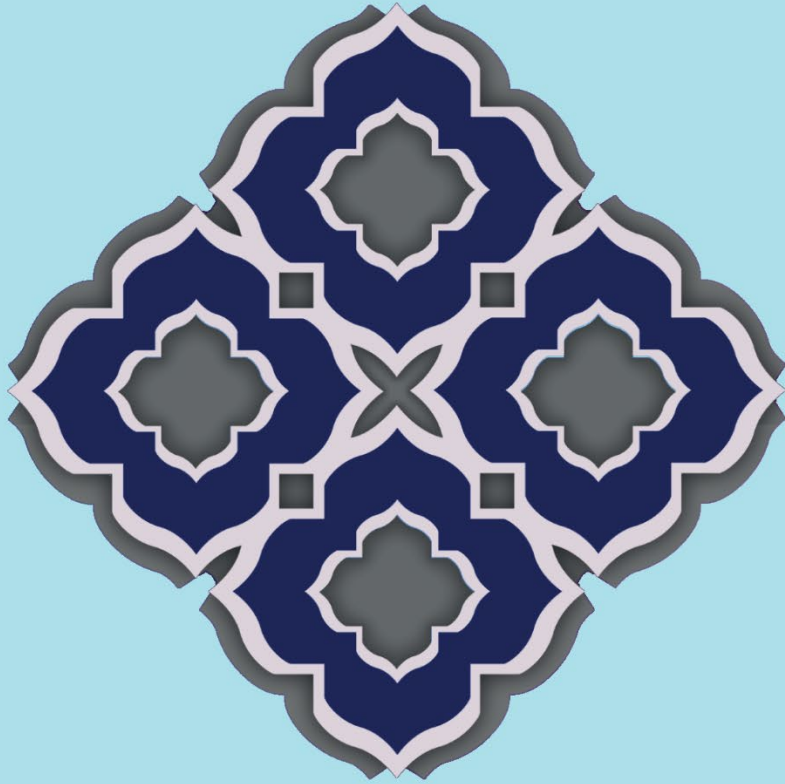


# KATHA

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Centre for Civilisational Dialogue

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# KATHA

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KATHA from which the Malaysian–Indonesian Malay word *kata* is derived, is Sanskrit in origin. It denotes dialogue, discussion and conversation [Mahdi M. & de Casparis J.G. (1997). Sanskrit loan words in Indonesian: An annotated check list of word from Sanskrit and Traditional Malay. Jakarta: Badan Penyelenggara Seri Nusa, Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya.]

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# Preface

It is of great pleasure that the UM Centre for Civilisational Dialogue published the 17<sup>th</sup> Volume of KATHA Journal 2021. This year also marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UM Centre for Civilisational Dialogue.

In this issue, there are four articles which discuss three (3) areas, namely dialogue, health and extreme ideology.

The article entitled **Major Muslim-Christian Dialogue Initiatives Since 9/11** by Simon Herrmann highlights efforts on interfaith dialogue done globally, including in the United States of America, Germany, Qatar, Nigeria, and Vienna. These initiatives are sponsored by various parties, Muslims and Christians alike, to foster a better understanding among religious believers.

In **The Benefits of Cupping (*Hijamah*) to Post-Vaccination Mental and Physical Health** by Syaidatun Nazirah et al. discusses how cupping has been studied and reviewed in many places around the world. In relation to COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers suggest that cupping has advantages to lessen the side effects of vaccination.

The third article on **A Civilizational Dialogue Perspective for A Global Family** by Elisabet Sahtouris reflects on the global crises that confront humanity ecologically, financially and politically. She delves into the question of religion and values of humanity, and then proposes some solutions for the crises, that is civilizational dialogue by building a global family during the time when communication is made feasible to many people around the globe.

The last article on **Islamist Extremism Ideology Rehabilitation Programs: A Critical Analysis** discusses the root cause of Islamist Extremism, the rehabilitation programs for those affected by extremism in Malaysia, and the regional guidelines for counter terrorism.

We would like to express our appreciation to all authors who have contributed to this issue. We hope that the articles will inspire all readers and benefit the authors and readers alike.

**Dr. Alwani Ghazali**  
Deputy Director, UMCCD

# MAJOR MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE INITIATIVES SINCE 9/11

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## Abstract

The events of 9/11 deepened tensions between the West and the Islamic world. But there were also Christians and Muslims who used the occasion to intensify dialogue with each other. In the 20 years since then, dialogue has taken place in many forms and settings. This article asks which large-scale dialogue initiatives between Muslims and Christians were started in the time since 9/11 and what their salient characteristics are. Using a historical and qualitative approach, it contributes to establishing a framework for Muslim-Christian dialogue by showing the developments and providing insights in the current status of the larger, widely visible Muslim-Christian dialogue initiatives. The first part introduces and describes seven such initiatives, ranging from conferences to centres, programs and individual persons. Using a deductive approach, initiatives are analysed according to the people involved, the time and location in which they took or take place, and the topics dealt with. The second part critically analyses the progression of these large-scale dialogue initiatives between Muslims and Christians. What stands out is their diversity and the fact that notable individuals and institutions of both religions have been involved as actors in the process. In a globalized world, what happens on the big stages also impacts what happens elsewhere. The precedence set by the initiatives introduced thus can serve to encourage and give credibility to the enterprise of Muslim-Christian dialogue in other contexts as well.

**Keywords:** Muslim-Christian dialogue; interreligious dialogue; dialogue initiatives

## Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001 – or short, 9/11 –, had a significant impact on the world and international relations. They took place in a climate where scholars had already predicted a clash between Islam and the West (Huntington, 2016). Following the attack, U.S. President George W. Bush embarked on the War on Terror. Islamophobia was on the rise and relations between civilizations shaped by Islam and those shaped by Christianity were strained.

On the other hand, Muslim-Christian dialogue also gained momentum after these events (Johnston, 2016). Timothy Tennent (2007), a US-American Christian scholar,

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writes how within weeks after 9/11 dialogue sessions sprung up in many different places. There was an eager interest among Christians to learn more about Islam and local Muslim leaders were invited for public conversations on the topic of religion and faith. However, dialogue initiatives did not remain on the local level only; some had a far wider, often international, scope.

Dialogue on the local level does not take place in a historical or ideological vacuum. Especially under the conditions of a globalized world, what takes place on the big stage sends signals into local communities. Therefore, this article reviews seven large-scale initiatives in the history of Muslim-Christian dialogue that started in the 20 years since 9/11. The thesis of this article is that the range of actors and initiatives today is more diverse than 20 years ago as a wider variety of people and institutions, both Muslim and Christian, have taken active roles in the dialogue process.

Christians as well as Muslims have laid out scriptural and theological reasons for their religious communities to participate in interreligious dialogue (e.g., Machado, 2019; Bakour, 2018). In addition to that, seeing others, from scholars to leaders to ordinary members of the religion, being involved and actively supporting dialogue can add to the courage and credibility of the undertaking in other contexts.

### **Methodology**

The question this paper seeks to answer is: Which large-scale dialogue initiatives between Muslims and Christians were started in the time since 9/11 and what are their salient characteristics? The article aims to contribute to establishing a framework for Muslim-Christian dialogue initiatives in recent history by showing the developments and providing insights in the current status of the larger, widely visible Muslim-Christian dialogue initiatives.

As with every historical study, the author must decide which episodes to include. The number of initiatives introduced here needed to be limited and could have been enlarged (see, for example, the initiatives listed by Weller, 2018). The selection made for this article, however, is not arbitrary. Some initiatives are milestones and are referenced in articles and books, some are too large to be overseen, some are significant in introducing new aspects or actors in the process and some are significant because of the status and potential impact the persons involved have. Some of the initiatives combine several of these aspects. The nets were cast wide and therefore, not only conferences, but also programs, centres and important persons are included, rendering it impossible to apply stricter or harder criteria for the selection than those just mentioned.

There is very little literature that reflects on some of the initiatives; therefore, the presentation will be descriptive first. Using a deductive approach, initiatives are analysed according to the people involved, the time and location in which they took or take place, and the topics dealt with. The progression of the dialogue between Muslims

and Christians on the large scale and the diversity in various regards will be explicated in the critical reflection towards the end of the article.

### **Intra-religious dialogue and interreligious dialogue**

Before looking at the different initiatives, it is important to note that frequently interreligious dialogue does not stand alone but is complemented and, more often, preceded by intra-religious dialogue. The often-heterogenic religious bodies within one religion need to come together to clarify their common basis and discuss how their commonalities and differences impact their engagement in interreligious dialogue. This prerequisite for interreligious dialogue is pointed out by Muslims (Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2011) as well as Christians (World Council of Churches, 2016). There is clear evidence on both Christian and Muslim sides for this to have happened since 9/11: Representatives of the World Council of Churches (Protestant) gathered with those of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Roman Catholic), and those of the World Evangelical Alliance (Evangelical) in 2006, 2007 and 2011, to discuss how witness and dialogue can respectfully take place in a multi-religious world. The document that resulted from these consultations, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* (World Council of Churches et al., 2011), has become an often-quoted point of reference for Christians' relations with people of other faith. On the Muslim side the process started by King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan in 2004, leading to the intra-Muslim dialogue and the Amman Message (<http://ammanmessage.com>), deserves to be mentioned. Later, members of the royal Jordan family were behind the interfaith Common Word initiative described later. Likewise, the initiative of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to bring leaders of Islam together in June 2008 preceded the launching of the interfaith conference in Madrid later in the year (Islamic Educational, 2011).

### **Survey of seven large-scale dialogue initiatives**

The presentation of the seven initiatives will start with two that have had a significant impact on the development of interreligious dialogue while having come to a conclusion. Next, three conferences will be introduced that have taken place on a relatively regular basis. Lastly, two contributions to Muslim-Christian dialogue will be presented that are strongly connected with the individuals that stand behind it.

### ***Fuller Theological Seminary's Conflict Transformation Program***

A significant initiative to foster dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the United States after 9/11 was the Conflict Transformation Program. Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA) had received a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice (Woodberry, 2010). From 2003 to 2006, the evangelical<sup>1</sup> seminary partnered with the

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<sup>1</sup> Evangelicals are not a certain Christian denomination, but Christians who hold certain orthodox Christian beliefs. They emphasize God's revelation in the Bible as authoritative, Jesus' death on the cross as redemption, and the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming humans. Out of these core Christian beliefs, they also highlight the need to respond to the Gospel through a decision to follow Jesus Christ

Salaam Institute for Peace and Justice at the American University in Washington, D.C., and the Islamic Society of North America for the implementation of the program. Mohammed Abu-Nimer and David Augsburger (2009), the latter being the chair of the program, described the purpose as follows: “to seek common practices, patterns, and pathways for conflict reduction, resolution, and transformation between faiths as well as to learn how to better resolve differences within our individual faith communities” (p. 12). They also describe how the initiative aimed to contribute to the dialogue on the local, practice-oriented level as well as on the scholarly level. On the community level, the program leaders created platforms, organized gatherings, and led talks between local religious leaders, such as imams and pastors. They also developed a manual used for conferences, where Christians and Muslims spent the weekend together and discussed issues pertaining to their faith.

On the scholarly level, two consultations were held, one in Washington, D.C. and another in Pasadena that resulted in a collection of essays (Abu-Nimer & Augsburger, 2009) in which both Christian and Muslim scholars contributed and commented on each other’s work. In this way, the dialogue of the two sessions was continued in the publication and made available for the interested public. Among the issues discussed are hot topics for Muslim-Christian relations, such as understanding war and peace and questions about witness, conversion and apostasy. Students of Fuller Seminary were also involved in the initiative and took up the baton by carrying out research about interfaith projects. A number of these student papers were also published. The book’s title, *Resources for Peacemaking in Muslim-Christian Relations* (Woodberry & Basselin, 2006), illustrates the wish to connect the academic world with the world where Muslims and Christians live their lives side by side.

### ***A Common Word Initiative***

When Pope Benedict XVI. addressed the University at Regensburg, Germany, on 12 September 2006 (Benedict XVI., 2006), little did he know that his lecture would spark anger and indignation among many Muslims. To illustrate the importance of reason in conjunction with faith, he used an example from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century when the Byzantine emperor Manuel II conversed with an educated Persian. Benedict quoted the emperor who had said: “Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.” While not making this statement his own, he agreed with Manuel II’s conclusion, namely that “spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul.” This was the only point he wanted to make.<sup>2</sup> However one wants to interpret the Pope’s speech, the least that can be said is that his example was chosen unwisely. It also provoked vehement protests in the Muslim world.

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(conversion), sharing one’s faith with others (evangelism), and having fellowship with other Christians; see: Stott (2003).

<sup>2</sup> See Footnote 3 of the aforementioned document, where the Pope tries to explain why he sees himself as having been misunderstood.

As a response, a month after the Pope's lecture, 38 Muslim scholars and intellectuals, led by Prince of Jordan Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, issued an *Open Letter to His Holiness*, the Pope, on 13 October 2006. They attempted to point out in a very gentle and polite way some factual mistakes in the lecture (Ghazi bin Muhammad, 2010). However, the response they received was not satisfactory. On 13 October 2007, 138 Muslim scholars and leaders wrote an Open Letter to leaders of Christian churches, everywhere, entitled: *A Common Word between Us and You*. Many of these 138 Muslims are scholars and leaders of high rank and together exercise influence over hundreds of millions of Muslims. The title of the document leans on Surah 3:64:

“Say: O People of the Scripture! *Come to a common word between us and you*: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him).” (The wording here follows the Common Word declaration in Volf et al., 2010, p. 46; emphasis added.)

