MUSLIM HERITAGE IN RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT: A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE PURPOSIVENESS & THE NON-PURPOSIVENESS OF MUSLIM SCHOLARSHIP[1]

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Abstract

The history of the study of religions has begun as early as man initially questioned on religion. Throughout the history of the study of religion or religions, many scholars had emerged and contributed to this vocation. Many international scholars; be them from the east and west, Muslims or non-Muslims; recognize Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft. In sum, comparative study of religions is regarded as one of the great contributions of Muslim's civilization to mankind's intellectual progress. Nevertheless, when referring to the popular works of Muslim scholars in this discipline, most people will refer to only some treatises with negligence to the great bulk of Muslim Heritage in Religionswissenschaft. This paper will unravel this issue and propose an alternative categorization or taxonomy with regards to Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft. The main reason for this effort is to guide the contemporary and future researchers to the great treatises of Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft. Therefore, this categorization or taxonomy will chart the mapping of possible references for any prospective readings, researches and new findings. This categorization can assist one's reading towards deeper understanding on issues in Muslim scholarship in

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religionswissenschaft. Likewise, this categorization can also help researchers to attain a better understanding of the opinion of any Muslim scholars in the field of comparative religion.

Keywords: Muslim heritage, religionswissenschaft, purposiveness and non-purposiveness.

Introduction

According to the late Professor Eric J. Sharpe (1933 – 2000), the history of the study of religions has begun as early as man initially questioned on religion.[5] The late Professor Ninian Smart (1927-2001) signified the study of religions as an attempt to understand the various aspects of religion, especially through the use of other intellectual disciplines.[6] Whilst, Professor Jacques Waardenburg (born 1930) suggests that the study of religion "includes all studies concerned with religious data, their observation, ascertainment, description, explanation, analysis, understanding, [and] interpretation."[7]

In brief, this questioning on religious issues can be divided into two main forms, specifically insider's or outsider's question on religious issues. Insider's study of religions is an attempt to understand the various aspects of one's own religion and this is most common from the latter. This study of religion mainly undertaken within each religion for the purpose of maintaining religious understanding among its believers and practitioners. Whereas the outsider's study of religions is vice-versa or an attempt to understand the various aspects of other people's religion.[8] It has been a great controversy in the study of religions ever since, to debate on this issue of the inside or outside view of religions.[9]

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5   Sharpe, Eric John. 1986. Comparative Religion: A History. Illinois: Open Court. pp. 1–2

6   Smart, N. 2006. Study of Religion. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved September 18, 2006, via Encyclopedia Britannica 2006 Ultimate Reference Suite DVD.

7   Olson, Carl. 2003. Introduction. In The*ory and Method in the Study of Religion: A Selection of Critical Readings*. USA: Cengage Learning. p. 5.

8   McCutcheon, Russell. T. 1999. *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*. London: Cassell.

9   Gardiner, Mark Q. and Engler, Steven. 2012. Semantic Holism and the Insider–Outsider problem. *Religious Studies*, 48, pp. 239–255; Pembroke, Neil. 2011. Outsiders and

Sutherland underlines that whatever the reasons that one may have to study religion or religions: be it due to one's interest, or seeking for existential answers that religion provides, evidently it is "for the successful outcome of anything worth studying ought to be an extension of knowledge and understanding."[10] In such a case, it might be said then that the study of religion is a process of extending one's knowledge and understanding of religion.

Throughout the history of the study of religion/s, many scholars had emerged and contributed to this vocation. Sharpe has stressed that it is hard to trace the origin of the study of religion, which is as hard as to trace the origin of any other studies.[11] To at least describe the history of the study of religion, it is best to refer to Jastrow's notion, whereby he said: "in one sense the study of religion is as old as human thought, but in another and more pertinent sense, it is the youngest of the sciences."[12] In this sense, the study of religion is supposed be understood as to begin, as soon as human begins to engage in pondering, learning and discovering a religion or religions.

Many international scholars; be them from the east and west, Muslims or non-Muslims; recognized Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft. According to the late Prof. Dr. Ahmad Shalaby (1915-2000), the Muslims were the earliest to contribute the intellectual development in this discipline for many other non-Islamic religions denied and condemned the existence of other religions.[13] It is worth mentioning here among the early Muslim scholars in this discipline were Al-Nawbakhti (d. 202H) through

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Insiders Personal Reflections on Methodology in Studies in Religion at the University of Queensland, 1986–2010. *Crossroads*. 5 (2). pp. 123–126 and Knott, Kim. 2008. Inside, Outside and the Space in-between: Territories and Boundaries in the Study of Religion. *Temenos: Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*. 44 (1). pp. 41–66.

