire and the coming of the Arabic-speaking Muslims as the new wielders of power in the region, the Persian tradition of translation continued but was redirected to produce Arabic translations.[4]

As the Abbasid rivalry with the Christian Byzantine Empire to the north intensified and as Islamic theological debates created internal tension, the fruits of the translation program—in particular translations of the philosophical corpus of ancient Greece—became a means by which the Abbasid caliphs could enhance their own cultural and intellectual stature. The disciplines of demonstrative reasoning and of dialectical argumentation set forth by Aristotle, for example, were adopted by the caliph al-Ma'mun in order to lend legitimacy to the Abbasid claim that they, rather than the Byzantines, were the rightful heirs of the admired Hellenistic tradition. Al-Ma'mun hoped also to acquire intellectual credibility as he asserted his claim to supreme religious as well as political authority amid a climate of theological controversy and cultural rivalry.[5]

The translation effort also sparked and then, in turn, came to be fueled by the desire of Abbasid courtiers, functionaries, and men of learning to acquaint themselves with the ancient sciences. By commissioning and funding translations, they cultivated their own reputations as sophisticated sponsors of high culture and learning.[6]

Over time, the translation movement increased in sophistication. Initially there were few or no translators who had sufficient command of both Greek and Arabic to accomplish direct translations from one language into the other. Instead, Arabic translations were made from existing Syriac or Pahlavi editions of the Greek originals. Within a generation, however, there

were translators working in Baghdad who had a firm command of Greek, allowing them to translate directly into Arabic and revise those translations made from intermediary languages. A catalogue of titles was maintained, and those works of greatest interest to the growing scholarly community were translated first, while those of secondary importance were translated later.

This activity at Baghdad lasted for nearly two centuries and eventually produced a vast corpus of Greek philosophy and science in Arabic translation. As a natural consequence of this translation work, Muslim scholars began to work in the Hellenistic tradition, producing their own commentaries and original treatises with an Islamic hue that was variously subtle or overt. A number of these Islamic intellectuals achieved great renown. The scholarly output of such thinkers as al-Kindi (died ca. A.D. 870), al-Razi (865–ca. 935), al-Farabi (ca. 878–ca. 950), Ibn Sina (980–1037), al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroës, 1126–1198)—to name only a leading few—is truly intimidating both in terms of sheer volume and in scope of subject matter and sophistication of thought. Their often controversial influence was felt not only among scholars in the Islamic milieu but also in Latin Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as the first philosophical awakenings following the Carolingian period took place.

The Translation Movement in Spain

The Latin West in the twelfth century saw the emergence of a town economy with specialized trades and disciplines, one of which was teaching. The *magister,* or professional teacher, was a new position that contrasted and competed with the older tradition of monastic learning. From the few Aristotelian works that were available to them, these teachers gradually pieced together Aristotle's system of logic and learned that there were yet other Aristotelian treatises lost to them—treatises on forgotten sciences for which the magisters had only the names but which had at one time been organized and systematized into an encyclopedic whole. C. H. Lohr has described the steps by which these European scholars gained access to the wealth of knowledge contained in the ancient Greek texts:

> As the masters learned the names of these new sciences, they were like a modern librarian who finds a lacuna of several volumes in one of his library's periodicals; they could not rest until they had found the means to fill the gap. Thus they turned to the translators. The additions which *these* interpreters of the classical tradition made to medieval knowledge was immense: in geometry Euclid, in astronomy Ptolemy, in medicine Hippocrates and Galen, and above all—for method, for system, for wholly new and undreamt-of sciences—the works of Aristotle, the Philosopher par excellence, together with his Arabic commentators.[7]

The translators of these works were, for the most part, members of the Arabicized Christian population of Spain, known as Mozarabs. Thoroughly conversant with Andalusian Muslim culture, including its Arabic language of administration, they were nevertheless Christians, maintaining their own communal identity within the larger Islamic context of their society. In addition, some peninsular Jews became involved as translators, since their knowledge of Hebrew allowed them relatively easy access to Arabic.

Toledo and Saragossa became the main centers of this translation effort, but translation also took place at Barcelona, Pamplona, Segovia, and León.[8] The Arabic texts were translated into Latin, then the language of learning in the West, and many of the manuscripts of these translations are still preserved in the museums and libraries of Europe.

This translation movement on the western extreme of the Islamic world was no less influential than had been the Abbasid translation effort nearly four centuries earlier. It supplied an entire civilization with heretofore unknown models of critical thought and inquiry enriched by the intellectual accretions of the intervening millennium. Of particular importance were the Aristotelian and other philosophical and scientific works, as well as Aristotelian commentaries transmitted or written by the Arabic philosophers mentioned above. These translations had a direct and pronounced influence on the thought and writings of Western men of letters such as Thomas Aquinas (who did more than anyone else to reconcile the tensions between the traditional theological learning of the clerics and the "new" Aristotelian approach of the scholars). The translations also inspired the development of Aristotelianism at the nascent universities of Paris and Oxford. In short, the translation movement in Spain was a prelude to the great cultural and intellectual renaissance of the West.