Their hope was to find common ground for dialogue with Christians on the unity of God, love of him and love of others which they saw as a basis of both religions. In retrospect, Gazi bin Muhammad (2010) clarifies the motive for launching A Common Word:

“We repeat that we had honestly ... only one motive: peace. We were aiming to try to spread peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims all over the world, not through governments and treaties but on the all-important popular and mass level, through precisely the world's most influential popular leaders – that is to say, through the leaders of the two religions. ... We were keenly aware, however, that peace efforts also required another element: knowledge. We thus aimed to spread proper basic knowledge of our religion in order to correct and abate the constant and unjust vilification of Islam, in the West especially.” (p. 9)

Within days, many Christian leaders responded individually to the open letter, welcomed and endorsed it ([www.acommonword.com/christian-responses](http://www.acommonword.com/christian-responses)). On 18 November 2007 a joined Christian response followed, titled *Loving God and Neighbor Together: A Christian Response to 'A Common Word Between Us and You'* (reprinted in Volf et al., 2010, pp. 51-75). It was published in the New York Times and was signed by almost 300 Christian theologians and leaders.<sup>3</sup> The document is appreciative of the initiative taken by the Muslim leaders and affirms that love for God and neighbour are indeed central issues also for Christians. It highlights that there exists a common ground, even “in some of the fundamentals of faith” and expresses the hope that the

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<sup>3</sup> Because Miroslav Volf, Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture at Yale Divinity School, was leading in this process, it is often also called *The Yale Response*.

“undeniable differences” between the two religions will not be able to overshadow this “common ground upon which we stand together” (Volf et al., 2010, p. 53).

What followed next was a conference held from 28-31 July 2008 in Yale, attended by more than 150 Muslim and Christian leaders (Volf et al., 2010 also entails the proceedings from that gathering). The leaders were looking for common ground, tried to clarify misconceptions, but did so from a position of faith and openly pointed out areas in which they could not agree. Other conferences followed, articles and books were published, and a plethora of symposia, workshops, and local interfaith initiatives have arisen that were not officially coordinated by those who initially spearheaded the initiative (Ghazi bin Muhammad, 2010, p. 14). According to the initiative’s website ([www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com)), it became “the most successful Muslim-Christian interfaith initiative in history.”

### ***Building Bridges Seminar***

The Building Bridges Seminar was first held in 2002 (within less than a year after 9/11) on the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is the head of the Anglican Church (i.e., the Church of England). In 2012, the Berkley Center at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., took over the lead. Georgetown University is a Catholic University. One of the scholars responsible for the project, David Marshall, works with the World Council of Churches (Protestant). Thus, the structural leadership of the seminar is in the hand of Christian scholars employed by Christian institutions which are affiliated with different denominations. Nevertheless, “[t]he dialogue is equally owned by both the Christians and Muslims involved” (Pratt, 2021, p. vii) evidenced by the fact that “[v]enue locations alternate between Christian and Muslim hosts with both faiths represented in the planning and organisation of each Seminar” (Pratt, 2021, pp. 10-11).

The gathering is relatively small, roughly 30 people, and consists of “Christian and Muslim scholars with deep commitment to their religion” who come together to discuss themes that are of significance for both faiths. The discussions entail the study of religious texts and theological reflection (*The Building Bridges Seminar*, 2018). Often, a Christian and a Muslim scholar provide their respective view on a particular topic with discussions following (Mosher, 2015, p. 513).

Getting to know each other personally during the weeklong seminar by sharing meals or going for a walk is an integral aspect of the seminar, as various participants point out in a video (Berkley Center, 2020). For Pratt (2021), who has recently undertaken an elaborate study of the Building Bridges Seminar, it demonstrates “the possibility and reality of deep interreligious engagement of these two faiths in the contemporary world” (p. vii).

Usually, a book is published with the proceedings of the seminar (Mosher, 2015, 521-522). The themes since the inception of the Building Bridges Seminar are listed in table

1 at the end of this article. The seminar planned for 2020 with the theme “Naming God” had to be postponed due to the Corona pandemic (Pratt, 2021, p. 11).

### ***Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference***

A year after the Building Bridges Seminar was first convened, another yearly gathering was birthed in Doha, Qatar and goes back to an initiative of the Emir of Qatar at that time, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. He had invited the Building Bridges Seminar to be convened in Doha. So the first Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference equals the second Building Bridges Seminar (Mosher, 2015, p. 513). From there on, the Doha conference developed independently. The conference aims to provide a platform for “those interested in interfaith and intercultural dialogue to address issues of concern to societies and to discuss challenges to ... peaceful coexistence between religions and multiculturalism.” It also wants to “foster a culture of peace among human beings” (Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, n.d.).

The first two conferences were only for Christians and Muslims, but starting from 2005, Jewish representatives were also invited. Number of participants grew from less than 100 in the first years to around 500 in 2016 and includes, in addition to representatives of the religions, also politicians and sometimes scientists, which is evidence for the broad scope of the conference. It is convened by the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID, which was founded in 2007) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Doha. It always takes place in one of the hotels in Qatar’s capital. It is generally held annually, but in the past few years rather biannually, as table 2 shows.

A conference was planned for 2020 but had to be postponed due to the Corona pandemic. For the same reason, no conference could be held in 2021, but there are plans to hold the next conference as soon as feasible (DICID secretariat, personal communication, May 25, 2021).

In addition to holding these international conferences, the DICID is engaged in a whole range of other programs to support dialogue and also issues two journals. As the News section on its website shows, it also hosts roundtable discussions on contemporary issues, comments on current affairs, and receives delegations from other nations.

### ***International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue***

The third conference to be introduced here takes place in different cities in Nigeria, either every year or every other year. It is called International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue. It is convened by New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation (NEECDSI, [www.newerasupportfoundation.org](http://www.newerasupportfoundation.org)), sometimes in partnership with other organizations like the United Religions Initiative (URI, <https://uri.org>). There is no website specifically for the conference. Therefore, what is presented here had to be gathered from different sources on the internet. The description of the 4<sup>th</sup> conference in 2012 gives insights into the purpose of the conference. It reads as follows: “The Conference brings together citizens, including

representatives of CSOs and Faith-based groups within Nigeria and around the world, to promote and improve mutual respect between faiths and cultures and to support civil society and individuals who intend to reject violence and build our common future” (United Religions Initiative, 2012). The focus is on enhancing communication and relationship between members of different faiths, primarily through young people, as the invitation for the third conference states: “Youth – with international adult mentors – will successfully engage face to face, applying new tools of communication and creativity to then take back home to their schools, communities, and nations” (*3rd Annual International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Communication*, 2011). Hands-on workshops where young people can learn to get in touch and communicate with people of other ethnicity and faith were also advertised.

While the conference was held annually from 2009 to 2015, there was a two-year gap until the next conference was held in 2018. The number of participants was somewhere between 250 for the first conference and slightly above 100 for the 2018 conference. Considering the religious clashes in Nigeria in recent years, the conference put a particular emphasis on countering violent extremism for its most recent three conferences. The themes for the conferences are listed in table 3.

According to Emmanuel Ivorgba (personal communication, May 25, 2021), director and convener of the conference, funding challenges did not allow the continuation after 2018. However, NEECDSI and URI carry on their work by hosting small group interfaith dialogue programs. Through initiatives like an Interfaith Academy ([www.newerasupportfoundation.org/interfaith-academy](http://www.newerasupportfoundation.org/interfaith-academy)), they attract young people in universities and colleges across Nigeria.

### ***Pope Francis***

The Pope is the representative of all Roman Catholic Christians, currently numbering roughly 1.2 billion people. When the current Pope, Francis, was elected in 2013, he became quickly known for his concern for the poor and disadvantaged. In addition, he has frequently shown the importance of interreligious dialogue in his words and deeds, a fact also recognized by Muslim scholars (see, for example, Siddiqui, 2018). A few highlights about his work for interreligious, especially Christian-Muslim relations must suffice:

In 2014, when visiting the President of the Department for Religious Affairs in Turkey, he stated his fundamental convictions about interreligious dialogue:

“Good relations and dialogue between religious leaders have, in fact, acquired great importance. They represent a clear message addressed to their respective communities which demonstrates that mutual respect and friendship are possible, notwithstanding differences.” (Benedict XVI., 2014)

He makes it clear that religious leaders are role models for the faithful. It is also significant that he not only speaks of tolerance but mutual respect and friendship.

A second example comes from 2018 when, on Holy Thursday,<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis went to a prison outside the Vatican to wash the feet of twelve inmates. Among the men were eight Catholics, two Muslims, a Buddhist and a member of the Orthodox Church (Hitchen, 2018). Undoubtedly, this gesture must be interpreted as an act of humility and a sign of openness toward people of other faith.

The last example comes from a survey of the Pope's travels. In 2019 he visited the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Bulgaria (Catholic News Agency, n.d.). In each of these visits, the topic of dialogue between the religions was high on the agenda. The visit to the UAE was outstanding as it was the first visit of a Pope to the Arabian Peninsula. The Pope was hopeful that the promotion of peace, based on human brotherhood, had made progress through his visit. During his time there, he also signed a document on human fraternity with the Grand Imam of al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb (who also is one of the signatories to *A Common Word*) and was also able to celebrate a mass at the stadium in Abu Dhabi that was attended by around 150,000 people (Brockhaus, 2019).

As the first Pope ever, Francis visited Iraq in March 2021. He first met with the head of Iraq's Shiite community, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, for an almost hour-long, private conversation (Catholic News Agency, 2021b). Later, he gathered with Christian, Muslim and Jewish representatives for an interreligious meeting. They met at Ur, which according to all three religions is the birthplace of Abraham (Catholic News Agency, 2021a). The religious leaders together appealed for harmony and fraternity between members of the different faiths.

### ***King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and KAICIID***

In 2008 King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia sponsored the Madrid Interfaith Conference to which Christian and Jewish as well as Hindu and Buddhist representatives were invited. Around 300 religious leaders gathered and underlined the need for dialogue for the well-being of people in society in the Madrid Declaration. Among other points, it stressed that “[d]ialogue is a necessity of life and is one of the most important means of getting to know and cooperate with others for the wellbeing of everybody” (*The Madrid Declaration*, 2008).

In 2012, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) was opened in Vienna, Austria. It is a joint inter-governmental organization with Saudi Arabia, Austria, and Spain as stakeholders. However, Centre's initiative and funding comes from King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. The Centre convened a conference in 2014 with representatives of different religions from Iraq, Syria, and other countries in the Middle East under the theme *United Against Violence in the Name of Religion*. They denounced “all violence in the name of religion,

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<sup>4</sup>This is the day before Good Friday on which Christians remember the death of Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, on the evening before, which is Holy Thursday, Jesus washed his disciples' feet and celebrated the Last Supper with them.



and have called on the international community to protect religious and cultural diversity in Iraq and Syria” (KAICIID Dialogue Centre, n.d.).

In 2017, the KAICIID founded a network of Christian and Muslim Faculties and Institutions in the Arab World to find opportunities for cooperation and interreligious exchange programs for institutions of religious education (KAICIID Dialogue Centre, 2017). Another platform for interreligious cooperation and dialogue in the Arab World was launched with 23 high-ranking religious leaders in Vienna in early 2018 (KAICIID Dialogue Centre, 2018).

Although the Middle East and the Arab World are the main focus of the KAICIID, it also has various programs to prevent violence, facilitate dialogue and foster social cohesion in Vienna, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, India and Myanmar ([www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do](http://www.kaiciid.org/what-we-do)).

While the activities have seen the support of many organizations, institutions and religious leaders, there have also been critical voices from the beginning of Saudi Arabia’s initiatives for interreligious dialogue, based on questions over the country’s stance towards religious freedom and human rights. Although KAICIID claims that it is an international and interreligious organization and therefore “[i]ts activities cannot ... be identified with any particular State” (KAICIID Dialogue Centre, 2019), it is undoubtedly true that Saudi Arabia is the central agent in the cooperation, as the name of the Centre already indicates. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2019, the Austrian parliament decided to pull out as a member of the organization and close the centre in Vienna, which caused many religious leaders and beneficiaries of KAICIID’s program to voice their support for the Centre. In recent developments, Faisal bin Muammar, the Secretary General of KAICIID, announced that the Centre would relocate to another city; all parties took the decision unanimously (KAICIID Dialogue Centre, 2021).

### **Critical reflection**

The review of the major interreligious dialogue initiatives of the past two decades clearly shows the wide range of large-scale initiatives for dialogue between Muslims and Christians. While 9/11 gave an impetus to some of the initiatives, it cannot account for all. The International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue in Nigeria has its own history, and the context of Nigeria plays a considerable part in its existence. The rise of the so-called Islamic State in the Middle East has frequently been mentioned as highlighting the need for dialogue in the Arab World initiatives of KAICIID. Growing tensions, often either outright religious or with religious undertones, have often contributed to the growth of interreligious dialogue initiatives. While uncertainties will not be eliminated entirely, sensible voices on both sides work for de-escalation, understanding, and fraternity and make their voices heard.

