Religious Other: A Systematic Review Of Contemporary Muslim Discourses For Co-Existence

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Abstract

Today in the globalized world, people are encountering with the cultural, racial and religious multiplicity because of rapid increase of mass media, immigration, internet and tourism. The increasing religious diversity raises many challenging and provoking queries about the presence and the value of religious difference. These encounters not only bring religious violence and oppression but also force to explore prolific and real-world coexistence. Many cotemporaries Muslim scholars are writing thought-provoking commentaries for the depiction of religious Other and on the function of religious plurality in the multireligious societies. This article aims to introduce discourses of contemporary Muslim scholars on religious Other and to review their discourses to identify their approaches towards religious diversity for co-existence using content analysis method. The paper highlights the distinct trends (prioritization of sameness over religious difference, Affirmation of sameness as well as affirmation of difference and prioritization of difference over sameness) by which contemporary scholars are able to account for religious difference. In fact, these trends have profound implications but also has limitations to understanding the religious Other.

Keywords: Religious diversity, religious Other, prioritization of religious sameness, Prioritization of Difference, Affirmation religious sameness and difference.

Introduction

In modern times people are living in communities comprising diverse culture and religions[1].In today's world, people encountered all sorts of diversity in a more difficult manner as compared to past which prompt discussions of interreligious interaction. Practically with interaction of different religious followers in social circle as neighbors and friends and at workplace as colleagues, we experience different aspects of different religions in our daily life[2]. The religious diversity increases the importance of religious other particularly in context of exclusivity and universality of the modern experience of religious plurality[3]. The inquiries into convergence and divergence in belief and practices, increasing religious violence and oppression prompt difficult questions about the religious Other, intolerance and oppression[4].

One imperative insight is that traditionally every religion has its own exclusivist or superiority claims[5].

Different views have been evolved concerning to religious diversity and religious Other with the changing social position of people of other religions in the present times[6]. This lived reality aggravates novel and persistent enquiries about the status of and contact with the 'Religious other[7]. So, the contemporary scholars directing the world to a roadmap for remaining faithful to self - understanding of Islamic tradition but also permits prolific and real-world coexistence[8].

The aim of this article is to review and to formulate all-encompassing account of contemporary Muslim scholar's discourses on religious diversity. Contemporary Muslim scholars envision their differences in distinct trends. These trends can be divided in three approaches: "Prioritization of Sameness over Religious differences, Affirmation of sameness and difference and Priortization of Difference." More specifically, contemporary approaches written in English, Asghar Ali Engineer, Abdulaziz Sachedina, Mahmut Aydin, Muhammad Legenhausen, Farid Esack, and Ismāʿīl al-Fārūqī are included in this study. The writings of these scholars have been influenced by their diverse backgrounds and specific context. For example, some scholars have written on religious diversity because of their firsthand experience on violence and interreligious intolerance like Asghar Ali Engineer and Farid Esack. Some other scholars have been compelled to write on religious plurality such as Abdul Aziz Sachedina and Al- Fārūqī. Some scholars like Muhammad Leganhausen also present theological and philosophical approach. This article is an attempt to review these trends and endeavors for interreligious tolerance to build upon the strengths of all of their philosophical, religious and contextual diversity for

interreligious co-existence. The article also aims to address and overcome the notable shortcomings of these trends.

Scholars' perspective of Prioritization of Sameness over Religious difference

Asghar Ali Engineer explicitly professed the trend of prioritization of sameness over religious difference for pluralistic civil society in his writings. [9] Engineer employs a "Theoretical Standpoint" to evaluate Islam's approach towards religious pluralism[10]. The tenacious connection between theological and practical concerns is unequivocally elaborated through a unique Islamic response that vigorously supports human rights and freedom, in contemporary liberalized and modernized world. There are four central proclamations in Engineer' work to articulate such a logic. Firstly, He exclaimed that Qurʾān accepts the legitimacy of Religious Pluralism and also consider it as central to its belief system[11].