During the past few centuries, the Aristotelian system of investigation and science has been gradually eclipsed by more recent concepts and approaches such as natural selection, theoretical physics, modern economics, and even modern logic. As "old" science has had less and less immediate bearing on the new, there has been a concomitant decline in the West's appreciation of its own intellectual roots. The Latin translations of the Islamic philosophers have fallen into obscurity, and the Arabic texts upon which they are based, though still published in the Middle East, have remained effectively unexplored by most Western scholars because of linguistic barriers. As a consequence, some of the most fascinating chapters of the world's intellectual history remain mostly unknown in the West, and a sense of cultural connection and even indebtedness to the East has remained undernourished and undeveloped.

The Islamic Translation Project at Brigham Young University

As a scholar of classical Greek and Islamic philosophy, Professor Daniel C. Peterson of Brigham Young University's Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages was concerned about the general lack of understanding regarding the role of Islamic civilization in the transmission and transformation of the Hellenistic scientific tradition. He believed that, if the linguistic barriers preventing Western scholars from having access to the primary texts from the medieval Islamic period could be overcome, the result might eventually be a more widespread acknowledgment of the historical and intellectual interconnections between the West and Islamic civilization. The classical Arabic texts were in the public domain. They could be published with modern English translations in a side-by-side format. Such an arrangement would facilitate the study of the original text by language students and would allow scholars in the field to make critical use of the translations. In 1992, Professor Peterson proposed his idea to university officials, who encouraged him to pursue the prospect further.

Shortly thereafter, Peterson became acquainted with a scholar in New York who shared his desire to see more classical Islamic works in translation. Professor Parviz Morewedge already had contacts with many of the major scholars in the field, some of whom had completed translations and were looking for someone to publish them. With the scholarly contacts provided by Morewedge and with encouragement and support from university officials, Peterson was able to secure financial commitments from private donors sufficient to officially launch the translation series. Peterson formally announced the creation of the Islamic Translation Series on October 23, 1992, during a scholarly convention on Islamic science and philosophy at Columbia University. Work on the new series began in earnest shortly thereafter.

While scholars finalized the first translations for submission to the series, efforts at BYU were immediately focused on preparing publishable copy of Arabic text. The problem of handling Arabic—a cursive script written from right to left—on conventional computers had only recently been solved by a local software company. A small team of part-time typists and proofreaders, hired from among the students of Arabic at BYU, began entering the texts into the computer. Working in shifts in Professor Peterson's office, they typed and then proofread the texts to provide clean, error-free copy for eventual publication with the translations. To ensure accuracy, some manuscripts were sent to Egypt for an additional review by an editor of Arabic.

In 1994 a regular office to house the project was obtained in BYU's Jesse Knight Humanities Building. In 1995 a full-time editorial position was created in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages to ensure

that the work of typing and editing was not undermined by the frequent turnover of part-time help. By 1996 the first volume in the series was almost ready for publication. That volume, al-Ghazali's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, was translated by Michael E. Marmura, an emeritus member of the faculty of the University of Toronto and one of the foremost authorities in the West on Islamic philosophy. A cover design that would be used for the entire series was approved, and the remaining technical hurdles of publishing Arabic and English together in the same format were finally overcome. Elizabeth Watkins, then of BYU's Scholarly Publications, shepherded the book through the logistics of the publication and cataloguing process. After several frustrated attempts to reach agreements with national or international distributors, an arrangement was made with the University of Chicago Press to help advertise and distribute the books worldwide.

The *Incoherence of the Philosophers* appeared in autumn 1997 and was followed a year later by another work by al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*, translated by David Buchman. In February 2000, *The Philosophy of Illumination* by the Persian philosopher Suhrawardi (translated by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai of Indiana University and UCLA respectively) was published using improved software and publication methods that allow digital integration and transfer to negative of both Arabic and English texts. A second edition of *Incoherence* was produced using the same technology. In 2001 a fourth volume appeared—Ibn Rushd's (Averroës's) *Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory,* translated by Charles E. Butterworth of the University of Maryland.

The aim of the Islamic Translation Series is to publish "significant works in the Arabic and Persian philosophical tradition, making them accessible to scholars, students, and the general public."[9] Determining which works from the almost limitless ocean of classical Islamic literature should be given priority, however, presents an interesting editorial challenge, a challenge that has so far been met with informed pragmatism. Consensus among scholars about the preeminence of certain writers and works, and submissions of already completed independent translations have as yet made it unnecessary to commission any translation. Among the titles currently in preparation are the monumental *Physics* and *Metaphysics,* key works by the greatest of the Islamic philosophers, Ibn Sina. Another translation in process is a commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* by Ibn Rushd, who was known to Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries as *the* commentator on Aristotle.