Noteworthy is the diversity of approaches and initiatives, especially regarding the people and institutions that have been involved. Five aspects are of particular importance:

First, there is diversity in those who initiated the dialogue. The initiators range from churches and Christian universities to Muslim state-funded organizations and non-profit organizations. Specific individuals also play an important role. The early initiatives – Fuller’s Conflict Transformation program and the Building Bridges seminar – have its roots in Christian institutions. However, it cannot be overseen that over the years, Muslims have taken a more and more active role in interreligious dialogue as the following snapshots from the literature illustrate: In 2011, Sallie King (2011) observed that it was often Christians who promoted dialogue. She remarked that “greater non-Western leadership would be welcomed, [but] ... has not been forthcoming” (p. 104). In this context, it is clear that “non-Western” also includes “non-Christian.” Two years later, in a comment to the Common Word Initiative, Daniel Madigan (2013) wrote: “It is new and slightly discomfiting for the PCID [i.e., the Vatican based Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue – S.H.] to recognize that its Muslim partners are now taking some control of the dialogical process” (p. 252). Then, again two years later, Turan Kayaoglu (2015) remarked that “[t]he interfaith dialogue agenda is now well-established in contemporary Muslim thought and practice” (p. 22). These quotes indicate that there has been a movement to more initiative taking regarding interreligious dialogue among Muslims in recent years. Muslims are not only responding to the invitation of Christians. They are themselves taking a much more active role as the Common Word initiative, the DICID and the KAICIID clearly indicate.

Second, there is a growing consensus that deep commitment to one’s faith is no hindrance to interreligious dialogue. People with strong faith commitments can still seek common ground, good relationships, and the good of society in dialogue with each other. Especially the growing stream of evangelical Christianity needed time to get involved in interreligious dialogue, mainly because they feared that they had to give up some of the convictions about their faith that they held dearly. For many evangelicals, the interreligious dialogue was long seen closely related to a pluralist theology of religions as proposed, for example, by John Hick (1982). However, initiatives like the Conflict Transformation program at Fuller Seminary or the Common Word initiative made it tangible that they did not have to compromise their faith to be engaged in interreligious dialogue. Whereas religions have often been seen as the cause of conflict, those involved in interreligious dialogue have become convinced that, especially as people committed to their faith, they can play an essential part in seeking peace and understanding in this world.

Next, Muslim-Christian dialogue is not something that has just a few proponents on the fringes of the religions. The initiatives introduced here have involved significant institutions and people of rank on both sides. Neither Christians nor Muslims have a single organisation or person who could represent them all. But with one of the most prominent-evangelical seminaries (Fuller), a substantial Muslim umbrella organisation (Islamic Society of North America), institutions of high reputation (Yale Divinity school), and renowned Muslim scholars involved (to name just one, the former Grand

Mufti of Egypt and President of Al-Azhar University, Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayeb), the initiatives gained both influence and credibility. The Pope is in a unique position as the head of the largest Christian denomination and has enormous influence; so does King Abdullah as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. They both use their influence to foster interreligious dialogue.

Fourth, part of the diversity of the introduced initiatives is that not only religious people and bodies are among the initiators, but that in part, states and governments are involved. The KAICIID bears the name of the Saudi king and was set up as an intergovernmental centre. The conference in Doha is jointly conducted by DICID and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Doha. Pope Francis is, strictly speaking, also the head of state of the Vatican, and while his political powers are limited, he meets with political representatives and speaks *into* society many times. As a matter of fact, governments have recognized the need for interreligious dialogue and often are involved directly or indirectly. An example of the more indirect involvement is the grant given to Fuller Seminary by the Justice Department to carry out the Conflict Transformation Program. When state agencies are involved in interreligious dialogue, there is a risk that political and economic interests or quests for power take undue prominence. Kayaoglu (2015), for example, writes that two of the reasons Saudi Arabia is such an active player in interreligious dialogue are “to substantiate Saudi leadership claims among Muslims and to engage with non-Muslim political and religious leaders as the mouthpiece of the Muslim world” and “to improve the Kingdom’s image in the West regarding its record of human rights and religious freedom” (p. 20). Likewise, the Australian government’s pulling out of the KAICIID could also be seen as politically motivated. While government involvement in interreligious dialogue carries problematic aspects, there is also the hope for it to have more significant and more direct influence on politics and public policies, often intertwined with religious issues.

Lastly, the dialogue initiatives reflect a wide range of modes and happen on different levels. While the Building Bridges seminar takes place solely on a scholarly level, in the Conflict Transformation Program it was purposely planned from the start that scholars, clergy as well as people on the grass-roots level should be involved; in the Common Word Initiative the debate was first held on the scholars’ level (but with the common believers in mind) and later trickled down to the local level, albeit partly without being planned so. While some of the KAICIID’s programs are oriented towards scholars, others are engaged with people at the grassroots. The International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue entails vital hands-on elements and includes political and social decision-makers.

Out of the five modes of dialogue that Kimball (2009, section Modes of Dialogue) proposes, the initiatives introduced here best cover the modes of institutional dialogue, theological dialogue, and dialogue in community/dialogue of life. The other two modes he mentions, parliamentary dialogue and spiritual dialogue, are less represented. However, the latter is included when, for example, the Pope and other religious

representatives said a prayer when gathering near Abraham's birthplace. One aspect not often mentioned in the literature could be dubbed "symbolic dialogue." This would include actions like washing the feet of a Muslim by the Pope, the permission granted by the Emir of the UAE to perform a mass on the Arabic Peninsula, or the gathering of representatives of the Abrahamic religions at the birth place of Abraham. In all of these actions, the symbolic character carries much weight for interreligious relations.

### **Conclusion**

The description of the initiatives, together with the critical reflection made it clear that there has been an increase in dialogue initiatives in the past two decades and that they came in a vast variety. Leading figures of Islam and Christianity have not only been proponents of dialogue but have themselves been driving forces in the process. What has also become apparent – and might sound like a silly truism – is that initiatives always need someone to initiate them; they do not create themselves. Someone needed the vision for Muslims and Christians to come together and take steps toward this aim. This is also true for the initiatives to be sustained. While some had their point in time and served the needs of that time (e.g., the Conflict Transformation Program initiated by Fuller Theological Seminary or the Common Word Initiative), others are planned to continue, but are hindered by funding problems (International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue), the Corona crisis (Building Bridges Seminar, Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference), or political dissension (KAICIID).

While it needs energy, commitment and courage to keep the dialogue alive or to start new initiatives, those who are interested in doing so – may it be on the grassroots level, among the clergy, scholars or high-ranking representatives of the two religions – will find examples of prominent figures within their own religion, and likely even within their denomination, who led the way and can serve as examples and, if necessary, also as justification for their steps in moving dialogue between the two faiths further.

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**Appendix**

Table 1: Building Bridges Seminar

<i>Number of Conference</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>	2002	The Road Ahead
<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>	2003	Scriptures in Dialogue
<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>	2004	Bearing the Word
<i>4<sup>th</sup></i>	2005	Building a Better Bridge
<i>5<sup>th</sup></i>	2006	Justice and Rights
<i>6<sup>th</sup></i>	2007	Humanity: Texts and Contexts
<i>7<sup>th</sup></i>	2008	Communicating the Word
<i>8<sup>th</sup></i>	2009	Science and Religion
<i>9<sup>th</sup></i>	2010	Tradition and Modernity
<i>10<sup>th</sup></i>	2011	Prayer
<i>11<sup>th</sup></i>	2012	Death, Resurrection, and Human Destiny
<i>12<sup>th</sup></i>	2013	The Believing Community
<i>13<sup>th</sup></i>	2014	Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation
<i>14<sup>th</sup></i>	2015	Human Action Within Divine Creation
<i>15<sup>th</sup></i>	2016	Affirming the Unity of God
<i>16<sup>th</sup></i>	2017	Power—Divine and Human
<i>17<sup>th</sup></i>	2018	A World of Inequalities
<i>18<sup>th</sup></i>	2019	Freedom: Muslim and Christian Perspectives



Table 2: Doha Interfaith Dialogue Conference

<i>Number of Conference</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>	2003	The Muslim - Christian Dialogue: Building Bridges / Scripture in Dialogue
<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>	2004	The Muslim - Christian Dialogue: Religious Freedom
<i>3<sup>rd</sup></i>	2005	The Role of Religions in the Construction of Human Civilization
<i>4<sup>th</sup></i>	2006	The Role of Religions in Building the Human Being
<i>5<sup>th</sup></i>	2007	The Spiritual Dimension of Faith and Co-existence of Human Societies
<i>6<sup>th</sup></i>	2008	Religious Values: Perspectives on Peace and Respect for Life
<i>7<sup>th</sup></i>	2009	Human Solidarity
<i>8<sup>th</sup></i>	2010	Raising the New Generation with a foundation of values and tradition: Religious Perspectives”
<i>9<sup>th</sup></i>	2011	Means of Social Communication and the Interfaith Dialogue: A Futuristic Outlook
<i>10<sup>th</sup></i>	2013	Best Practices in Interfaith Dialogue
<i>11<sup>th</sup></i>	2014	Role of Youth in Enhancing the Value of Dialogue
<i>12<sup>th</sup></i>	2016	Spiritual and Intellectual Safety in the Light Religious Doctrines
<i>13<sup>th</sup></i>	2018	Religions and Human Rights

Table 3: International Conference on Youth and Interfaith Dialogue

<i>Number of Conference</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Theme</i>
1 <sup>st</sup>	2009	Building Bridges through Interfaith Dialogue and Citizen-to-Citizen Collaboration
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2010	Building Bridges Through Interfaith Dialogue and Youth Participation
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2011	Youth Building a Common Future through Interfaith Dialogue and Mutual Understanding
4 <sup>th</sup>	2012	Harnessing the Creative and Innovative Capacities of Youth and Women for Peacebuilding
5 <sup>th</sup>	2013	The Role of Free and Responsible Media Toward a Peaceful Society Imbued with Dignity and Mutual Respect”
6 <sup>th</sup>	2014	The Role of Religions to Build Peace, Security and Counter Violent Extremism in Africa
7 <sup>th</sup>	2015	The Role of Religions to promote Peace, Security, Sustainable Development and Transcend Violent Extremism in Africa
8 <sup>th</sup>	2018	The Role of Religions to Promote Peace, Security and Transcend Violent Extremism

# THE BENEFITS OF CUPPING (*HIJAMAH*) TO THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH POST-VACCINATION

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## Abstract

The Muslims have been challenged significantly during the pandemic, both mentally and physically. Staying safe and healthy have been a great concern of all throughout the world. The prophetic ways of life have been fundamental examples in how we could go about in dealing with the disastrous effects of the pandemic, and also the AEFI (Adverse Effect Following Immunizations) that could affect some individuals in various ways. The purpose of this study is to promote the benefits of cupping (*hijamah*) as one of the ways in dealing with the AEFI that may cause blockage in the brain, heart attacks and sudden death. Cupping therapy (CT) is used in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East and is prevalent in Muslim communities where it is a recommended sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Cupping has been studied tremendously and proven to improve one's health conditions related to high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterols, knee and joint pains, asthma, acne, migraine, respiratory problems and other medical issues. Cupping is also proven to be able to help improve one's mental and physical health when affected by COVID- 19 or other diseases that increase dramatically during this pandemic. Finally, some challenges and their implications are discussed with recommendations.

**Keywords:** cupping; AEFI; pandemic; health; vaccination; *sunnah*

## Introduction

Mankind all around the world have been affected significantly since pandemic COVID-19 occurred in December 2019. One of the preventions from COVID-19 is by increasing one's immunity through the immunization program promoted by World Health Organization (WHO). This immunization program through few vaccinations' doses for COVID-19 were reported to have various side effects in mild, moderate and severe levels of AEFI (Adverse Effect Following Immunizations) including death

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(Polack et al 2020; Md. Martuza et al 2021). The purpose of protection by an immunization program is to protect one's mental and physical health, but the side effects are questionable by the so called "anti vax" because it undeniably led to other health issues as well. Having made compulsory or imposed as a "must" by certain countries such as America, Britain, Singapore, Malaysia and others, citizens have not much choice and led to take the jab (minimum of two doses) in less than one year. News was spreading out that there will more doses in the future.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to highlight the benefits of cupping therapy (CT) that could help maintain one's mental and physical health despite of the challenges faced in relation to COVID- 19 and vaccinations. CT represents a cornerstone of traditional Chinese and Persian medicine, but it has its roots in the history of therapy. Although its exact mechanisms of action have been not fully understood, it is widely used as an alternative or complementary treatment of a broad spectrum of diseases, mainly musculoskeletal pain and muscular tension. Some practitioners use CT to cure dermatoses, but the most common adverse events occur at the skin level.

According to Khalil & AlSanad, (2018), cupping therapy (CT) is used in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East and is prevalent in Muslim communities where it is recommended by the Prophet of Islam. The majority of modern, medical practitioners interested in CT, view it as a medical technique and distance themselves from the mechanisms proposed by traditional medicine. However, modern medicine does not offer a valid explanation for the mechanisms involved in CT. There is growing evidence of CT's effectiveness, specifically in chronic pain management and diseases (Kouser et al, 2021; Rahman, 2016).

This paper is arranged by firstly discussing the statement of problems, secondly on cupping as therapy; thirdly, the benefits of cupping according to Islam; and modern medicines; relationship between mental strength and physical health; lastly implications and recommendations.