10 Sutherland, Stewart and Clarke, Peter (eds.) 2003. *The Study of Religion, Traditional and New Religions.* London: Routledge. p. 29

11 Sharpe, Eric John. 2005. The Study of Religion in Historical Perspective. *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religions.* London and New York: Routledge. p. 22

12 Jastrow, Morris. 1901. *The Study of Religion*. London: Walter Scott, Paternoster Square. p. 1

13 Ahmad Shalaby. 1988. *Muqaranah Al-Adyan: Al-Yahudiyyah*. Cairo: Maktabah Al-Nahdah Al-Misriyyah. p. 24

his *Al-Ara' Wa Al-Diyanat*, Al-Masᶜudi (d. 346H) through his *Al-Diyanat*, Al-Musabbihi (d. 420H) *Dark Al-Bughiyyah Fi Wasf Al-Adyan Wa Al-ᶜIbadat*, Al-Baghdadi's (d. 429H) *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*, Ibn Hazm's (d. 456H) *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal Wa Al-Ahwa' Wa Al-Nihal*, Al-Shahrastani's (d. 548H) *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal* and Al-Biruni's (d. 440H) *Tahqiq Ma Li Al-Hind Min Maqulah Maqbulah Fi Al-ᶜAql Aw Mardhulah*.[14] Unfortunately, many of these early works were only noted in the pages of historical books of *manaqib*, *tabaqat* and *tarikh*; whereby only a few of them managed to survive to the present day for academic reference and analysis.

The late Professor Shalaby therefore urges the present Muslims to continue this academic pursuit from the past.[15] This sense of urgency has also been shared by the present Muslim scholars of study of religions, such as Professor Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Al-Sharqawy. He also acknowledges that Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft, in comparison to other nations and religions, with two special attributes: first, this study being independent as a discipline of knowledge and second, the results of findings are trustworthy and reliable.[16]

Such recognition also came from many non-Muslim scholars. For instance, H.U. Weitbrecht Stanton (1851-1937) acknowledges, "no other scripture in the world teaches comparative religion as the Al-Quran."[17] Whilst, Adam Mez (1869-1917) in his *The Renaissance of Islam* highlights that the spirit of toleration that was missing in the Medieval Europe, could only be found among the Muslims due to the Muslim comparative study of religions. He states: "this toleration found expression in Islam in the creation of the science of Comparative Religion and its enthusiastic cultivation."[18] In the same gesture, the late Professor Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003)

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14   Ibid. pp. 27-28

15   *Ibid*. pp. 24–36

16   Al-Sharqawy, Muhammad Abdullah. 2010. *Buhuth Fi Muqaranah Al-Adyan.* Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi. pp. 16–18

17   Ghulam Haider Aasi. 1989. The Qur'an and Other Religious Traditions. *Hamdard Islamicus.* vol. 9. no. 2. p. 65

18   Mez, Adam. 1937. *The Renaissance of Islam.* trans. by Salahuddin Khuda Bakhsh and Margoliouth, D.S. Patna: Jubilee Printing & Publishing House. pp. 32, 209-210.

had remarked, "the comparative study of religions has been rightly acclaimed as one of the great contributions of Muslim civilization to mankind's intellectual progress."[19]

In sum, comparative study of religions is regarded as one of the great contributions of Muslim's civilization to mankind's intellectual progress. This is due to the nature of this study, which recognizes and calls for the understanding of the pluralistic nature of human faith. The religion of God is one, but the religion of humankind is multiple in number.[20] This recognition and calling for the understanding of the various kinds of human religions are enshrined in the Holy Quran. Muslims learn this fact from the Quran and in the passage of time; many prominent ulamas (Islamic religious scholars) emerged as scholars of religionswissenschaft.

Nevertheless, when referring to the popular works of Muslim scholars in this discipline, most people will only refer to Al-Biruni's *Tahqiq Ma Li Al-Hind*,[21] Al-Shahrastani's *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*[22] and Ibn Hazm's *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal Wa Al-Ahwa' Wa Al-Nihal*[23] with negligence to the great bulk of Muslim Heritage in Religionswissenschaft. This paper will unravel this issue and propose a categorization or taxonomy with regards to Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft.

What is with the Purposiveness & the Non-Purposiveness of Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft?

As a matter of fact, there are many reasons that cause us to provide this categorization or taxonomy for the Muslim heritage in the religionswissenschaft. In brief, the main reasons for this effort is

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19 Lawrence, Bruce. 1976. *Shahrastani on the Indian Religions*. Mouton: Mouton Co. p. 5

20 *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, Surah Ali ᶜImran 3: Verse 19 and 85.

21 Al-Biruni, Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad. 1958. *Fi Tahqiq Ma Li Al-Hind Min Maqulah Maqbulah Fi Al-ᶜAql Aw Al-Mardhulah.* India: Matbaᶜah Majlis Dai'rah Al-Maᶜarif Al-ᶜUthmaniyyah.

22 Al-Shahrastani, Muhammad Ibn ᶜAbd Al-Karim. 1993. *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*. Beirut: Dar Al-Maᶜrifah.

23 Ibn Hazm, Muhammad Ali Ibn Ahmad. 2002. *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal Wa Al-Ahwa' Wa Al-Nihal.* Beirut: Dar Al-Ihya' Al-Turath Al-ᶜArabi.

to guide the contemporary and future researchers to the great bulk of Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft. We have addressed previously, how unfortunate for us to suffer such a loss in terms of the disappearance of many precious manuscripts and texts of Muslim comparative religions. Therefore, this categorization or taxonomy will chart the mapping of possible references for any prospective readings, researches and new findings.