Early in 2001, the Islamic Translation Series became a part of BYU's newly created Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. The institute consolidated several of BYU's scholarly organizations and

projects into one organization. The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), the Dead Sea Scrolls searchable data base, and related undertakings that use technology to restore and conserve ancient texts are now part of the institute. The creation of the institute made possible a more efficient sharing of technical expertise and resources by researchers and editors.

As the reputation of the Islamic Translation Series has grown, so has scholarly interest in the project's publication capabilities, particularly in its capacity to handle "exotic" scripts in tandem with English translations. Manuscripts and offers of collaboration have been received from quarters slightly outside the original purview of the series. For example, medical treatises in Arabic by Moses Maimonides, the great rabbi of twelfth-century Egypt, have been offered for publication by a scholar in Germany, and scholars working on ancient texts of Arabic and Syriac Christianity have expressed an interest in the possibility of publishing through BYU. Such texts come from the same geographical and historical milieus as those in the Islamic Translation Series; the only significant difference is that they are not specifically Islamic in character or authorship. During the past two years, several scholars with expertise in these fields have joined BYU and the institute, making it possible to take on these and related texts and bringing about the creation of two allied texts projects: the Graeco-Arabic Sciences and Philosophy series and the Eastern Christian Texts series. The three series (which include the Islamic Translation Series) are now being developed jointly, and a robust program of publications is in process for each.[10]

Translations Old and New

At key points in history, human thought has benefited from periods of intensive translation during which the religious, philosophical, scientific, and literary traditions of one civilization have been rendered into the language of another. The sheer magnitude of these translation efforts seems almost surreal to us today. Yet whenever the motive has been sufficiently strong and constant, means have been found to carry on seemingly Herculean tasks of intellectual and cultural transference. The Islamic Translation Series, as well as other translation projects undertaken by the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, is making a significant contribution to the sharing of knowledge across linguistic and cultural boundaries. These projects may never reach the monumental proportions of the great movements centered in Baghdad and Spain. Nevertheless, over time, the projects at Brigham Young University, like the great translation efforts of the past, will produce positive intellectual, cultural, and spiritual benefits for the generations to come.

D. Morgan Davis is Assistant Executive Editor of the Islamic Translation Series. He has been involved with the project since 1993, when as an undergraduate in Near Eastern Studies at BYU he worked part-time as a typist of Arabic manuscripts. He holds an M.A. in history from the University of Texas at Austin and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Utah.

Books from the Islamic Translation Series can be purchased directly from the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts at http://farms.byu.edu or 1-800-327-6715. Works currently available include Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael E. Marmura; Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*, trans. David Buchman; Averroës, *Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth; and Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, trans. John Walbridge and Hossein M. Ziai.

1. Juan Vernet, *La cultura hispanoárabe en Oriente y Occidente* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1978), 80–84.

2. Arthur Goldschmidt Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East*, 4th ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), 69.

3. The ideological and historical underpinnings of the Zoroastrian translation ideology and its influence in the Abbasid context have been ably delineated by Dimitri Gutas, whose brilliant study *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* is now the single most important scholarly work for understanding the Abbasid translation movement. Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), 40–45.

4. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 54.

5. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 75–104. See also Majid Fakhry's rather different and, in my view, less convincing interpretation in his nevertheless invaluable *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 10–12.

6. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 121–36.

7. C. H. Lohr, "The Medieval Interpretation of Aristotle," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 84. See also R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth Century Renaissance* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1999), 103–15.

8. Josep Puig, "The Transmission and Reception of Arabic Philosophy in Christian Spain (until 1200)," in *The Introduction of Arabic Philosophy into Europe*, ed. Charles E. Butterworth and Blake Andrée Kessel (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 11.

9. This statement is printed on the dust jackets of the books published in the Islamic Translation Series, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press).

10 . See Erica Griggs, "Islamic Translation Series Expands," *Brigham Young Magazine* 54 (summer 2000): 16. The new scholars include Glen M. Cooper, who has a Ph.D. from Columbia University in classical Arabic with specialization in Graeco-Arabic translation and the history of medicine and astronomy; Kristian Heal, a doctoral candidate at the University of Birmingham, U.K., with specialized training in Syriac and oriental Christianity; and Carl Griffin, a Ph.D. student in early Christian studies at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., specializing in Greek, Latin, and oriental patrology.

Book Review

AL-GHAZALI, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers: A Parallel English-Arabic Text Translated, Introduced, and Annotated by Michael E. Marmura.* Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2000. xxxi, 258 pp. Notes, index. $29.95.

David Paulsen and Eric Madsen

Written by al-Ghazali (1058–1111), *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahafut al-falasifa)* has long been recognized as a classic of Islamic thought. In it, al-Ghazali launches a vigorous attack against twenty philosophical doctrines that he sees as threatening to the Islamic faith. These doctrines include metaphysical claims about the nature and attributes of God, the nature of the world, and the possibility of miracles as well as epistemological assertions about which of these doctrines can and cannot be rationally demonstrated.