### **Statement of problems**

Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO 2019) as any undesirable medical incident that occurs after immunisation and does not necessarily have a causal association with vaccine use. These occurrences may involve one or more unpleasant or unexpected signs, symptoms, or test findings that cause worry among immunisation programme managers, policymakers, and the general public. AEFIs can be common and modest (such as fever, local pain and swelling), severe (such as pain and swelling that extends beyond the adjacent joint or a high-grade fever), or serious (such as a high-grade fever, disability, conditions requiring hospitalisation or leading to death) (MOHFW 2015).

Since the COVID-19 vaccination programmes are still recent, major clinical development programmes are intended to investigate the benefits of vaccines, with the

major goal of pivotal studies being to demonstrate efficacy. Safety evaluation is usually a secondary goal, and pivotal studies were not designed to provide statistical analysis of specific AEFIs (Chandler 2020). Therefore, the study cases of AEFIs on COVID-19 vaccines beneficiaries are still lacking.

According to Jeskowiak et al (2021), data in Poland confirm a low vaccination reported post-vaccination reactions to the Sanitary Inspection despite high frequency occurred. People in the health sector know about the ways and need to report vaccine reactions, while those outside the sector do not. It is important to remind people in the National Vaccination Program about the need to report vaccine reactions, and to inform people from the next groups of the National Vaccination Program about possible ways of reporting side effects.

However, there have been a few reported cases of surging blood cholesterol level after patients took on the COVID-19 vaccination. Liu et al. (2021) confirmed the elevated blood cholesterol level after the first inoculation. Study by Tang et al. (2021) found that abnormalities on blood cholesterol levels can indirectly increase the susceptibility of patients to the COVID-19 virus and increase risk of death due to the virus. Tang et al. (2021) next advised the continuation of cholesterol-lowering treatment for COVID-19 patients. CT has been proven to lower down cholesterol level. On the hand, Rahman (2016) proved that CT lower down the blood pressure.

Even though there are great interest in cupping, CT is not taken seriously by most Muslims, despite of its good effect for health (Hasina & Hariyani, 2021) and the establishment of the Traditional and Complementary medicines practices division in Malaysia (Mohamad & Betania, 2021). When modern medical practitioners became interested in cupping therapy, they separated it from the essential elements of traditional cupping such as prayer and regarded it simply as a technique. Neglect of these essential elements of cupping therapy may lead to false cupping treatment methods as well as not providing the healing effect it should have.

The study made by Hasina & Hariyani (2021) was to determine the effect of cupping therapy on lowering total blood cholesterol levels. The study conducted on 35 cholesterol patients in the cupping clinic. The test subject was divided into two groups, namely the intervention group who received treatment in the form of cupping therapy and the control group were not given treatment. The results showed that the average cholesterol level in the intervention group 241 and in the control group 243 with P value = 0.782 means there is no difference in the average cholesterol level in the intervention group and control group before given cupping therapy intervention. After cupping therapy, the average cholesterol level in the intervention group was 188 and in the control group 273 with P value = 0.000, there was a difference in the average cholesterol level in the intervention group and the control group after the cupping therapy intervention. Cupping therapy significantly with P value = 0.000 which means that cupping therapy has an effect on lowering total blood cholesterol levels. For that

reason, cupping therapy could become one of the choices to mediate AEFI's symptom due to the vaccination and even for recovering patient of COVID-19.

### **Cupping as therapy**

Cupping therapy to treat various ailments has been used in the Chinese state for thousands of years. Cupping therapy is administered by creating negative pressure in a cup-like container to make inhalations to the desired point on the patient's skin to create hyperaemia that can have a healing effect on certain diseases. Cupping therapy was then used more widely when about 300 years ago it was used clinically for the treatment of internal ailments experienced by humans. The development of cupping therapy subsequently increased as various types of cupping were developed including bamboo cupping, glass cupping, ceramic cupping, metal cupping, air extraction cupping and vacuum cupping. New advances in technology and materials have been integrated with cupping therapy and its use now revolves around a variety of different treatments and applications. According to much research, the quality and quantity of controlled trials on cupping therapy appear to have improved over the past 50 years in China, and the majority of studies show potential benefits on pain conditions (Pinzon-Perez, 2013). Many studies have been conducted that show that cupping therapy can treat neck, waist, knee joint pain, acne, itchy skin, senility, fever, migraine, and cough effectively (Wang et.al, 2021). Studies also show that cupping therapy can also help cure non-chronic asthma (Lei Guo et.al, 2021) and lipid control in the body (Suhaily et al, 2017).

The relationship between spirituality, religion, and medicine as a healing system has been recognized since ancient times. However, in highly developed countries, religion and medicine have been separated and seen as two healing systems. Yet this is not the case in many developing countries, where religion can influence medical interventions. In Muslim society, cupping therapy, also known as "hijamah", is one of the very popular medical approaches. Its popularity is likely because it is categorized as one of the prophetic medicines in which the Prophet Muhammad himself is said to have once practiced it. Apart from that Rasulullah PBUH once stated that hijamah is the best among the medicines available. In Nabawi medicine, Muslims do not need to look for scholarly explanations or evidence of the effectiveness or the mechanism of the treatment itself because it is considered credible as a result of it being applied by prophet Muhammad PBUH himself. This is mentioned in the hadith reported by Bukhari RA, "Whoever performing cupping on the 17th, 19th or 21st day (of the Islamic lunar month), then it is a cure for every disease" (Sunan Abu Dawud Hadith No: 3861).

### **The Benefits of Cupping According to Islam**

According to the ruler of Brunei Darussalam, one of the most prestigious Muslim countries, the viruses that caused COVID-19 were the armies of Allah Taa'la and we should bow humbly to Allah and seek His mercy and forgiveness because begging for Allah's kindness and mercy is important instead of adopting an arrogant approach to fight and wage war against the pandemic (Abdul Aziz, 2021). Therefore, besides

gaining Allah's bounty and mercy in facing the pandemic, adhering to the teaching of Islam, and applying the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is one of the ways to find cure to AEFI cases or the COVID-19 itself. Jamari (2016) discovered that there so many benefits of cupping, namely in curing the patients with high blood pressure, falling hair/baldness, infertility and elephant leg. According to his observation in a cupping centre in Malaysia, he discovered that following the Prophet Muhammad PBUH lead to better health and well-being.

Ismail and Asnawi (2021) studies the concept of scientific commentary (*al-sharḥ al-ilmī*), which recently gained considerable significance, especially in dealing with ḥadīths of al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī (Prophetic medicine) and understanding them. In the beginning, the study defines the concept of scientific commentary, shedding light on its history in terms of its emergence, context, scholars and their arguments. Later, the study identifies and discusses the following theoretical and practical issues of scientific commentary in selected ḥadīths of Prophetic medicine. The historical, descriptive, and analytical methods are utilised in the entire study. The finding of this study indicates that there have been numerous commentaries that adopt the scientific approach in dealing with the subject of Prophetic medicine.

According to El Sayed et al. (2014) excretory treatment modalities that excrete pathological substances outside human body deserve more research attention as this may potentiate the therapeutic effects of pharmacological treatments. Wet cupping therapy (WCT) is a prophetic medicine according to the Arabic medical literature where it is reported to treat many diseases differing in etiology and pathogenesis. Al-hijamah may be referred to as bloodletting cupping therapy or blood cupping therapy in medical studies and reports from the Arabic countries. Both Chinese dry cupping therapy and WCT are partial steps of Al-hijamah. Scientific and medical bases of Al-hijamah were recently reported in the evidence-based Taibah mechanism (Taibah theory) where Al-hijamah is the only excretory treatment that clears blood, lymph and intercellular fluids from causative pathological substance (CPS).

### **The Benefits of Cupping in Modern Medicine**

Ullah et al (2007) had investigated the effect of CT at a patho- physiological level for anterior knee pain and its impact on quality of life and well-being. This is an experimental survey utilising clinical trial and a questionnaire. A three-week-follow-up was conducted to determine longer term carryover of treatment effects utilising both objective and subjective assessment. This method enables the researcher to examine how much the independent variable causes participants to change (Dane, 1990). Result shows that there was statistically significance difference between the level of pain, wellbeing and range of motion for patients with anterior knee pain pre and post Cupping ( $P < 0.05$ ). The efficacy of the treatment of CT for Anterior Knee Pain, wellbeing and range of motion has been researched and results reveal improvements in participants as a result of CT.

El Sayed et al (2014) highlighted that cupping or *Al-hijamah* benefits from the histological structure of the skin in performing a percutaneous pressure-dependent and size-dependent non-specific blood filtration and excretion of causative pathological substances (CPS) through the fenestrated skin capillaries upon application of negative pressure suction using sucking cups. *Al-hijamah* benefits also from the production of endogenous nitric oxide (vasodilator, antineoplastic and antimicrobial agent). *Al-hijamah* exerts many other health benefits, such as enhancement of immunity and pharmacological potentiation. *Al-hijamah* was reported to clear blood significantly from serum triglycerides, total cholesterol, LDL- cholesterol, ferritin (circulating iron stores), uric acid, autoantibodies, cytokine receptors and others. Those therapeutic benefits may treat some diseases, namely hyperlipidaemia, hypertension, atherosclerosis, coronary heart diseases, gout, musculoskeletal pain conditions, hepatitis and iron overload conditions which lead to thalassemia. Therapeutic benefits of *Al-hijamah* are mainly related to the amount of excreted CPS. *Al-hijamah* may carry some advantages better than acupuncture and other types of cupping therapy in treating a large number of diseases differing in etiology and pathogenesis.

Mehta & Dhapte (2015) asserted that since ancient times, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) have played an important role in human health and welfare. Many therapeutic approaches in healthcare outside the realm of conventional medicine persist in various parts of the world. There is considerable scientific and commercial potential in CAM, which needs to be explored precisely. Cupping therapy as one of the CAM, is practiced across the world. This therapy is believed to act by correcting imbalances in the internal bio field, such as by restoring the flow of “Qi”. Cupping involves applying a heated cup to generate a partial vacuum that mobilizes the blood flow and promotes effective healing.

Wang et al (2021) argued that cupping therapy has been accepted worldwide, and many studies have been conducted to reveal its curative effects and mechanisms. To comprehensively evaluate the effect of CT, database including China Network Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Chinese Scientific Journal Database VIP, Wan Fang Database, Chinese Biomedicine (CBM), PubMed and Web of Science were searched from 2009–2019. Wang et al (2021) summarized the meta-analyses, randomized controlled trials, clinical trials and the mechanisms studies of cupping therapy in the previous 10 years, to provide a reference for the clinical applications and studies.

Isma (2017) argued that controlling high blood sugar levels is the best way that can be done to avoid complications of diabetes mellitus. There are various ways to control blood sugar levels, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies. Pharmacological therapies are considered to have adverse side effects such as kidney and liver damage when used over a long period of time. While non-pharmacological therapies are considered to have fewer side effects and more economical such as cupping therapy. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of cupping therapy on



changes in blood glucose levels in adults aged 26-45 years in Indonesia. This study used Non-Random Sampling technique with total sample of 30 people. The results of the Paired Sample T-test statistical test obtained that the average change in blood glucose levels from measurements before and after cupping therapy was 14.2 mg/dl with a P-value of 0.0001 ( $P < 0.05$ ), so the  $H_a$  hypothesis was accepted. Which means that there is the effectiveness of cupping therapy on changes in blood glucose levels before and after treatment in one observation.

### **Relationship Between Mental Strength and Physical Health**

According to Essiti & Guzel (2021), individuals travel locally and globally in order to find alternative treatments which are less-toxic and more beneficial to their health and wellness. CT is based on the principle that different sized cups create a vacuum effect on the skin and increase the blood flow. Thus, while increasing the amount of oxygen and blood in the tissues, the excretion of toxins and carbon dioxide through the lymph is accelerated. Despite the popularity of western system of medicine, CT started to attract great attention in Turkey as a traditional and complementary medicine system to improve the quality of people's life. It is also a source of attraction for wellness and health tourism. In this context, the present study by Essiti & Guzel (2021) aims to examine the effectiveness of CT on health-seeking travellers in the sample of visitors who have had cupping therapy at least once in their life. The findings of the study indicated that the participants who visited the thermal facilities to have CT considered as an alternative and complementary treatment method without side effects. The participants also indicated that CT made them feel good and healthy. From this point of view, it can be said that CT positively affects individuals' perception of physical and psychological health and increases people's health and general quality of life. Based on the study results, with the reason of cupping therapy has very common knowledge and demand within Turkey, it can also be said that CT is a different way of increasing the variety of wellness and health tourism.

Hajek & König (2021) asserted to date, only a few studies have investigated the association between personality and functional impairment. Therefore, our purpose was to add to this knowledge. Methods: Data from wave 7 of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) were used (70 028 individuals in the analytical sample). Personality was measured using the 10-item Big Five Inventory (BFI-10). Functional impairment was quantified using activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) indices. Multiple linear regressions were conducted. Results: Regressions showed that an increased likelihood of limitations in ADL was associated with higher extraversion, higher agreeableness, lower conscientiousness, higher neuroticism, and higher openness to experience. Similarly, an increased likelihood of limitations in IADL was associated with higher agreeableness, lower conscientiousness, higher neuroticism, and higher openness to experience (only with one IADL index). As a conclusion, this knowledge of associations between personality and functional limitations may help in determining

individuals at risk for increased functional impairment (e.g., individuals with low conscientiousness or high neuroticism).