> "We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' this book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous scriptures and a supreme authority on them. So, judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His will is to test you with what he has given 'each of you'. So, compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you 'of the truth' regarding your differences". (Al-Qurʾān 5:48)

This fact makes him claim that spiritual development of a society is

achieved by sticking to laws and revelations, reveled by prophets and scriptures of that specific religious community. For an enhanced and holistic human civilization, the one God created multitudinous communities which would pool resource, entailing richness rather than uniformity of one single law for all people. Resultantly, diversity is an exquisitely created advantage that should be utilized to promote "peace and coherence among all populations[12].

Albeit Engineer intends a positive notion by observing that most of the times, the divine prerogative of judging other humans is triggered amongst the communities, because of religious diversities, leading to aggression and conflicts. However, he does not elucidate the productive re channelization of diversity in human actions. In the light of Qurʾānic verse (5:48), Asgar Ali also beseeches the perception of "unity of religions or "Whadat-e-Din" which means that despite differences in law, practice, or beliefs, the "din" as the divine source, essence, or truth of all disclosures and faiths is declared. Moreover, the "comprehensively pluralistic attitude to the religious 'other'" entailed in the former[13] cannot be override by secondary dis similarities. Engineer thus admits difference, yet prefers sameness.

His prioritization of sameness, which is Engineer's second assertion, is confirmed on top of difference. According to Engineer instead of specific dogmas, Qurʾān accentuates universal good deeds.[14] Paradoxically, he supports this claim by citing:

> "True goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger. These are the ones who are true, and it is they who are conscious of God." (Al-Qurʾān 2:177)

Engineer interprets this passage as strong evidence of the Quran's de-emphasis of specific beliefs and styles of worship in favour of a broad ethical criteria of judgement. However, the significance of the moral principle cannot be argued, it is challenging to understand how an urge to have faith in God, Judgment Day, prophets and revelations; to offer prayer (ṣalāt); and to pay charity (zakāt) is not related with specific belief system and practices. Qurʾān's promotion of liberty of morality and freedom from obligation with reference to religion and faith, is Engineer's third proclamation. He relates these autonomies with added eminent Qurʾānic theme, unanimity of humankind. (Al- Qurʾān 2:213)

Interpreting the foremost phrase of this verse ambiguously as "Mankind is one community" instead of "Mankind was a single community", Engineer utilizes Qurʾānic viewpoint "all humanity was God's creation to present the prime significance of a universal, communal conception. Engineer says that even though humanity is one but God offers religious and cultural diversity as a result of diverse revelation allowing to live freely by combining

these two ideals of freedom and unity. Engineer is clearly aware of the realities and benefits of diversity.

Engineer's fourth and concluding assertion for the concrete and historic example of pluralistic vision of Qurʾān is the Constitution of Medina (Mithāq al-Madīna). As compared to other Islamic political models, Engineer perceives the constitution as an alternate in which it allows diverse religious groups to be unified under one agreement while keeping independence in all religious matters and other societal businesses. The constitution of Medina represents that for the strong, stable, affluent, and violence-free society religious diversity and pluralism should be accepted as legitimate[15]. For Engineer, sociopolitical harmony is the primary concern for forbearing dialogue and a beneficial view of religious diversity. Nevertheless, Engineer not only neglect but also diminishes the other facets of Islamic belief while endorsing his validation for the religious pluralism. Qurʾān also endorsed unity, respect and sameness in term of diversity but not in segregation. Engineer does not delve into their connection to added "pluralism-ambiguous" features of the Quran, including as the Qurʾān penetrating assessments of some forms of variance, like as "shirk"[16]. Relatively, Engineer neglects the text that considerably engage difference and only implements only selective textual practice that prioritizes resemblances. Markedly, Engineer's selective textual approach to proclaim religious sameness over difference is alike to other scholars who adopt this methodological approach to attain an exclusivist attitude that prioritize religious difference over sameness. Only those elements from the Qurʾān that support the particular perspectives, such as pluralism or exclusivism, are accepted in both circumstances, while all additional features of the text that contradict or complicate these findings are terminated hastily.