Al-Ghazali condemns seventeen of these twenty doctrines as "heretical innovations" (xx) and the remaining three as being in total opposition to Islamic belief. These three are the doctrines that the world is eternal and hence needs no creator; that God does not know particulars but only their universal characteristics—and hence does not know us as individual persons; and that bodily resurrection is impossible. While refuting rational arguments both for and against revealed doctrines, he affirms that such doctrines must be accepted on faith. For al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence* is more than a speculative discussion of timeless theological questions and philosophical theories; it is a defense and preservation of his religion and a voice of warning to those who have been misled by reliance on (and sometimes misunderstanding of) these philosophical doctrines.

Structure and Translation

The Incoherence of the Philosophers is highly structured. This translation consists of six introductions—five by al-Ghazali and one by the translator, Michael E. Marmura—twenty philosophical exchanges, and a conclusion. Each exchange contains one or more philosophical proofs followed by al-Ghazali's refutation of the proofs. Al-Ghazali supplements this exchange with a discussion of the philosophers' anticipated rejoinders followed again by his reply. This method was motivated by al-Ghazali's belief that he must first summarize and explain the philosophers' arguments for his readers before he could successfully refute those arguments. Marmura comments that al-Ghazali "explained them so clearly and so well that he

rendered philosophical ideas accessible to nonphilosophers" and thus, ironically, made philosophy more popular (xv). Because each exchange builds upon the others without the prior proofs being re-explained, the reader cannot pick and choose which discussions to read but is forced to begin with the first discussion and continue reading straight through the book.

Marmura's translation of *The Incoherence* includes a brief biographical sketch, which places the text within the context of al-Ghazali's life and other works and clarifies his purposes for this text. Other features of this translation include annotations, explanatory notes, the Arabic text and the translated text on facing pages, and numbered lines and paragraphs. To enhance the flow and clarity of the translation, Marmura adds words and phrases that are implied by, but do not appear in, the original text. These additions are bracketed to enable the reader to distinguish what comes directly from the original text and what does not.

These features allow Marmura to distinguish his translation from two other English translations, neither of which, he claims, is adequate for the serious scholar. Most of the text of *The Incoherence* is in S. Van Den Bergh's translation of Averroës' response to *The Incoherence*, titled *The Incoherence of the Incoherence (Tahafut al-Tahafut)*. Though Marmura lauds Van Den Bergh's translation as "a major contribution to the study of both al-Ghazali and Averroës," he asserts that the work contains "serious errors." He also criticizes S. Kamali's English translation of *The Incoherence* for having "its share of inaccuracies" and at times for being "more of a paraphrase than a translation" (xxvi).

Religious and Philosophical Objectives

Al-Ghazali's objective in *The Incoherence* is to refute various philosophical doctrines. In his critiques, al-Ghazali denies that philosophers have been able to prove the existence of God, challenges rational arguments attempting to prove the nonembodiment of God, and discredits a theory of the soul that denies bodily resurrection. Confident of the success of his arguments, al-Ghazali demands that those who have been misled by philosophers change their behavior and submit to religious laws. He describes these misled persons as those "'who repel away from God's way, intending to make it crooked, who are indeed disbelievers in the hereafter' [Qur'an 11:19]" (2). Such people follow ancient philosophers by denying "revealed laws and religious confessions" and also by rejecting "the details of religious and sectarian [teaching], believing them to be man-made laws and embellished tricks"(2). Because these misled persons have abandoned their faith, they believe themselves superior to the faithful.

Al-Ghazali believes such followers embrace "the false as true" (2–3), and his basic intent is to correct these misled people by demonstrating the

contradictions and confusion—the incoherence—of the philosophers on whom they rely. He explains, "I took it upon myself to write this book in refutation of the ancient philosophers, to show the incoherence of their belief and the contradiction of their word in matters relating to metaphysics; to uncover the dangers of their doctrine and its shortcomings" (3).

According to al-Ghazali, the followers are impressed by the philosophers' mathematical and scientific certitude and as a result are quickly swept away by metaphysical theories that are unaccompanied by the same level of certainty. The metaphysical realm of study is distinct from scientific and mathematical study in critical ways. Thus, while the ancient thinkers are able to give demonstrations of their mathematical and scientific proofs in such a way that leaves little room for doubt, they fail to provide convincing demonstrations of their metaphysical theories.[1]

Interestingly enough, al-Ghazali not only refutes the philosophers but also, in certain ways, defends and clarifies their views against the misinterpretations of their followers. While these followers want to reject religious practice and godly belief on account of their leaders' doctrines, al-Ghazali claims "that all significant thinkers, past and present, agree in believing in God and the last day" (3). If the followers interpreted their philosophers correctly, they would at least hold to a belief in God and, perhaps, to their religious duties. His criticism of the philosophers is not that they reject God, but that "they have fallen into confusion in certain details beyond these principles, erring in this, straying from the correct path, and leading others astray" (3). Nonetheless, he still argues that "certain details" are "heretical innovations" and "utterly irreligious" (xx); *The Incoherence* is his reply to these innovations.