Osman & Baharuddin (2020) mentioned various research have been conducted related to cupping from Islam's point of view. Developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia have had various guidelines in terms of legal aspects of traditional medicine. However, there is still no comprehensive study on the Shariah and civil legal aspects of cupping treatment. This library literary research refers to the legal aspects of cupping practice from a Shariah and legal perspective. This highlight analyzes the important literature related to the study of the determination of cupping liability in cupping treatment. The results of the study found that there are gaps in the determination of liability and the creation of such guidelines will protect cupping service providers in the event of any accident. It is important that the interests of all parties, providers and recipients of cupping services can be safeguarded, both from a Shariah and legal perspective. One should also observe other aspects of Shariah involved in cupping such as preservation of the customers' awrah, segregation between ladies and men, room designs so as to protect one's dignity and health.

Aboushanad & AlSanad (2018) asserted that cupping therapy is an ancient traditional and complementary medicine practice. Recently, there is growing evidence of its potential benefits in the treatment of pain related diseases. The study gives an overview of cupping therapy practice. Furthermore, they also suggest a new classification of cupping therapy sets, a new classification of cupping therapy adverse events, and an updated classification of cupping therapy types.

### **Implications & Recommendations**

This study has implications for Islamic medical figures, practitioners, physicians and therapists who practice the cupping method so as not to leave out important elements in cupping such as prayer, *dhikr* (the remembrance of Allah) and certain verses of Qur'an (spiritual aspects) so that cupping is truly effective in curing diseases. The same goes for modern medical practitioners to include the spiritual aspects so that it could determine the effectiveness of cupping therapy.

Oakman et al (2020) argued that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has resulted in changes to the working arrangements of millions of employees who are now based at home and may continue to work at home, in some capacity, for the foreseeable future. Decisions on how to promote employees' health whilst work from home (WFH) need to be based on the best available evidence to optimise worker outcomes. The aim of this rapid review was to review the impact of WFH on individual workers' mental and physical health, and determine any gender difference, to develop recommendations for employers and employees to optimise workers' health. Ten health outcomes of WFH were reported: pain, self-reported health, safety, well-being, stress, depression, fatigue, quality of life, strain and happiness. The impact on health outcomes was strongly influenced by the degree of organisational support available to employees, colleague support, social connectedness (outside of work), and levels of work to family conflict.

Overall, women were less likely to experience improved health outcomes when WFH. Therefore, this paper would suggest that relating mental health and cupping could increase one's health conditions and the ability to adapt changes in working arrangements and stressful events.

Practicing *sunnah* is the best way to deal with health problems since the time of Rasulullah PBUH. Apart from cupping, Muslims are encouraged to chew *habbatus sauda*, consume honey, olive oil and some sunnah foods and drinks to maintain health and to build their immunity in facing the COVID-19. Physical health will help to improve mental health, and vice versa. By practicing the sunnah, one will have happier heart and peace of mind. The application of Sunnah is a civilizational process to ensure the well-being of the person, family, society and the Ummah. The importance of sunnah is mentioned in many hadith, such as: "This black cumin is healing for all diseases except As-Sam.' Aisha said, 'What is As-Sam?' He said, 'Death" (Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith number 5687). In another hadith which is narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, the Prophet PBUH said: "Healing is in three things: A gulp of honey, cupping, and branding with fire (cauterizing). But I forbid my followers to use (cauterization) branding with fire" (Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith number 5680).

### **Conclusion**

Based on the studies that have been done on cupping, it is found that many benefits are obtained to help deal with diseases caused by pre-existing conditions or possibly caused by vaccinations. This study recommends that individuals who are affected either because of AEFI or because of COVID-19 infection, perform cupping immediately after taking the vaccine or after recovering from COVID-19. This proposal is to ensure the survival of the individuals affected during this pandemic.

Although cupping is said to originate from ancient empires, but it can be considered as a source of Islamic medical treasures as the Prophet Muhammad PBUH has advised his followers to use cupping to treat various diseases. This study investigated the benefits of using cupping on mental and physical health after vaccination. Overall, this review of the literature has successfully shown that cupping does indeed have the potential to help reduce the negative effect resulting from immunization. Through this study, cupping was found to bring benefits from religious and medical point of view. Further studies should be conducted using real patients to see the effects more clearly.

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# A CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE PERSPECTIVE FOR A GLOBAL FAMILY

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## Prologue

Surely we live in the most exciting, fascinating and challenging, if also the most complex, frightening and confusing time in human history. Even the most affluent and comfortable people in the world now face the sudden confluence of the biggest global crises ever-in energy, finance and global warming, not to mention the continuing crises of poverty, war, ecosystem destruction, air, water and soil pollution, etc.

As these great global crises converge upon us with terrifying speed and impact, we seem to be numbed to the staggering amounts of new money printed for government bailouts of banks and businesses in the West while public debt and unemployment soar. In the East we fear the loss of newly found wealth and newly created or entered markets. Everywhere we are paralyzed by the dire warnings of scientists about desertification, temperature and sea level rise that governments are reluctant to address, along with the enormous waste of massive resources in many places on warfare.

One might think that we humans, facing such crises, would be putting our heads together and bringing all our human and material resources to bear on peaceful dialogue and cooperative economic/ecological sustainability, as one would expect an intelligent species with the capacity of foresight to do. Yet the world's political and economic leadership largely clings to the status quo, tinkering a bit here and there, but unable effectively in this process.

More than two decades ago, In the 1980s, writing my book *EarthDance*, Elisabet Sahtouris (2009): *Living Systems in Evolution on a Greek island*, I began it with the following words: Everyone knows that humanity is in crisis, politically, economically, spiritually, ecologically, any way you look at it. Many see humanity as close to suicide by way of our own technology; many others see humans as deserving God's or nature's wrath in retribution for our sins. However, we see it, we are deeply afraid that we may not survive much longer. Yet our urge to survival is the strongest urge we have, and we do not cease our search for solutions in the midst of crisis.

The proposal made in this book is that we see ourselves in the context of our planet's biological evolution, as a still new, experimental species with developmental stages

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that parallel the stages of our individual development. From this perspective, humanity is now in adolescent crisis and, just because of that, stands on the brink of maturity in a position to achieve true humanity in the full meaning of that word. Like an adolescent in trouble, we have tended to let our focus on the crisis itself or on our frantic search for particular political, economic, scientific, or spiritual solutions depress us and blind us to the larger picture, to avenues of real assistance. If we humbly seek help instead from the nature that spawned us, we will find biological clues to solving all our biggest problems at once. We will see how to make the healthy transition into maturity.

Now the crises have grown to nearly overwhelming proportions, but fortunately the help I promised is even more available to us because science has not stood still and has brought us even clearer views of how nature solved critical problems in the course our own human evolution. In particular, we can see more clearly into the amazing nanoworld of our own cells and genomes, with new clues about how to make our own financial system and economy work as well at the global-social scale as it does in our bodies!

Furthermore, we increasingly recognize that we are not helpless victims of circumstance, but that we individually and collectively create the situations in which we live out of our beliefs, our values and ideas. This recognition is essential to acceptance of individual responsibility for our collective condition. Every building, every war, every agricultural practice, every airplane, every constitution, every industry, every medical practice and every piece of music or other art, began in a human soul/mind and was then translated into our physical world. Even choices we make shopping now affect the whole world.

From my perspective, while in some ways our adolescent crisis has deepened with recent financial/economic tsunamis, we can also clearly see the first steps toward species maturity, notably in the amazingly fast development of the Internet and iPod, permitting instantaneous and global dialogue and decision-making, including the weaving together of over a million grassroots NGOS working to make life better for people and their ecosystems on the ground. While banking and corporate giants representing our immature phase topple like dominoes, we the people are taking on the responsibilities of mature citizenship, self-governance, clean green technologies and other means to a more workable future. Yes, we can live better, even on a hotter planet!

### **The Call to Cooperation**

For the first time, ordinary people as well as leaders are having instant conversations around the entire planet. Our conversations are about huge global issues as well as myriad personal and local matters. Whatever they are about, these people-to-people conversations are changing our world. We have all become decision makers making a difference by sharing our information, so we must do our best to make sense of our world, to understand what we are acting upon in order to make intelligent choices.



Economic issues and global warming call upon humanity to cooperate, yet we are held up by continuing hostilities-expensive for most people and profitable for few-or bureaucracies or wanting to quietly maintain our own status quo despite the neediness of others or feeling somehow inadequate to the task.

Business is changing on large scales; the western domination of recent centuries is being rebalanced by eastern development though the span of wealth among people of different social strata is wider than ever in most parts of the world. Population demographics-ethnic, religious and age distributions-are shifting everywhere. A growing pool of experienced and active older global citizens can see on longer timescales while rapidly increasing numbers of young global citizens are testing their wings in dialogue and decision-making activities across the distance-eliminating Internet.

Technology has brought us wondrous advances while also making dangerous advances into arenas of life that are still poorly understood, putting our food supplies and bodies at risk. Science and religion battle even in courts of law over how our world came to be, yet movements are growing that integrate these opposing views harmoniously. While many people and organizations are actively engaged in positive change, many others are losing hope as they watch the world's seemingly insurmountable crises pile one on another. It is an amazing stew of events that churns the world and dizzies our minds with its complexity.

For me, as an evolution biologist, the key to understanding this complexity, so rife with contradictions, has been to observe humanity, along with other species, in the great evolutionary trajectory of planet Earth. As I engaged in this exercise, I came to see an intelligent harmony working itself out in nature again and again, more often than not in the midst of crisis, chaos, confusion.

Earth is a great living being with a common gene pool shared throughout biological evolution by all its species, from the lowliest bacterium to the greatest mammoths and whales. Further, the Cosmos, as I see it, is a vast living, evolving system. This view of things took me far beyond what I was formally taught as a western scientist, yet I gradually discovered many other scientists independently coming to see things this way. Eventually I realized that the whole scientific story of How Things Are was evolving, just at the time when humanity was evolving from immature competition to mature cooperation.

Indeed, this is an exciting time, and the most exciting thing about it is that every one of us can understand our world and be active change agents within it for a better, more cooperative, and peaceful future.

## **Western Science, Society and Religion**

Before I get to biology and what we can learn from it, let me say a little about the evolution of western science. All cultures need, and have, creation stories to give them understanding, meaning and purpose for human life. Historically, most tellers and keepers of creation stories have been religious priesthoods from the most ancient times to the present. As we know from the history of recent centuries, a traditional alliance between Church and State in Europe gave way to an alliance of Industry and Science. The Enlightenment together with this alliance in turn gave rise to secular nation states in which Church and State were intentionally separated. Scientists were then given the mandate to tell their 'creation story' as the official story of How Things Are in our cosmos and world.

The scientific creation story is intended to come from research rather than revelation and is therefore subject to its own evolution with gains in scientific knowledge. While much of the world has become convinced that the scientific story as told up to now is worth believing in, it has also led many to despair of the human condition and driven them deeper into, or back to, older religious creation stories that are often seen as opposed to the scientific story but provide meaning, consolation and hope.

We need to understand the depressing aspects of this scientific creation story that have locked us into inequitable economics and environmental degradation, into the belief that science and religion are incompatible, and to see how this story is now changing to give us new hope for a truly better world.

The western science creation story at its simplest comes from physics and biology. Physics begins it, telling us we live in a non-living accidental universe running down by entropy-the steady overall loss of energy ever since the Big Bang-in a universe without meaning or purpose and doomed to an eventual cold nothingness. Biology continues this basic theme by agreeing to the concept of life as negentropy-the organization of living systems that runs counter to entropic disorganization. Unfortunately, the story continues that life cannot overcome entropy but eventually loses to the stronger entropic decline. Further, biology tells us we are doomed to endless competitive struggle in scarcity because that is nature's way of evolution and thus our own human nature.

This is, obviously, a depressing story. It developed most clearly during the two decades from 1850 to 1870, when Rudolf Clausius formulated the entropy law and Charles Darwin the theory of biological evolution. Though both physics and biology have evolved their stories considerably since then, these essential teachings still prevail as the scientific creation story for our world culture today.

An important social consequence of this scientific story has been to see human life as devoid of any meaning or purpose beyond material acquisition. Another was the retreat from science to religion believing the two to be incompatible. A third, stemming from

the claim that science is value free, was cultural relativism-the proposal that beliefs and ethical truths only hold relative to a specified culture-a concept now foundering as we recognize that we need basic common values as much as cultural diversity in a time of globalization.

With the blessings of State power, the western scientific story fostered a dominant world culture that increasingly sacrifices the relationship riches of previous human cultures to material consumerism, which is widely advertised even to those who have been made poor in the competitive struggle of our world economy. This highly inequitable consumer culture, taken up by many deeply religious people as well as non-believers, is now acknowledged as unsustainable-a term that literally means 'cannot last; must be changed.'

Unsustainability is the prevailing material crisis of the present, with hopelessness our prevailing spiritual crisis. Both are rich in opportunity for our evolution into cooperation.