Like Engineer Abdul Aziz Sachedina also expressed sociopolitical plurality. Born in Tanzania, he is of Indian legacy. He discusses religious belief, law, Islamic teachings and interfaith affairs in his writings. Sachedina draws three foremost assertions with reference to Qurʾānic verse (2:213) to proclaim religious pluralism and to announce prioritization of sameness over difference. First, the harmony of all mankind under one God; second, the uniqueness of all the religions as God sent prophets to them as bearer of good tidings and warnings; and the role of scriptures to judge between people regarding their differences[17].

Later on, Sachedina explicates on his first two deductions, but he failed to explain his third assertion that how scripture determine theological differences of people. In fact, he dedicates a substantial chunk of his work to illustrating innumerable methods in which the specifications of each revelation have led to clash, exclusivism, and claims of individuality. Sachedina confers that Islam primarily concerned with the civic sphere at its foundation, whereas Qurʾān also mentions private belief, the key precepts in that field are individual freedom of morality and non-interference. Quran also provide principles for the formation of an "ethical public order" in order to defend the divinely certain right of every individual to govern someone's nature and oneness with divinity without menacing"[18].

The hermeneutical tendency toward exclusivism, however, was additionally actuated by seen pressures or logical inconsistencies inside the Qurʾān itself, particularly between those verses that confirmed the salvific worth of different religions and those that appeared to infer that Islam was the main religion fit for prompting salvation. Traditional researchers, as indicated by Sachedina, in this way created a variety of expressed and methodological tricks to encircle those stanzas of the Qurʾān which highlighted its

ecumenical pushed by stretching out salvific realness and ampleness to other monotheistic traditions[19]. These tricks included specific reference of the Qurʾānic text, "naskh", "supersession", and the soteriological essential of perceiving and following to the religion revealed to Muḥammad.

In view of this appraisal, Sachedina thinks about whether current researchers ought to stick to such exclusivist textual readings that raise Islam over any remaining religions and that principally based on difference. His reaction to this question is to emphasize divine solidarity, unity of mankind, and divinity all revelations, which in spite of various outside structures contain a similar message. Notwithstanding this conspicuous rise of sameness over the difference, complexities, and problems presented through different revelations, he likewise expresses that there is authentic point of reference for staying away from exclusivism. This is the religious position (usually connected with the Muʿtazilite believed) that the independent human insight, or reason, is "appropriate for accomplishing a genuine life by looking over among a variety of prophets and their messages[20]."

Sachedina believes that this method is a desirable choice in modern perspective, as compared to exclusivism which needs an unambiguous acquaintance to Muhammad's message. It's also a decision he perceives as focusing on a fundamental human potential, the universal human fitra. Fitra, in this regard, serves the purpose of a moral compass, administering all individuals toward the establishment of a shared moral ground and a shared set of moral norms and purposes. Retorting to the Qurʾānic verse, to "compete with one another in good works" or "race to do good[21]", the growth of an ethical unanimity also surpasses mere tolerance, necessitating active engagement and consideration in spite of variances.

Mahmut Aydin also exemplifies the idea of "prioritization of sameness" over "difference." Aydin, a professor of theology teaches the history of knowledge and interreligious dialogues. Aydin avers that the increasing religious diversity and ever-growing number of immigrants raises new questions on exclusivist claims of individuality and universality[22].

Such assertions, in particular those about Islam being the only true religion, the Quran being the infallible word of God, and Muhammad being the greatest and last prophet, are being contested more and more, which makes interreligious conversation and engagement more difficult. Thus, he contends that in the twenty first century it's crucial to "reconstruct" Muslim doctrine in in relation with different religions.