It is important to note that al-Ghazali does not intend *The Incoherence* to offer a positive description, explanation, or apology of either Islamic doctrine in general or his personal beliefs in particular. In fact, as observed by Marmura, in the interest of refuting the philosophers, al-Ghazali even persuasively defends doctrines to which he does not personally adhere—for instance, the possibility of the immateriality of the soul (xxvi). Al-Ghazali repeatedly reminds his readers that his task is strictly negative apologetics. His aim is the refutation of philosophical theories that undermine faith, and he undertakes this project only "as one who *demands* and *denies*, not as one who claims [and] affirms" (7, italics added).

Contemporary Relevance

Although *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* was written over nine hundred years ago, it addresses several themes that will capture the interest of the twenty-first-century reader. Two of the more important themes are the proper relationship between science and religion and the nature of causality.

Science and Religion. In his second introduction, al-Ghazali discusses the role that science has relative to religion. He identifies science as central to one of three broad disputes "between [the philosophers] and others of the sects" (5). Eleventh-century theologians often viewed science as a threat to faith and belief in God. However, al-Ghazali claims that the faithful ought not be worried at all about the advances of science and that it is a dreadful mistake for religion to take issue with scientific proofs. With regard to scientific theories, he explains, "Whoever thinks that to engage in a disputation for refuting such a theory is a religious duty harms religion and weakens it" (6). He continues, "The harm inflicted on religion by those who defend it in a way not proper to it is greater than [the harm caused by] those who attack it in the way proper to it. As it has been said: 'A rational foe is better than an ignorant friend'" (6). The theologian will always lose in such a debate against science and thus makes religion, not science, suspect. The proofs of science are exact and repeatable. Because of this, when theologians position faith against science, anti-religionists find satisfaction and view the opposition in their own favor:

> The greatest thing in which the atheists rejoice is for the defender of religion to declare that these [astronomical demonstrations] and their like are contrary to religion. Thus, the [atheist's] path for refuting religion becomes easy if the likes [of the above argument for defending religion] are rendered a condition [for its truth]. (7)

For this reason al-Ghazali is not concerned with offering any refutations outside of the metaphysical realm. For while the scientific proofs are often indubitable, metaphysical and theological theories are vulnerable to debate and disagreement. Furthermore, science does not pose a threat to religion: "There is no necessity to oppose them in terms of the revealed law in any of these sciences" (166). Speaking of the principles of religion, he similarly states, "It is in this topic and its likes, not any other, that one must show the falsity of their doctrine" (7).

In a day when tensions between scientific models and religious explanations of the world continue to mount, all of us may profit from careful study of al-Ghazali's reflections on the proper attitudes of religious believers toward science.

The Nature of Causality. Al-Ghazali's discussion of causality is one of the most interesting discussions in this work, perhaps in part because he offers alternate theories in order to refute those presented by the philosophers. Al-Ghazali addresses theories of cause and effect in defense of the possibility of miracles. Some philosophers, he tells us, deny the occurrence of miracles because they contradict the natural and established flow of cause and its necessary effect. To deny a certain cause its natural and established effect would run contrary to the edicts of natural law.

Al-Ghazali claims that we are too hasty in identifying what is the cause and what is the effect in our world. When two things happen in conjunction with one another, we immediately assume that the first is the cause and the second is the natural and necessary effect. In challenging this assumption, al-Ghazali creates a distinction between an event occurring "with" another event and an event actually occurring "by" another event. "With" claims nothing about one event being the effect of the other. On the other hand, "by" is a claim that one event is the sole source of another event's occurrence.

So what is this additional, and essential, element that we overlook in all of our observance of cause and effect? It is so essential, al-Ghazali claims, that in all of the events we observe happening "with" one another, not one of the events we observe occurs "by" the other event that we observe (167). For example, we see a person kick a small rock, and the rock goes flying through the air. We observe this happening time and time again. In each instance, a person swings his leg and makes contact with the rock; this we identify as the cause. In conjunction with it, each time we also observe the rock leaving the ground and flying through the air; this we identify as the necessary effect. But how is such an effect assigned to such a cause? We expect a certain effect when given a certain cause out of habit; it is what we have always observed.

Al-Ghazali concludes that it is not irrational for what we habitually expect to be the effect of some cause not to occur when we observe the cause. Thus—and this is his motive for this analysis of causality—the occurrence of a miracle is perfectly rational. We consider an occurrence miraculous because it is different from what we expect, contrary to our experience, and even contrary to what we believe to be natural law.

So, again, what is this essential cause "by" which every effect occurs? Al-Ghazali answers: God. God is responsible for every effect. Which effects will occur with which causes is decided by and empowered by God in every instance. But, al-Ghazali notes, an objector might reply that if God assigns every instance of cause and effect, why do we observe a natural pattern to things? Why does not everything become arbitrary and random so that we cannot expect or be certain of anything? As an example of the chaos implied by al-Ghazali's deconstruction of our usual notion of causality, the objector might propose:

> If someone leaves a book in the house, let him allow as possible its change on his returning home into a beardless slave boy—intelligent, busy with his tasks—or into an animal; or if he leaves a boy in his house, let him allow the possibility of his changing into a dog; or [again] if he leaves ashes, [let him allow] the possibility of its changing into musk. (170)

Al-Ghazali responds to this objection by explaining that God has chosen to act in a consistent manner. Thus, "the continuous habit of their occurrence

repeatedly, one time after another, fixes unshakably in our minds the belief in their occurrence according to past habit" (170).