Scientific belief in a non-living universe is just that: a fundamental belief, an unproven assumption on which western science is built, not a research result. For the founding fathers of western science, who were religious, believing in the universe as a vast mechanism gave them hope of understanding it as the invention of a God in whose image they were made and by whom they were empowered as inventors in their own right. When God was later rejected by western scientists, the belief in a mechanical universe actually became illogical, since mechanisms are assemblies of parts designed to meet their inventors' particular purposes. They simply do not come into being by series of sheer accidents without any designer, purpose or meaning, yet this is how the universe was said to come into being after the overthrow of God. It is this illogic of seeing nature as meaningless, purposeless, accidental machinery that drove me to work on new foundations for western science that would be more compatible with its research findings.

It is interesting to note that the great religions -Judaism, Christianity and Islam- all share a Creator God maintaining an identity apart from His creation, while in eastern religions including Taoism, Confucianism, Vedism, Jainism, Kotodama and Buddhism, nature arises from and within some version of Oneness, an undifferentiated consciousness or cosmic mind that is the source of the material worlds formed within it. These eastern religions have been found very appealing to many of us trained in western science and have given us the keys to our new fundamental assumptions about the universe. I would add that the great desert religions have all had their mystical intellectual thinkers who did not personify their Creator in popular form and came much closer to the concepts of the eastern religions, while the latter, notably Hinduism, developed popular forms with personified gods.

The word religion comes from the Latin re-ligio, a binding back to source. By this essential definition, even science has the 're-ligio' purpose of revealing and linking us to our origins. Many scholars within the ancient eastern religions, as well as the mystic scholars of the desert religions, were researchers in their own right. Through long and rigorous training, they observed not only the outer world with which western science is concerned but, even more fundamentally, the inner world of the human mind, using formal techniques of meditation to consciously experience, observe and analyse the human mind from within, as well as ultimately connecting or merging it with Cosmic Mind in Oneness.

### **An Evolving Scientific Story**

World renowned physicist Ervin Schroedinger, in his essay *Mind and Matter*, first published in 1958, pointed out the strange fact that scientists can only build models of the universe in their conscious minds but then leave that consciousness out of their models. More and more, I meet western scientists who, like myself, have reversed their belief in a material universe giving rise to consciousness in the process of evolution, taking up the entirely opposite belief that consciousness is primary and gives rise to material worlds in evolution, not to mention humans with human consciousness.

Even if they have not yet made this clear reversal in belief, many will acknowledge that all human experience occurs within human consciousness and that scientific models of the universe should therefore be acknowledged as models of a universe seen through human consciousness. If we accept that ants and aliens must necessarily see their universe differently from humans, and that their perspectives must also have validity, our models can include our perceptions of how they see things, insofar as we can see into and thus share at least certain aspects of their experience. The entire process of such efforts to see from multiple perspectives still occurs within human consciousness.

The model of a lifeless, mindless, mechanical universe independent of human experience is a historical construct that originated in the very construct science rejected: that of an external Father God engineer of nature's machinery. The emerging new scientific model acknowledges that the only appropriate definition of reality is the sum total of direct human experience—a definition of reality found in Webster's online dictionary as "non-derivative experience." Human experience is perceived both as an outer world including scientific experiment and as an inner world of thoughts, feelings, emotions, dreams, revelation and intuition. Taking inner experience as seriously as outer, the new breed of scientists is establishing research projects inspired by cultures with long experience in studying inner worlds, thus building important bridges with spiritual traditions. The Dalai Lama's ongoing work with neurological laboratories is a case in point.

This kind of scientific model would help us to understand that each and every human being lives in a uniquely evolving reality shaped by his or her own shifting perceptions, beliefs and values as we seek common values and other common ground while

respecting our differences. This seems a much more realistic view of things than to continue staging human contests for trying to convince everyone on Earth of any one culture's or science's reality. Moreover, the foundational consciousness in such a scientific model would go far to bridge the current differences between science and spirituality.

As this new version of western science evolved from our different foundational beliefs or assumptions, we gained a new perspective showing everything perceivable in our universe and on our planet as self-organizing, creating itself from within and from a common field of Oneness, clearly related to the relatively newly discovered Zero-Point Energy field in physics. Several new proposals for unified field theories integrate radiation (the primary entropic electromagnetic energy) with centropic or syntropic gravitation in such dynamic balance that no Big Bang and no universal deterioration occurs. See for example the model developed by Nassim Hamein with Elizabeth Rauscher).

In biology, the definition of life called autopoiesis, literally self-creation, states that a living entity is one continually creating and maintaining itself in relation to its surround. While intended for the biological entities science previously recognized as life forms of Earth, I have shown in my book *EarthDance: Living Systems in Evolution*, as well as in my model of a living universe that it is easily and persuasively extended to Earth as a whole, as well as to the entire self-organizing universe. One of the great advantages of seeing the universe as alive is that the evolution of life from non-life, consciousness from non-consciousness and intelligence from non-intelligence disappear as scientific problems. In a science based on belief in a divinely created living universe these problems never arise. The group of western scientists in which I count myself has been engaged in finding a set of fundamental assumptions for science that include a plausible self-organizing living universe arising within cosmic consciousness.

### **A New Biology of Earth and Cosmos**

From a biological perspective, we can see the balanced universe as having a metabolism of anabolic buildup and catabolic breakdown and recycling, from the fundamental vortex of a vast proto-galactic cloud in the macrocosm to the tiniest whirling particle in the microcosm, revealing a universe self-organizing and maintaining itself at all levels, alive by the autopoiesis definition. Earth is a giant self-organizing living cell that continually recycles itself from the inside out as magma surfaces and cools into new rock, then melts back in as crustal materials are sucked into deeper magma through tectonic plate activity. Wind patterns, water cycles, sedimentation, decay and other Earth means of recycling its materials as biological creatures evolve fill in the picture of a living Earth.

The giant Earth cell gains ever greater complexity by evolving tiny cells on or near its surface (like the living bark of a giant redwood tree) through the intelligent alliance of DNA, proteins and lipids. Microscopic cells evolve enormous variety and complexity

by freely exchanging their genetic material as DNA becomes the planetary language of life, permitting blueprints to be encoded and shared among all Earth's creatures from the tiniest single-celled bacteria and funguses to the largest mammals and tallest trees.

Once physics and biology are reconciled in a common universal model, with Earthlife as a special case of additional complexity halfway between the macrocosm and the microcosm, as the ancients intuited and we now can measure, the other fields of science can readily adapt to the new foundational assumptions. Alternative medicine is already becoming mainstreamed; many conferences are organized to further the integration of religious and scientific worldviews. A whole new branch of scientific investigation into the ongoing communion and conscious co-creation among all species and life forms may soon develop, with special attention on indigenous knowledge in this field.

### **An Integral Evolution Theory**

Perhaps most importantly, evolution biology, as I see it, needs to integrate Charles Darwin's understanding of the importance of competition with Pyotr Kropotkin's understanding of the importance of cooperation, which was as avidly taught in the Soviet Union as Darwin was taught in the evolving capitalist world. I recognized this need when I began to perceive an evolutionary maturation cycle completing itself again and again as species evolved.

Ecologists recognize several different types of ecosystems based on two fundamental ones known as Type I, in which species compete fiercely for territory and resources and Type III, in which species are highly interwoven in complex and mutually beneficial cooperative networks. While the Type I's are characterized as 'pioneer species' and the Type III's as 'climax systems', ecologists have not acknowledged something I came to see as obvious: that Type I's exemplify the first or immature phase of species evolution, in which species multiply rapidly, competing creatively and aggressively for resources to establish themselves, while Type III's represent a later cooperative phase on an evolutionary learning curve or maturation cycle.

While western science assumptions about nature make it very difficult to see intelligence throughout nature, it seemed to me obvious that species learned from experience, perhaps by trial and error, the economic benefits of forming cooperative alliances in which they feed and nurture each other, evolving the collaboration that permits them to build complex stable ecosystems such as rainforests and prairies, not to mention complex multi-celled creatures in which the cells must necessarily achieve a highly cooperative mode of being.

Note also, that in human cultures as well, individuals are expected to grow out of their competitive if creative adolescent phase to become maturely cooperative members of a stable society. What if the more aggressive human social organizations of today discovered how much cheaper it is to feed your enemies than to destroy them, not to mention the security that comes with making friends of enemies?

This cyclic evolutionary process of maturation can first be seen in the way the earliest ancient bacteria evolved from a highly creative hostile, competitive mode to a peaceful collaboration that evolved much larger and more complex nucleated cells through a cooperative division of labor among a variety of specialized kinds of bacteria that came to live in community with each other, each of them 'donating' some of their DNA to the central library known as the nucleus. All fungi, plants and animals, including humans, are made from these cell cooperatives to this day the only kind of new cell ever to evolve since bacterial cells evolved. But before multi-celled creatures could evolve as giant cooperatives of cells, the new nucleated cells had to live through their own juvenile phase of hostile and creative competition with each other before evolving into multi-celled creatures by the same process of learning the advantages of a collaborative division of labor.

In every completed cycle a new and much larger unity evolves, within and upon the gigantic Earth cell. I believe that the very same evolutionary cycle is now driving our competitive human nations to collaborate as global family.

Because of this repeating maturation cycle, living entities came to be embedded within one another in what I call (following Arthur Koestler's terminology) holons in holarchy, where holons are living entities operating by the same principles at all size levels: for example the holarchy of the cell organelles (descended from once free-living bacteria) within their nucleated cells, the bodies made of these larger cells, the families in which the bodies live, and their communities, ecosystems, nations and global socioeconomy.

Now, things become really interesting when we combine this notion of holarchy with the evolutionary maturation cycle. For example, when every level of your own body's holarchy from cell to organ, to organ system, to the whole body is able to express and meet its self interest (note: not selfishness), negotiations happen and cooperation evolves through bio-dialogue or communion. It is very important to see that self interest is only destructive when not constrained by the self interest of larger holons that modulate it, or when larger holons fail to understand that their health depends on smaller holons embedded within them.

Every individual human, like every cell in a body, must be supported in meeting their needs, and diversity must be recognized as essential to creativity, while everyone's overarching goal is mature cooperation and mutual sustainability. The World Trade Organization, for example, cannot create a healthy world economy without meeting the expressed self-interests of local economies. Only healthy individuals in healthy families in healthy communities can serve as a basis for a healthy world economy. Healthy living systems are necessarily healthy at all levels of holarchy.

The Soviet Union failed, by my analysis, because it suppressed self-interest in its citizens, thereby killing an important source of motivation and the ability to take

initiative. Capitalism may fail because individualism has been overdone and juvenile competition has not been adequately encouraged and supported to mature into necessary communal cooperation. Cooperative communities can and should, of course, include friendly competition, as in sports, design and other creativity contests, in order to keep up creativity without hostility.

In my biological model we can also see that Earth's greatest periodic crises-the simultaneous extinctions of many, if not most, life forms-brought about her greatest waves of creativity, each extinction followed by a sudden explosion of new life forms, rather than slow linear Darwinian changes. Not until things were thoroughly shaken up did these novel patterns arise out of the crises, as the fossil record reveals, and the new patterns extended across many life forms at once as if ecosystems evolved as a whole, not species by species. The universal DNA language and a consciousness pervasive in nature permitted them all to commune and share information in adapting to each other.

As another example of how nature includes opposites, such as competition and cooperation, rather than choosing between them, it tends toward conservatism wherever and whenever things are working well and radicalism where they don't. Sharks and cockroaches are so highly adaptable that they have not evolved further for a very long time despite massive changes in their ecosystems, not following the Darwinian model. One might say they are like bicycles in a jet age, still working well despite the newer modes of transport. But when things do go wrong, or a crisis of climate change causes an extinction, nature goes into a radically creative mode, as I just illustrated in talking about entire ecosystems organizing new species after an extinction.

Many research results point the way to this new scientific model of nature in physics, chemistry, biology, medicine and psychology, their evidence accumulating over the past century, needing only to be put into a more holistic context founded on consciousness and universal life. Once this new scientific model described in greater detail that is more widely accepted and publicized around the world, I believe it will release considerable human hope, joy and creativity, inspired by a dynamically balanced and sustainable universe that is not running down at all, and by an inspiring evolution theory showing that the way of the future is not hostile competition in scarcity but creative collaboration and recycling to produce sustainable abundance for all.

### **Building Global Family**

Humans have known from experience that old, rigidified structures do not change without shaking their very foundations. A butterfly cannot happen without the meltdown of a caterpillar and many cultural stories, such as the phoenix rising from the ashes, have recognized this fundamental pattern. Whole cultures have collapsed before new ones arose; countries destroyed in wars emerged in shiny new forms. Philosophies and beliefs have been challenged, reincorporated in new thought systems, or dissolved and replaced throughout history as human cultures evolved. My favorite Greek



philosopher, Anaximandros (known as Anaximander in English) left only a single amazing written line describing evolution through recycling Earth's materials, which in my own translation from ancient Greek reads: "Everything that forms in nature incurs a debt that it must pay by dissolving so that other things may form."

History, too, makes sense in this light: understanding thousands of years of competitive empire-building-from expanding kingdoms to colonizing nation states to the empires of multinational banks and other corporations-as the juvenile to adolescent phase of urbanized humanity's socioeconomic and political evolution. (Some non-urbanized Indigenous cultures that remained embedded in nature achieved maturity earlier.) Billions of people who long for a peaceful world today could be helped to see the very real possibility-even probability-of the way ahead to a cooperative global family through this new story of species maturation into peaceful cooperation. And for the many whose worldview is religious, surely this is the will of their God.