> "New improvements request that Muslim religious philosophy be reproduced not in disengagement but rather in connection with different religions and philosophical dreams on the grounds that these new advancements clarify that only Islam sees itself with regards to the world religions will check out in the twenty-first century[23]."

As a Muslim pluralist, for him salvation can be achieved by following the particular religious tradition and that salvation is not limited to the adherence of Muhammad. He wisely observes that such a rebuilding will require reexamination of interrelated and fundamental Islamic religious categories. Aydin explicitly refers to previous exegetical arguments as he reexamines the core Qur'anic notions of din and Islam in order to articulate his pluralist theology. In the end, he comes to the conclusion that these phrases are interchangeable and allude to a

conviction and faith in general that is marked by obedience and self-surrender to God.

Markedly, he says that Islam's particulars or beliefs are defined by the Qurʾānic category of īmān (belief). Nevertheless, he does not go into much depth to support this claim, and as a result, he offers no explanation for Qur'anic allusions to "iman" as something practiced by other specific religious groups. According to Aydin,

> "The uniqueness of traditions, the recognized edifices such as revelation, a holy book, prophethood, holy places, the religious community, and law (sharīʿah) are not religion per se but its tangible forms[24]."

These tangible forms, according to Aydin, are destined to time and place. They are completely context reliant. Aydin asserts the case that everyone who has general faith, regardless of the peculiarities of practice or doctrine, is qualified for salvation according to his inclusive reinterpretation of din and Islam. Salvation is based on faith or similarity, not context-specific difference.

In his latest drudgery, Aydin returns to mystical approaches as a historical genre and proposes an understanding of Jalal al-Din Rum as an Islamic example to confirm pluralism[25]. Aydin renders numerous selections from Rūmī's poetry to force the divine inexpressibility, the fractional involvement of that Divine in each religious custom, the conflict between intrinsic harmony and extrinsic multiplicity, as well as the idea that many directions might all ultimately lead to a progression away from egocentrism. Despite the fact that many of these claims are recurrent in Rumi's works, Aydin's emphasis on the universality, shared origin, purpose, and efficacy of all religions, generalizes Rumi's grasp of the

nuanced interaction amid unity and variety. However, Adyin overlooks essential variation between the two. Hick believes that these phenomena are human estimations or human reactions delineated in light of "limited cultural and psychological categories"[26]. For Rūmī, in disparity, the emergence of divine characteristics and names in the world has led to the variety of forms, which is a result of divine self-disclosure and was intended by God. The Real/God is portrayed in both models as being bigger than any particular religion (phenomenon or form), but for Rumi, there is an actual relationship amongst the two. Although defined, the entities are actual indicators of Being instead of projections of humans[27]. The fact that Aydin doesn't explicitly state what constitutes an acceptable religion in Rumi's eyes is another example of oversimplification. Aydin debates for the tolerability and salvific effectiveness of all religions, but he alludes to Rūmī in these words, "Is not the origin of the law or revelation the same?[28]" This is in reference to what is made abundantly evident in discussion of Rumi: he urges to adhering to the revealed religion's general teachings and practices, and prefers essentially, Muhammad's specific teachings and practices. While it is possible to argue that Rumi offers an additional comprehensive explanation of which faiths are the results of deific revelation transmitted through prophets, Aydin doesn't make this point. Contrarily, Adyin believes there is corruption and infection in religion, hence he does not seek to affirm all manifestations of it.

He sees Rumi's poetry as an unmistakable declaration of the common source and purpose, the equivalent legitimacy and efficacy of all religious paths notwithstanding their variations. Aydin emphasizes similarity while acknowledging that there are differences.

> "The lamps are different but the Light is the same and religions

are different vehicles headed in the same direction[29].