Conclusion

Even with Marmura's careful translation and helpful notes, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* remains an undeniably difficult text.[2] Those unfamiliar with philosophy or philosophical problems will likely find reading and rereading this work slow and tedious. Yet *The Incoherence* is an eminent example of the intellectual depth and rigor of medieval Arabic thought as it engages the reader in one mentally challenging exercise after another. Given al-Ghazali's negative apologetic aim in *The Incoherence,* the reader who studies the text to better understand the Muslim faith must study it as part of a much larger scholastic undertaking.[3] Within such a framework of additional study, *The Incoherence* assists in clarifying Islamic doctrine and bringing to light various takes on controversial theological issues in eleventh- and twelfth-century Islam. But even from a study of *The Incoherence* alone, the reader may appreciate the thought patterns and refutation methods of one of Islam's most influential thinkers. In the end, this rigorous and dialectical journey through carefully articulated and argued philosophical positions, rebuttals, and rejoinders leaves the reader to contemplate the magnificent and oftentimes mysterious wonder that is God.

David Paulsen (david_paulsen@byu.edu) is Professor of Philosophy at Brigham Young University. He received a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Michigan. Eric Madsen received a B.S. from Brigham Young University with a double major in philosophy and economics.

1. Al-Ghazali offers his argument against holding confidence in their metaphysics:

We have transmitted this story to let it be known that there is neither firm foundation nor perfection in the doctrine they hold; that they judge in terms of supposition and surmise, without verification or certainty; that they use the appearance of their mathematical and logical sciences as evidential proof for the truth of their metaphysical sciences, using [this] as a gradual enticement for the weak in mind. Had their metaphysical sciences been as perfect in demonstration, free from conjecture, as their mathematical, they would not have disagreed among themselves regarding [the former], just as they have not disagreed in their mathematical sciences. (4)

2. This fact was not lost on al-Ghazali himself, who in an effort to assist the reader provides an appendix (not a part of this translation) to his book setting out the logic and terminology of Islamic logicians, *The Standard of Knowledge (Mi'yar al-ism).*

3. Fortunately, other works by al-Ghazali and those who respond to and try to refute him are available. For instance, al-Ghazali wrote *Al-iqtisad fi al-i'tiqad* (Moderation in Belief) which is a constructive exposition of Ash'arite doctrine.

Brief Notices

The Niche of Lights, by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, trans. David Buchman (Brigham Young University Press, 1998)

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (A.D. 1058–1111) is a pivotal figure in the history of Islamic thought, whether his work is seen as having a negative impact or, as is far more common, a positive one. He was famous in his time as a master of Islamic jurisprudence (which defined correct practice) and doctrine (which defined orthodox belief). But his own spiritual quest convinced him that salvation was not to be obtained merely by slavish adherence to a code of conduct or intellectual assent to a creed but rather in the firsthand experience of the divine, toward which the beliefs and practices of Islam were oriented but often went unrealized. Al-Ghazali's quest for a fully actualized spiritual life led him to the disciplines of meditation on the divine essence and reflection upon the inner meanings of the Islamic revelations as contained in both the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. *The Niche of Lights*, written in the latter part of his career, is a luminous example of al-Ghazali's personal effort to understand certain of those revelations in their richest sense.

The focus of attention in the first two chapters of *The Niche of Lights* is a Qur'anic passage widely known as the Light Verse:

> God is the light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp, the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star kindled from a blessed tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil well-high would shine, even if no fire touched it; light upon light; God guides to His light whom He

will. And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything.[1]

In the first chapters, al-Ghazali develops "a metaphysics of light" (xxxii) founded upon the cardinal doctrine of Islam that God is one. Along the way, al-Ghazali discusses the process by which one achieves nearness to God—and thereby, greater comprehension of His essence as the one true light. It is a process that involves inner purification and "meditating on the qualities of things in the visible world" (xxxiii) as a means to comprehend the nature of unseen realms. A methodology for interpreting the imagery or "similitudes" of the Qur'an is thus elaborated, with specific images and vignettes from that book serving as examples. In the third and final chapter, al-Ghazali explains the so-called Veils Hadith, a saying by the Prophet Muhammad that employs both the imagery of light to describe God and the imagery of veils to indicate the various levels of insight required to comprehend God fully.