As we face the great confluence of crises I spoke of at the beginning of this article, we recognize the need to replace oil with alternative energies. Science can lead the way into massive development of solar, hydrogen, wind, geothermal and other benign forms of power, as well as the necessary conversion of industry from the extremely wasteful 'heat, beat, treat' methods of hydrocarbon-based production to following nature's lead in carbohydrate-based production with zero waste.

New projects for building global family through cooperative enterprises have already cropped up everywhere around the globe, now woven together by the Internet through which they can communicate and strengthen each other. The more than a million NGOs mentioned earlier are working in myriad ways to improve human life, more often than not at the grassroots level. A story can be a powerful catalyst for change, and as the new story of science catches on, they will flourish more and more.

In my travels around the world as an evolution biologist, I see spirits lift and sleeves roll up for the work of building cooperation as I tell this new biological evolution story, showing people that nature is actually on our side: that crises are opportunities for our evolution to cooperative maturity. We humans can follow countless other species to mature collaboration precisely because we have gotten ourselves into such big trouble now!

### **Evolving Science from Conquest to Consortium**

Thus far, I have described the emergence of a new consciousness-based science from within western science as though it will replace the latter. But that is not my intent. Ever since Thomas Kuhn's mid-20th century classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, we have indeed looked for the signs of yet another historic paradigm emerging within western science, the only science legitimating itself, to replace it by preserving its methodology while changing its foundational assumptions, its formal worldview. Indeed, we can now identify the one I have described, which shifts our

picture of the universe from one in which consciousness is the late emerging product of a non-living material universe to one that recognizes the universal primacy of consciousness in a living universe.

Kuhn's model of scientific revolutions, however, seems to me to belong to the juvenile mode of my evolutionary maturation cycle, exemplifying the conquest mode of a new paradigm killing off and replacing the old after a period of competition. My view of evolution biology, as described in this article, clearly makes this obsolete. In its place I propose an alternative model considered in the 2008 Hokkaido Symposium on the Foundations of Science that better fits our globalizing world, as well as my own conceptualisation of evolution as a maturation process from hostile competition to mature collaboration.

Not the least of the arguments for this is that western science should not be abandoned because it has proven itself again and again in amazing experiments on the nature of nature, as well as by spawning wonderfully useful technologies from steam engines to locomotives, to internal combustion engines, global electric systems, medical equipment, microscopes, telescopes, genome readers, telephone systems, television, computers, space vehicles, iPods, and so many more.

The problem is that because it does not see nature as conscious and intelligent throughout, it has led the entrepreneurial business world to see nature as no more than an array of resources for human use and has thus been taken into areas of life such as genetic 'engineering' and other hi-tech agricultural initiatives heavily based on fossil fuels and their derivative toxic chemicals that may be doing us more harm than good because of the failure to understand living systems adequately. And, as I pointed out in this article, its fundamental 'creation story' has been depressingly hopeless, inspiring a consumer culture with which to comfort ourselves as the meaningless, purposeless universe runs down.

What I thus proposed at the symposium was that we promote the concept of recognizing the unique sciences of different cultures that could engage in sharing and mutual friendly critique as equal participants in a global consortium of sciences. The fundamental difference between these sciences would lie in their publicly stated fundamental assumptions about the universe and nature as known on Earth, and how these can be studied scientifically: i.e., the scientific worldview of each science, formally stated. Only upon such a foundation of assumptions can we posit scientific theories and testable hypotheses; there is no other way to build a science, however little this crucial matter is still understood in the world at large. In the differing worldview of each such science, it will be natural to ask different questions, to posit different kinds of theories and hypotheses, so we would stand to get a far richer knowledge base than is possible within a single science.

I repeat, because this is so important, that no science is possible without a set of fundamental cultural assumptions. Because western science has risen virtually unchallenged to global hegemony, many western scientists-no matter where in the world they were trained, as all leading universities globally teach western science-have forgotten, or have never even thought about, their fundamental assumptions, which are considered the domain of philosophy of science, now relatively rare in university curricula.

It is no more and no less valid to hold a living universe as a fundamental assumption than a non-living universe. Similarly, consciousness, without which there could be no kind of shareable knowledge, and therefore no science, can equally legitimately be assumed as primary to material worlds or as their late emergent product. These are just two assumptions on which differences in scientific foundations have become obvious; at the symposium we listed dozens of such basic assumptions for each of the two sciences we considered.

In speaking to Islamic audiences, I have suggested that Islamic science-a very old science rooted in ancient Arabic and Greek and Egyptian sciences, if not others from the farther East as well-reclaim its legitimacy. The best strategy for doing this seems to me to find domains in which it can excel that have been overlooked by western science and that would be important to the world at large.

Since science is the formalized study of nature, some aspect of nature not yet studied adequately would need to be found. One such, I further proposed, would be economics, which until now has not been the domain of science but of economists with rather unscientific entrepreneurial worldviews and purposes, with a smattering of sociology in the prevailing belief of economists in the selfishness of individuals, fundamental to their models.

It has long been obvious to me that nature is the great expert on economics, defined as the transformation of natural resources into useable products that are distributed and consumed, with any remains (called 'wastes' by humans) recycled in a sustainable (zero-waste) economy.

Our own highly evolved multi-cellular bodies are composed of up to a hundred trillion cells, each of which, at its nanolevel, is as complex as a large human city, and in each of which there are now known to be some 30,000 recycling centers renewing our proteins, the major constituent of our bodies. Further, these recycling centers are so sophisticated that they can be compared to chipper machines that issue a new tree in place of each dead or ill tree fed into them!

In each cell, as well, there are some thousand mitochondrial 'banks' issuing free stored-value credit cards of ATP currency spent on every single molecular chemical transaction in that city-complex cell. When the credit limit is spent, the card goes back

to the bank for a new credit line; no repayment required, much less an interest charge. These 'banks' economic role is to monitor the amount of currency needed to maintain balance in the cellular, and thus body, economy by adjusting the credit lines.

Every cell in our bodies is nourished equally by the food, air and water we take in; each is supported in its own role, and no organ can hoard wealth while depriving other organs. Similar situations occur in healthy mature ecosystems, where every species has its unique but critical role in maintaining the whole.

This is only a small taste of what such an Islamic economic science would find in the mature ecosystems of nature. Further, I assume that unlike western science, Islamic science would not deny values and ethics as part of science but would insist on their inclusion. And I would hope that Islamic science would recreate and expand on the marvelous scientific tradition of developing gardens in deserts and otherwise living very comfortably in them through highly effective natural cooling and night-heating systems, appropriate architecture, etc. as our planet heats up and more and more populations would benefit from such science.

Similarly, I would encourage the revival and evolution of the ancient sciences of India, Tibet, etc, to reclaim their legitimacy and modernize their amazing ancient understanding of the human mind, as I would encourage indigenous sciences that include very impressive medical, astronomical, agricultural and other scientific domains to join the consortium, and I would make room at the table for young people who may be interacting with outer space beings that have yet a different take on the universe/nature to develop more sciences accordingly as their worldview expands.

I believe such a consortium of sciences would be one of the most valuable things we could do to role-model cooperation in the larger process of peaceful globalisation that is our evolutionary mandate. Further, I am persuaded that it would make enormous contributions as we put our heads together collectively, across all cultures, to solve the current confluence of great economic crises and find ways to thrive even on a hotter planet.

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# ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IDEOLOGY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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## Abstract

The September 11 attacks gave an immense impact on Muslims worldwide. Governments, both Islamic and Western took matters regarding terrorism even more seriously. The incident too, however, became a stepping stone for Muslim terrorists to be louder. Nevertheless, terrorism among Muslims have always existed in the doctrine of certain sects, *Salafi Jihadi* in particular. Such extreme and radical misconceptions of Islam is inherited by their predecessor, the *Khawarij*. The study discusses the rehabilitation programs for those affected by extremism in Malaysia, and the regional guidelines for counter terrorism. The root cause for Islamist extremism is also analysed, along with the influence of *Khawarij* ideology on *Salafi Jihadi*, the similarities shared by both, particularly with regards of jihad.

**Keywords:** *Salafi Jihadi*; *Khawarij*; jihad; extremism; rehabilitation programs

## Introduction

On the 23rd of June 2016, a video titled Thought, by Mohd Rafi, a Daesh member from Malaysia gave a rather bold statement. Targeting for the Muslims in Malaysia, he deliberately mentioned, “if you have a car, hit them. Use firearms or knives”. He also warned the Royal Malaysian Police, *Polis Diraja Malaysia* (PDRM) “to those of you in Bukit Aman, you are no longer in *aman* (peace). We are ready to slaughter you. When we come, our allies in this country are hunting you too” (Haziq Jani 2017).

This statement is one of the many examples of the boldness and discourtesy of the extremists in Malaysia. This study henceforth focuses on the rehabilitation of such extreme ideology, which is related to Islam. For that, there will be two main parts, the first is on rehabilitation programs in Saudi, Singapore, and Malaysia. The second part of the study is a critical analysis on the factors leading to such extreme ideology.

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### **Threats of Muslim Terrorists**

The Muslim community of this day are troubled by major issues, one of the many being deterioration leading to dependence on western countries. Worse still, extremism related to Islam has given the religion a more difficult time. The chain of reactions post 9/11 proved the consequences, how the west retaliates to every misconduct by Islamist extremists, sadly on the Muslims who disagree with the Islamist extremists themselves.

The Bali bombing incident, for example, sparked a series of more bombings in Indonesia (Azyumardi Azra 2003). Throughout 2000-2005, there had been many bombings such as in J.W. Marriot Hotel in 2003, Australian Embassy in 2004, and the second Bali bombing in 2005.

According to a study conducted in Singapore by Bilveer Singh (2017), the people in Southeast Asia assumed that the influence of Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and al-Qaeda (AQ) was already ended, with the death, capture, and silence of the faces of JI. Mentioned in his report:

“By 2011, however, JI appeared to have been severely degraded with its key military and ideological leaders either dead or detained; some broke away to form splinter groups. Among those killed or executed included operatives such as Azahari Husin (2005), Imam Samudra (2008), Nordin M Top (2009), and Dulmatin (2010). Leaders under detention include Abu Bakar Bashyir, Hambali, and Abu Dujana. The organisation’s structure and networks were also believed to have been severely disrupted.

Globally, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s IS having superseded AQ as the leading global jihadi movement and key security threat. The killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011, and expansion of IS in Iraq and Syria culminating in the declaration of a caliphate in June 2014, have eroded AQ’s position as the base of jihad. In Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, counter-terrorism measures are believed to have crippled JI and rendered it ineffective. In Indonesia alone, more than 110 JI members have been killed and 1,200 imprisoned.”

The Southeast Asian community assumed the total disappearance of JI influence. On this matter, Singh warned about the inaccuracy of this assumption. A recent interview with Abu Rushdan, exposed how JI also benefited along with ISIL’s wide expansion. A number of factors facilitated the continued survival and revival of JI in general, and in Indonesia in particular. These are:

1. AQ central organisation under Ayman Zawahiri’s leadership continue to exist and even expand with territorial gains in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and parts of Africa, including Libya and Somalia. This provides inspiration and hope to AQ alumni, comprising veterans and loyalists among JI followers.

2. Pro-AQ and JI leaders continue to operate and remain steadfast in their loyalty to AQ and JI in Indonesia. They include Abu Rusydan, Zarkasih, Abu Jibril, Abu Tholut, Irfan Awwas, Abu Dujana and others.
3. The continued existence of JI members and networks in Indonesia, with most of the group's detainees scheduled to be released in the next few years.
4. JI members continued belief in and support for international jihad, with many Indonesians fighting with *Jabhat al-Nusra* (JAN), an AQ franchise, in Syria and Iraq. One of Abu Jibril's sons, Muhammad Ridwan, died fighting for JAN in March 2015. Abu Rusydan has also admitted that his group was providing humanitarian assistance to people in Iraq and Syria.
5. The continued running of many JI publishing houses, through Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, with magazines such as *Risalah Mujahideen* and *Syamina* being produced on a regular basis.
6. Many pro-JI mosques and madrasahs in Indonesia, such as the one in Ngruki (Central Java), have continued to function and even expand.
7. The willingness of JI leaders to learn from the past failures of the group, as well as other like-minded groups, such as *Darul Islam* and *Komando Jihad*, which were neutralised by the security apparatus.

The statements above are indeed frightening and call for a proper plan of action by those in power in Southeast Asia. One of those being well prepared with rehabilitation programs.

### **Extremism Rehabilitation Programs**

Extremism rehabilitation programs that have proved effective in this modern era can be found in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Malaysia (Ezzraqui 2010). Essentially these programs are in two forms: deradicalization and disengagement. The former refers to the separation of an individual either voluntarily or forcefully from a radical ideology. The latter on the other hand, refers to the separation and the distancing of an extremist from the individual's group, even if it does not affect the individual's extreme ideology. The models used in these three countries involve both hard and soft approach.

### **Rehabilitation Programs' Modus Operandi**

The rehabilitation programs require the authority to:

1. Trace, pry and detain.
2. Collect information on the details of an extremist ideology and its source.
3. Deradicalize detainees.
4. Gain support from the extremists' family members.
5. Keep track on released detainees.
6. Make use of the internet to expose of extreme ideologies and extremist groups (Mohd Mizan 2009).