He is able to place more emphasis on the overall message than on the established doctrine of certain religions. Rumi's multifaceted view on the interaction between oneness and plurality, which derives from the very nature of God, is complicated, and the ontological mandate is only one facet of it. The deontological mandate, in which God directs people to take only specific ways, is the other element. Aydin's most in-depth analysis of difference is found in a footnote, which may be an indication of his overall emphasis on similarity. He claims in it that all differences are divinely ordained so that people can seek to get to know each other and contest with one another in doing good actions. Aydin believes that while emphasizing particulars may be advantageous in an idealistic situation, doing so causes friction in the real world.

Affirmation of sameness and difference

Vital to this second trend, In Muhammad Legenhausen's work, the apprehension to avoid the decrease of variance assumes its maximum evident manifestation. Legenhausen, American philosopher, holds a doctorate from Rice University, is a professor at the Education and Research Institute in Iran. Numerous books translated in into Persian and Arabic are to his credit, additional to his work. John Hick and other scholars, according to Legenhausen, are supporting a "reductive pluralism" that recognizes religious difference based on a sense of sameness that appeals to the lowest common denominator[30]. For him this kind of pluralism ignores the "practical dimensions" of religions and as compared to public observance of religion, its emphasis more on individual faith.

> "Religions have important practical dimensions, not only because of the moral codes they promote, but also because of their ritual and aesthetic dimensions[31]."

Legenhausen contends that while reductive pluralists emphasize the freedom of religion, this freedom only applies to doctrine or beliefs, not to rites, ethics, or legislation. Furthermore, reductive pluralism also minimizes distinctions on a theological level, reducing religious obligation to a matter of preference or personal preference. Legenhausen contends that as Islam lays a strong focus on social and legalist piety as well as absolute monotheism, this sort of pluralism is inappropriate for use in discussions about Islam. Legenhausen articulate the concept of non-reductive pluralism as a dogma in which some type of auspicious provenance is recognized to a plurality of religions[32]. After that, he defines a "plurality of pluralisms," outlining a variety of various types and scopes. He lists several different types of religious pluralism, such as soteriological (relating to redemption), normative (relating to conduct of followers of different religions), epistemological, alethic, ethical, deontological, and hermetic. Legenhausen draws a distinction between degree pluralism and equality pluralism in terms of breadth. The former suggests that positive provenance is equally present in all religions, whereas the latter suggests that the positive provenance is existing in various degrees in various religions. His goal in highlighting the complexity of religious pluralism is to not only broaden his evaluation of reductive pluralism but also to raise the prospect that theologies of religions developed within various religious traditions may place a different kind of plurality at their core. This is another instance of him criticizing the theology of religions' largely Christian development and its emphasis on redemption.

Hence, Legenhausen is concerned about the diminution of difference since it affects both

the complexity of the field and how we evaluate other religions. He distinguishes between the ideas of "correct religion" and "salvation[33]" based on the explanation of a variety of pluralisms. In contrast to other faiths where the two are closely related, Legenhausen distinguishes between the two, arguing that correct religion consists of current-day ideas and deeds that are "divinely prescribed," and that salvation ultimately depends on God's Compassion rather than faith or deeds alone. Legenhausen isn't particularly concerned with salvation because, in many respects, everyone is in need of God's mercy. Instead, he is focused on the issue of the proper religion, or more specifically, the issue of how different religions relate to God's deontological demand. According to Legenhausen, Islam, the faith that was revealed to Muhammad, is the only true religion in this particular meaning. Nevertheless, he asserts that Islam is the only divinely appointed religion in present-day times by drawing on concepts of supersession, superiority, and perfection. Recognizing that this stance may come across as exclusive, he characterizes it as a form of pluralism that accepts the potential that people of other faiths may find salvation as well as the degree of truth in their respective religions[34]. Thus, Legenhausen fits both sameness and difference by petitioning inflexible ranked and graded evaluation that Islam is complete and unmatched but other religions also have divine truth. He explains the inclusive/exclusive passages in the Qur'an using both text and tradition, and he comes to an orthodox conclusion upholding Islam's dominance over other religions and against religious plurality.