The Niche of Lights is a relatively short book that can be read in one or two sittings (the translation itself is just 53 pages). It is an excellent example of a text in the Islamic Sufi (or mystical) tradition and will be read with interest by those who wish to learn more about this aspect of Islamic faith and practice. Professor Buchman has produced a translation that is not wooden yet is literal and employs technical terms consistently. Thus, the translation, paired with the Arabic text on facing pages, provides an opportunity for students of Arabic to hone their reading skills while exploring an engaging text from medieval Islam. Finally, *The Niche of Lights* affords an opportunity to view a Muslim spiritual master at work—not merely expounding a theory of worship

informed by imagination and oriented toward "becoming," but actually carrying it out in the very act of writing these meditations.

—Morgan Davis

1. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 24:25.

Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East, edited by Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early, 2d ed. (Indiana University Press, 2001)

In the second edition of *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East,* Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early have reintroduced this often confusing region in a clear and concise manner. Rather than seeking to describe every aspect of every country in the Middle East, Bowen and Early have included essays that focus on the everyday activities of the Muslim people of the region. This approach works well in introducing the reader to the struggles, feelings, and daily routine of the inhabitants of this area.

The book is presented in much the same way as the first edition, divided into five sections: generations and life passages; gender relations; home, community, and work; popular expression of religion; and performance and entertainment. While the book retains the successful format of the first edition, it introduces twenty-three new narratives, stories, and studies. Each essay and section contributes to the weaving of a tapestry that reflects the realities of Middle Eastern societies. To complement the articles and to give relevant background, Bowen and Early have written an informative introduction to each section as well as comments that precede each individual piece.

Given the size and disparities of the Middle East, the authors have done well in choosing articles that have salience in countries outside of the essays' immediate subject matter. Although all but three of the articles deal with specific countries and not the region as a whole, the ideas and insights that they present are often applicable to other areas of the Middle East. For example, the essay by Diane Singerman, "Networks, Jobs, and Everyday Life in Cairo," highlights the important role played by formal and informal networks in gaining employment in the face of a large bureaucracy and a dearth of jobs. While the article deals exclusively with Egypt, family, social, and political networks also have a significant role in much of the rest of the Middle East.

Among my favorite articles are Brian Barber's "Politics, Politics, and More Politics: Youth Life Experiences in the Gaza Strip," Jon W. Anderson's "Internet Islam: New Media of the Islamic Reformation," and an article that was included in the first edition, Michael E. Jansen's "An American Woman on the Hajj." Each of these essays deals with issues that are important yet often overlooked or misunderstood by the Western reader.

Barber's article describes the intense politicalization that has occurred in Gaza and its impact on the Palestinian youth's perceived realities and hopes for the future. Anderson looks at the way in which a new technology, the Internet, has been effectively used to further Islamic discourse and what effect this might have on Islam. Jansen's piece is a personal narrative of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

As indicated in the title of the book, the essays are about the *Muslim* Middle East. Perhaps one of the most unique attributes of the Middle East is the impact religion has on the culture, identity, and politics of the region. The book contains many articles that effectively describe the extent that Islam influences and permeates the everyday life of the modern Middle Easterner. "Young Women's Sexuality in Tunisia: The Health Consequences of Misinformation among University Stu-

dents" demonstrates the conflict of conscience that occurs as the changing morals of modernity react with Islamic cultural and religious traditions. The essay "Inside the Islamic Reformation" deals with how education and the mass media have precipitated an ongoing reinterpretation of Islam.

In light of recent world events, this book could not have come at a more appropriate time. Now, more than ever, it is important that the English-speaking world has access to a work that can help increase mutual understanding and respect between the West and the Muslim Middle East. In the editors' own words, "The best way to combat stereotypes is to meet others on a person-to-person basis" (xi).

—Steven Bitner

The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature, edited and translated by Tarif Khalidi (Harvard University Press, 2001)

Although in Islam Jesus is not the divine being revered by Christians, he is often seen as a prophet second in importance only to Muhammad. He was held in particular esteem by Islamic ascetics and mystics and, one hadith states, by Muhammad himself (60). Accordingly, over the centuries Islamic scholars recorded many sayings attributed to Jesus, often couching them in brief stories. Al-Ghazali, for example, cites forty-seven sayings. Now 303 of the scattered post-Qur'anic references have been compiled into what their editor, Tarif Khalidi, calls "the Muslim gospel" (3).

Many of these sayings represent a Jesus familiar to readers of the Gospels, recasting, paralleling, or echoing New Testament material. One recurrent modification is the addition of an explicit moral where the biblical text is silent. These morals may take a somewhat unexpected, yet bracing, twist. For example, the recast text, "Look at the birds. . . . They neither reap nor plough,

and God provides for them" is interpreted as "Strive for the sake of God and not for the sake of your bellies. . . . Beware the excesses of the world" (60).

In the "Muslim gospel," Jesus is not perfect, although, as a prophet, he is still a worker of miracles. He is beset with self-doubt, struggles with anger, dreads the Hour (Judgment Day), complains of helplessness, is admonished by God, and occasionally is bested in holiness by his cousin John and an anonymous "old man."