By the end of the programs, a few actions will be taken:

1. The individuals will be returned to society, with social and economic support.



2. The individuals usually tend to expose the wrongs in the ideology and help expose the community on such matter.
3. The deradicalized individuals' experience will be used to help those still in rehabilitation.

### **Malaysian Government's Approach on Handling Muslim Extremism**

Basically, the approach used by the Malaysian government is similar to those used by Saudi Arabia and Singapore (Boucek 2008; Ramakrishna 2009). The differences are only in the agencies in charge. In Malaysia, these programs are entrusted to PDRM, KDN (*Kementerian Dalam Negeri*) and JAKIM (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*) (Mohd Aslam 2016).

The PDRM investigates and detains using the SOSMA Act (*Akta Kesalahan Keselamatan (Langkah-Langkah Khas) 2012*). JAKIM, PDRM and KDN all take part in the rehabilitation of the extremists. Some actions are taken throughout the process, which is studying the extremist ideology's details, classifying the active members from the passive, preparing answers to the extremist ideology's details, approaching the extremists through dialogues and taking care of the extremists' family and their welfare through KEMAS (*Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat*) and *Pusat Zakat*.

### **Regional Counter Terrorism Guidelines**

A study conducted by Al-Hedayah, an NGO based in Indonesia showed a guideline for counter terrorist programs (Zeiger 2016). It consists of a few key components:

#### ***Push/Pull Factors and Target Selection***

The government needs to recognize the push and pull factors for an individual to get involved in Islamist extremism. This is also followed by the need to categorize the targets of extremist programs, consisting of the common public, the elites, the sympathisers and the supporters.

#### ***Deep Understanding of Extremism***

Governments should recognize extreme ideologies both literally and figuratively. The extreme ideologies commonly found in Southeast Asia can basically be classified according to the one of these narratives: religious, political, social or economic. Abdullah Azzam on this matter, wrote in which his writings pointed out these ideas:

1. Religion justifies extremism.
2. Cementing belief and faith is an obligation for all Muslims.
3. Everything by the west is corrupt.
4. Retaliation is permitted.

The reading materials promoting Islamist extremism, be they printed or online, are all founded on these four points. The outcome of these four bases is a misconception of Islam in which it is believed that *jihad qital* (killing) is a *fardh* (religious duty) on every Muslim. Any Muslim who has a different say or disagree with this teaching is no longer

a Muslim, which is why the practice of *takfir* (excommunicating) is popular among the Islamist extremist.

Meanwhile, in the context of a political narrative, there has to be a sovereign Islamic country in Southeast Asia, only then can Islamic law be implemented. The extremists would also stress that this Islamic country will attend to everyone. On this basis, Daesh welcomes recruits from anywhere around the globe.

### ***Identifying the Weak Points of Islamist Extremism Ideology***

Organizers of rehabilitation programs should recognize the weak points of these extreme ideologies which include:

1. Daesh actually fail to attend to foreigners who join the group.
2. Daesh's claim for authority and caliphate is illegitimate.
3. Their grounds for allowing *jihad* are already proven to be wrong by Muslim scholars.

### ***Programs Involving Extremists' Family Members***

To ensure the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, support from the extremists' family members is also essential. They are invited to counselling sessions and their well-being are taken care of throughout the extremists' time in holding. This is necessary for family members have big influence over each other, and the extremists' ideology may have spread through them.

### ***Programs Upon Detained Extremists' Release***

Should a detained extremist be freed, the extremist should beforehand, be taken through a strict screening process to ensure his deradicalization is indeed successful. Inevitably, the said freed extremist should be under constant supervision and probation.

### **The What and Why of Islamist Extremism: A Critical Analysis**

One challenge faced by western researchers is to understand the Islamist extremist ideology. This is mostly due to their secular mindset, and logical empiricism philosophy, which sees religion as a redundant factor (Mohd Hazim 2005). This makes it impossible to understand the role of faith in the making of an extremist. The outcome of their research is only from a sociological point of view.

The western researchers typically link extremism phenomenon to; *first*, social relationship, *second*, oppression, like that faced by Palestinians. *Third*, even if the researchers do link extremism to al-Quran and al-sunnah, it is only in a literal manner. At any rate, their studies show the extremists' fanaticism is beyond sanity (Kruglanski 2004).

### **Influence of Worldview on A Person's Mentality**

To undo extremists' ideology is not easy. This difficulty is constituted by the worldview to which the extremists hold. This, from another perspective, reflects the

advanced approach of Islam, which considers world view and mentality as necessities for human too and not just material needs (Abdul Rahman 2001). World view is seen by Islam as one of the factors in decision making (Hossein Nasr 1990).

Worldview is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the whole of the individual's or society's knowledge and point of view. A worldview can include natural philosophy: fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics. This point of view affects the individual's or society's thoughts and actions.

Essentially, a worldview is based on: the reality and truth obtained through the study of metaphysics regarding the visible and invisible worlds, integral thinking regarding life based on religious texts (Syed Naquib 1996).

This opinion is parallel to the findings by a researcher on extremism, Kumar Ramakrishna (2009), who found that people with spiritual and religious voids tend to:

1. Long for the spiritual touch.
2. Blindly trust an extremist for guidance.
3. Commit to religion even without essential basic understandings. On these matters their eagerness is usually wrongfully fuelled with the harsh reality on the oppressed Muslims in the hands of great powers, such as faced by the Muslims in Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq and the region of Kashmir.
4. Be driven by financial desperation.

People with these four traits are the common targets of extremists. Their groups would approach and provide the needs, then the target individuals would be asked to join gatherings. In case of disagreements, the common threats would be that the law enforcers have already set eyes on them and kept an eye on their movements. This instils fear and leaves them no other choice but to stick to the extremists.

### ***Ignorance and Misconception in Epistemology***

Theories on the emergence of extremist ideology can be grounded on the idea that ignorance is the foundation. This is inspired by the views of Syed Naquib Al-Attas and Syed Husin Al-Attas.

Muslims are required to judge every matter in a holistic and integrated manner. Evaluations and assessments are not to be static, literal, formalistic nor judgemental. Those in compliance with Islamic principles would be faith-driven, rationalistic, societal and world affirmative.

Matters stressed in the theory of ignorance are:

1. Individuals related to extremism and terrorism whether on cognitive, affective, or psychomotor levels have weak minds and are ignorant.

2. Lack of knowledge on the correct religious epistemology leads to dense ignorance, which leads to being spiritually weak, hence strengthening stubbornness, closeness to a different point of view even if it was correct. This denseness has been mentioned in the holy Quran to be a punishment from God to those unwilling to learn properly.
3. This stubbornness when mixed by vengeance and hatred, causes an individual to be extremely hateful to the extent of taking extreme measures, which would ultimately leave impacts on the whole Muslim community.

### **Khawarij Ideology as a Main Factor in the Understanding of the *Salafi Jihad***

Research by Muhammad Haniff Hassan (2009) discovered several main contents of the *Salafi Jihadi* ideology:

1. The difference between Islam and every other religion. Everything must be seen in a legal formalistic manner, where a person is either Muslim or *kafir* or *munafiq*. All the destructions happening in the world is conspired by a bigger power, the Zionists. On this ground, it is believed that they must be fought.
2. The never-ending feud between Muslims and others, as mentioned in a Quranic verse that the Jews and Christians will never accept Islam.
3. Muslims are prohibited to agree with non-Muslims on no matter what. Living in a non-Muslim country is also not advisable. The only allowed reason for visiting a non-Muslim country is to preach. Learning from non-Muslims is allowed only for the sole purpose of using their own knowledge against them. Non-Muslims on the other hand, are obliged to pay *jizyah* (tax) to Muslims. Any form of diplomatic relationship with non-Muslim governments is prohibited.
4. All Muslims must support the *Salafi Jihadis* in order to establish a fully Islamic government.
5. The only reasonable way to establish an Islamic government is through weapon wielding *jihad*.
6. War against the non-Muslims allows targeting the public for the following reasons:
  - a. Non-Muslims have done the same to the Muslim public.
  - b. The non-Muslim public vote for the leaders from among themselves and pay taxes to their government.
  - c. Collateral damage is allowed in pursuit of the greater good.
7. Suicide bombing is allowed and leads to martyrdom.

### **Similarities Between the Ideologies of Khawarij and *Salafi Jihad***

Based on the findings stated above, the *Salafi Jihad* ideology is a reincarnation of the Khawarij. Studies have been conducted and showed the similarities shared among the two (Wagemakers 2014).

*First*, both are formed by young adults with short vision. This similarity, despite the time gap between the two, is undeniable. *Second*, both equally reject contextual

elements in their fights. The Khawarij saw no difference between Ali and Muawiyah. Likewise, the *Salafi Jihadi* see all the current Islamic government as *toghut* (astray) and influenced by the West.

The Malaysian government is seen totally a non-Islamic. (Mohd Noor 2014). Although Malaysians are relatively peaceful, *Kumpulan Militan Malaysia* (KMM) decided to walk on the extreme path (Mohd Mizan 2009). Few examples can be shown for this ground:

1. KMM was established for the sole purpose of taking over the government through revolution. Members joined PAS, the only Islamic party in their eyes, discreet in because PAS would not agree to their agenda.
2. The group smuggled and stored firearms in a huge quantities for use when necessary.
3. They were responsible for bombing Hindu temples, attacking police stations, robbing banks, and murdering Dr. Joseph Fernandez for reverting Muslim women out of Islam. They were also responsible for an assault attempt on US Navy on Malaysian soil.
4. They were involved in indoctrination effort on civilians and university students.

### **Extreme Measures and Misconception of Jihad**

Similar to Khawarij, *Salafi Jihad* have a tendency towards extreme measures. This is prioritized even over fellow Muslims' blood, which ultimately gave no other option to Ali, a caliph who would avoid civil war at all cost, but to fight them and lead to the battle of Nahrawan. During his final days, he warned his two sons on them. He described them to be misled and their belief would only pollute the purity of Islam. Those of the *Salafi Jihad* were symmetrical to Ali's words, in whose eyes suicide bombing is allowed even at the cost of innocent civilians' lives (Green 2009).

The Salafis are also reluctant to learn from orthodox scholars and texts, seeing them as *taqlid* and *bid'ah*. Instead, they follow their own scholars for their literal interpretation. Their young are kept busy with war related activities, and they grow up without sufficient basic Islamic knowledge (Eggers 2011). This insufficiency is visible in Imam Samudera's weak justifications for the Bali bombing tragedy. His short writing, "*Aku Melawan Terorisme*" backlashed and was criticised by every orthodox Islamic movement in Indonesia for two reasons. *First*, his views were tightly influenced by that of Abdullah Azzam, a figure in *Salafi Jihad* ideology indoctrination from Afghanistan (Calvert 2007), and *second*; the bombing is justified with verses misinterpreted to suit his selfish vision. This misconduct is a solid proof of his lack of understanding of *Maqasid*, the goals of Islamic law (Amir Mualim 2004). In his book, he wrote that the bombing is a payback for the oppression on Muslims by the West (2004). He quoted, "...and wage war on all the non-believers as they do to you, and (know that) Allah is with the cautious (of their duty)" (al-Quran 9:36). Imam acknowledged the prohibition of killing innocent lives, but America and her allies crossed the line first. In another

verse, ‘...and if you retaliate, let it be equivalent to what you have suffered. But if you patiently endure, it is definitely better for those who are patient’ (al-Quran 16:126).

Imam Samudera claimed the Bali bombing to be in accordance to the calls for *jihad* and its stages, as explained in *Tarbiyah Jihadiyah* by Abdullah Azzam and *Tafsir Ibn Katsir*. The fourth and final stage, obliges the killing of every non-believers (al-Quran 9:5). This interpreted by Imam Samudera, as a license to be offensive towards all who are in favour of the West until the world is cleansed of their impurities, and no other is worshipped but Allah.

Regarding suicide, Imam Samudera’s justification on that matter are a few narrations of the prophet. Ibn Nuhas recorded 16 narrations where the prophet’s companions attacked the enemies with no regards of their own safety. This was supposed to be backed by a verse once read by Abu Hurairah in public, “and among them are those who sacrifice themselves for the sake of Allah...” (al-Quran 2:207).

His opinion was opposed by the Muslim scholars of Indonesia for reasons such as:

1. The typology of *Dar al-Harb* and *Dar al-Islam* is no longer relevant for this age since there are no longer major changes in international relationships. Tariq Ramadan in his book *To Be a European Muslim*, mentioned this typology opposes the concept of Islam being a blessing to the whole universe, and has no origin from al-Quran nor sunnah (Yoyo Hambali 2010).
2. The verses quoted by Imam Samudera were out of context and opposed their purpose. Scholars like Imam al-Qurtubi and al-Tabari explained that the permission for war is not valid unless by proper authority.
3. Islam’s principle on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is based on toleration and peace, not harm.

## **Conclusion**

It is undeniable that the violent acts by JI, so allegedly in the name of Islam, have polluted the world’s take on the peaceful religion. Such acts have also caused western countries to retaliate on the whole Muslim community regardless of their stand on the extremists. This henceforth requires the whole world to prepare suitable rehabilitation programs. This study has pointed out the efficiency of the programs carried out in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Malaysia. This is due to the combination of both soft and hard approaches. Still, Muslim scholars must inject these programs with the proper Islamic philosophy and principles. Only then will these programs prove to be fully successful.

## **Appreciation**

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