Although Legenhausen's viewpoint may seem exclusive, the truth is that he bases his theory of religious pluralism on the observation that there are numerous religious pluralisms. For instance, He refers to soteriological religious pluralism, for instance, when it discusses the subject of salvation. In a similar way, he defines alethic religious pluralism as one referring to the truth of beliefs. Legenhausen also discusses normative religious pluralism in relation to how believers of other religions are treated[35]. For example, he is of opinion, as mentioned above, that in terms of alethic religious pluralism, he sees that Islam is exclusive, but in terms of soteriological religious pluralism, he sees that redemption is achievable for non-Muslims by God's mercy, not because their faiths are true. In context of normative religious pluralism, Legenhausen consider it the responsibility of "true believers" to treat the followers of other religions or traditions with respect and acceptance[36].

Prioritization of Difference

Two modern Muslim intellectuals, Farid Esac and Ismail al-Faruqi, not only point out the conceptual differences across religions but also start to improve the narrative for the close by religion. Esack, a researcher and activist from South Africa, after receiving his PHD from the university of Birmingham and completing a traditional Islamic studies Program which called Darsi Nizami from Pakistan formerly appointed by Nelson Mandela as the national commissioner on gender equality. His research and advocacy are centered on liberation theology, interreligious dialogue, female empowerment, and Islam and AIDS. In his discourse, Esack caters the theme of identity and confers that the interreligious thought is mostly postulated upon the notion of firm self and form religious community which sticks to a to a "package of essential and unchanging values, principles and beliefs which stand in contrast with the other equally stable, even if invariably 'lesser', other[37]."

According to Esack, this representation or falsification hides the truth that identity is complex and always changing. Furthermore, according to Esack, the "insistence on viewing

identity as solid, unchanging, or monolithic" is indicative of a lack of confidence or a fear of the fuzziness that may manifest if the identities of oneself and the other were to be thoroughly explored[38]. In spite of the possible risks, he avers that it is crucial to transmit such an examination: There is, nonetheless, only one approach to live; through learning what the self and other and their ever shifting nature are really about, to comprehend how much of the other is really mirrored in us and to discover what it is that we have mutual in the brawl to a world of fairness and self-respect for all the dwellers of the earth. To do this, one must transcend theological concepts of self and other which were developed in and meant for a different time and place. Through a critical reinterpretation and reconceptualization of the quranic categories relating to the Religious Self and Religious Other, Esack seeks to theological categories[39]. By critically and selectively reinterpreting and conceptualizing the Qur'anic categories relating to the religious self and the religious Other, he therefore aims to transcend those categories[40].

Farid Esack appears to be a good place to start when it comes to works that explore the Qur'anic concept of religious plurality in a more specific sense because there is a strong similarity between it and present study in terms of the core issues rather than the approach. Farid's work is an attempt to strike the proper balance between two seemingly incompatible methods to comprehending the Qur'anic perspective toward the other, based on the socio-political context of the Apartheid government in South Africa[41].

The first method is used by some liberal academics who frequently just overlook Qur'anic texts that condemn the other, whereas the second method is typical of certain conservative scholars who have turned to exegesis in order to produce exclusivist meanings. The notion that Qur'anic exegesis should take into account both the interpreter's environmental context and universal

human ideals, however, is what distinguishes Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism as a key resource in the field of Qur'anic research. Such an idea is likely to make a positive contribution to the development of religious pluralism in both external and internal levels.