Understandably, in these sayings Jesus is Islamized. The mosque replaces the temple. Jesus cites the Qur'an, and as a Muslim prophet, he performs Muslim ablutions and prayers and is spared crucifixion. His contemporaries symbolically pay homage to the future Muhammad. Straying *'ulama'* (religious scholars) receive the stinging rebukes reserved in the Gospels for the scribes and Pharisees, while Jesus attires himself in the *midra'a*, a garment preferred by Islamic ascetics and Sufis.

Poignant lessons for the modern situation abound. The Muslim Jesus teaches that pride and fanaticism arouse anger, a sin. Our real enemies are Satan and the enticements and distractions of the world. Mercy should be extended to all the "people of [one's] race," who, Jesus tells an interlocutor, are "all the children of Adam" (79). "He who prays for those who treat him badly defeats Satan," he reminds us (170).

Readers will quickly find favorite sayings. Some I appreciate for their wryness: "A pig [unclean animal] passed by Jesus. Jesus said, 'Pass in peace.' He was asked, 'Spirit of God, how can you say this to a pig?' Jesus replied, 'I hate to accustom my tongue to evil'" (123). As a teacher, I am humbled by the teachings on the responsibility of scholarship: To the question "'Who is the most seditious of men?'" Jesus replied, "'The scholar who is in error. If a scholar errs, a host of people will fall into error because of him'" (61).

—Doris R. Dant

Index
Volume 40

Authors

Ashurst-McGee, Mark, "Mormonism's Encounter with the Michigan Relics," 40:3:174–209.

Axelgaard, Frederick W., "Saudi Arabia: The Islamic State," 40:4:169–82.

Balmer, Randall, review of *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*, by Jan Shipps, 40:3:248–50.

Barber, Brian K. *See* Chadwick, Bruce A.

Barney, Ronald O., "'A Man That You Could Not Help Likeing': Joseph Smith and Nauvoo, Illinois, Portrayed in a Letter by Susannah and George W. Taggart," 40:2:165–79.

Bell, Kristi A., review of *Mormon Healer and Folk Poet: Mary Susannah Fowler's Life of "Unselfish Usefulness,"* by Margaret K. Brady, 40:2:226–29.

Bennion, Mark, "Destination," 40:2:132.

———, "Joseph Smith," 40:1:204.

———, "The Night before My Baptism," 40:3:48.

Boone, David F., "The Evacuation of the Czechoslovak and German Missions at the Outbreak of World War II," 40:3:122–54.

Bowen, Donna Lee, "Respect for Life: Abortion in Islam and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 40:4:183–97.

Bushman, Richard Lyman, "A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-First Century," 40:3:155–71.

Bushman-Carlton, Marilyn, "In the Loge," 40:2:220–21.

———, "Learning to Be a Woman," 40:3:242–43.

———, "Nobody Can," 40:3:120–21.

———, "The Quiet Ones," 40:3:244.

Cannon, Donald Q., "Leopold Bierwirth's Impressions of Brigham Young and the Mormons, 1872," 40:2:133–48.

Carlstrom, Cheryl, "Cedar Waxwings," 40:3:172.

Carmack, John K., "Father Brigham in His Western Canaan," 40:2:13–22.

Chadwick, Bruce A., Camille Fronk, Ray Huntington, Tim B. Heaton, and Brian K. Barber, "Tradition amid Social Upheaval: The Palestinian Muslim Family," 40:4:147–68.

Charles, David P., "The Day the 'Brave Sons of Mohamed' Saved a Group of Mormons," 40:4:237–54.

Christmas, R. A., "Riding Backwards," 40:1:224.

———, "Santa Anas," 40:2:180.

Cracroft, Richard H., "'Cows to Milk Instead of Novels to Read': Brigham Young, Novel Reading, and Kingdom Building," 40:2:102–31.

Davis, D. Morgan, "Medieval Texts for a Modern Audience: The Islamic Translation Series at BYU in Light of Two Early Antecedents," 40:4:255–62.

Derr, Jill Mulvay, "The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow," 40:2:54–101.

Eliason, Eric A., and Gary Browning, "Russia's Other 'Mormons': Their Origins and Relationship to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 40:1:6–34.

Emmett, Chad F., "Jerusalem's Role as a Holy City for Muslims," 40:4:119–34.

Finlayson, Cynthia, "Behind the Arabesque: Understanding Islamic Art and Architecture," 40:4:69–88.

Finlayson, Cynthia, and James A. Toronto, "Islam: An Introduction and Bibliography," 40:4:8–28.

Fleming, Stephen J., "'Sweeping Everything before It': Early Mormonism in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey," 40:1:72–104.

Foster, Craig L., review of *Printing in Deseret: Mormons, Economy, Politics, and Utah's Incunabula, 1849–1851: A History and Descriptive Bibliography*, by Richard L. Saunders, 40:1:217–18.

Fronk, Camille. *See* Chadwick, Bruce A.

Gedicks, Frederick Mark, "Irony and Grace," 40:2:213–19.

Articles and Essays

Book Reviews

Poetry

Subject Index

Italicized page numbers indicate illustrations. *Front cover* is abbreviated *fc; back cover, bc.*

special issue