Though Farid's study approach is meticulous in its etymological analysis of the Qur'anic texts, it frequently ignores the Qur'anic context and the Ḥadīth, which are crucial additions to and clarifications of the Qur'anic text[42]. Esack pronounces a Qurʾānic doctrine of liberty grounded in an examination of the Qurʾānic usage of categories, such as "īmān", "islām", "kufr", "ahl al-kitāb and "mushrikūn". His research reveals an interpretive trend toward reification: phrases that emerge in the Qur'anic text as dynamic traits have been transformed into "entrenched" labels that denote specific groupings[43]. Largely, His reinterpretation is principally focused on highlighting the complexities, dynamism, and outliers associated with these categories. By employing such a methodology, the author appears to be attempting to extrapolate from the Qur'an a form of religious pluralism that is not dissimilar to Hick's. It could be anticipated that the book Qurʾān, Liberation and Pluralism is the practical application of conclusions and recommendations made by Jane McAuliffe.

According to Ismail al-Fārūqī (1921-1986) everyone has dīn al-fiṭra (regular religion) based on human instinct (fitra), and as a result, individuals often attend an acknowledgment of the norms of tawḥīd. All ancient religious customs are descended from dīn al-fiṭra that must always be notable from them all[44]. This is crucial for Fārūqī in light of the fact that dīn al-fiṭra turns into such an assessing bar against which all described customs can be surveyed and imaginatively changed. All religions including Islam should be compared to dīn al-fiṭra and are not therefore compared to Islam[45]. According to,

Fārūqī, the most important component of being accountable to God is doing good deeds, and self-identification with a particular religion is given the "least premium." This trails essentially from his stress on dīn al-fiṭra.

Utilizing the example of the Hanīf, whom he describes as someone who has dīn al-fiṭra without adhering to a specific religion, he claims that making a categorical statement of faith is not required. Indeed, he confers that faith is simply "great work[46]." Although there is an incentive in it, it is by no means necessary for acts of compassion to be recognized by God. He admits past religious customs in the institutional sense, but he also raises important questions about the value placed on the distinct boundaries created between these customs. Furthermore, He draws inspiration from notions put forth by other modern researchers, particularly Sachedina, but he also attempts to combine and synthesize the many elements into a broad, libertarian yet ethical framework.

Conclusion

Conversely, by creating clearly defined and different (even when linked) religious wholes, the effort to indorse religious sameness and religious difference disregards the whole intricacy of proximity.

While the former approaches irradiate various theological apprehensions and offer a excess of valued perceptions, they all spin around a singular essential concern: the identification and valuation of religious diversity. Perchance, more importantly, these intellectual methods reveal a common understanding of religious diversity. This idea portrays religious diversity as dividing humanity by creating barriers that are distinct, static, and impermeable. Such borders are considered as obstacles to the ultimate objective of forbearing contact in the first trend, which prioritizes religious sameness; boundaries

and difference, lead to struggle. Consequently, difference is undervalued and moderated, whereas sameness is highlighted. In Engineer's discourse "deeds are underlined over doctrines", according to Sachedina, "ethical fiṭra over revelation" and for Aydin, the message and "meaning over the system and form".

However, in the subsequent trend, there is an attempt to affirm religious sameness and religious difference simultaneously keeping separations and limits in order to uphold the worth and revealed intentionality of difference. Henceforth, for Leganhuasen, faiths are described as confined entities that moreover do not interact or, in an ideal world, would not interact at all, or are related solely by an evaluative hierarchy. Although sameness is accepted, limits are maintained by separation and hierarchical evaluation, but it is not permissible to remove or obfuscate such boundaries. Similarly, Legenhausen acknowledges divine revelation in relation to additional religions, but divine revelation also establishes limited societies that are organized in progressive and direct order beyond intersection.

However, Ismāʿīl al-Fārūqī and Farid Esack are two other present-day muslim scholars who initiate to highlight alternates to the common ideas of difference and thus start to better account for the proximate religious Other.

Muslim scholars frequently stress the importance of putting aside preconceived notions about other religions and treating them with respect in order to comprehend them from their own religious perspectives. However, Muslim pluralists do not go as far as to deny Islam's universal assertions. They reframe such assertions as affirming religious pluralism. Muhammad (PBUH) has undeniably a mission and a message for all humankind, but this must not be misinterpreted in an exclusivist sense.

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