Among the indicators that guide us towards producing this categorization or taxonomy of Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft are: first, the multiskilled and multitalented nature of majority Muslim scholars throughout ages; secondly, the development of Islamic sciences in the passage of time and thirdly, the ubiquity of discourse on religions in many pursuits of knowledge and sciences of all time. These three indicators will be further explained below to enlighten this discussion. (Look Figure 1: Indicators for the Purposiveness & the Non-Purposiveness Categorization or Taxonomy)

Firstly, it has been attested by many scholars of the past and the present that most of the renowned and prolific Muslim scholars are among those who are multiskilled and multitalented scholars. For example, Imam Muhammad Ibn Idris Al-Shafiᶜi (150-204H) is not only a scholar of *fiqh*, however he is also an expert in the Arabic literature (*al-Adab al-Arabi*), principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) and hadith.[24] The same also goes to Imam Al-Ghazzali (450-505H), who possessed expertise not only in Islamic sufism, but also in *fiqh, usul al-fiqh*, philosophy, and *ᶜIlm al-Kalam*.[25] Therefore, it

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24 As it is popularly told, كان أديبا قبل أن يكون فقيها. Complete biography of this founder for Shafiᶜi mazhab, could be referred to: Al-Razi, ᶜAbd Al-Rahman. 1993. *Adab Al-Shafiᶜi Wa Manaqibuhu*. Cairo: Maktabah Al-Khanji; Al-Razi, Fakhr Al-Din. 1986. *Manaqib Al-Imam Al-Shafiᶜi*. Cairo: Maktabah Al-Kulliyyat Al-Azhariyyah; Muhammad Abu Zahrah. 1948. *Al-Shafiᶜi: Hayatuhu Wa ᶜAsruhu, Ara'uhu Wa Fiqhuhu*. Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-ᶜArabi and Al-Daqr, ᶜAbd Al-Ghani. 1996. *Al-Imam Al-Shafiᶜi: Faqih Al-Sunnah Al-Akbar*. Dimashq: Dar Al-Qalam.

25 Watt, William Montgomery. 1963. *Muslim Intellectual Al-Ghazali*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Al-Qardawi, Yusuf. 1993. *Al-Imam Al-Ghazzali Bayna Madihihi Wa Naqidihi*. Beirut: Mu'assasah Al-Risalah; Mustafa Abu Sway. 1996. *Al-Ghazzaliyy: A Study in Islamic Epistemology*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and Al-Shami, Salih Ahmad. 2002. *Al-Ghazzali: Hujjah Al-Islam Wa Mujaddid Al-Mi'ah Al-Khamisah*. Dimashq: Dar Al-Qalam.

is not shocking to find discussion of religionswissenschaft in the works of other disciplines of knowledge due to the multiskilled and multitalented nature of majority Muslim scholars.

In the specific model of Muslim scholar in religionswissenschaft, Imam Abu Al-Fath Muhammad ibn ᶜAbd Al-Karim Al-Shahrastani is not only known for his *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*, but is also a great scholar of western and eastern philosophy and science of *kalam* through his *Nihayat Al-Iqdam Fi ᶜIlm Al-Kalam* (1934) and *Musaraᶜah Al-Falasifah* (1976), altogether with Quranic exegesis through his *Mafatih Al-Asrar Wa Masabih Al-Anwar* (2008). According to Suhayr Muhammad Mukhtar[26] and Muhammad Nasir Al-Suhaybani,[27] Imam Al-Shahrastani is a polymath of many disciplines of knowledge where only a few of his intellectual fruits remain published until today while others are lost or still in the form of old manuscripts.
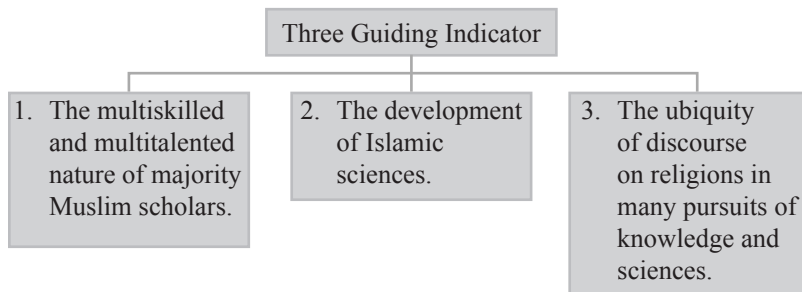
Figure 1: Indicators for the Purposiveness & the Non-Purposiveness Categorization or Taxonomy

Next, with regard to the development of Islamic sciences (*al-ᶜUlum al-Islamiyyah*), this could be referred to the sayings of our Muslim epistemologists and philosophers of Islamic sciences. In chapter six of *al-Muqaddimah*: the various kinds of sciences, Ibn Khaldun (732-808H) states:

26 Al-Shahrastani, Muhammad Ibn ᶜAbd Al-Karim. 1976. *Musaraᶜah Al-Falasifah*. N.pl.: Matbaᶜah Al-Jabalawi, pp. 18-22.

27 Al-Suhaybani, Muhammad Nasir. 1412H. *Manhaj Al-Shahrastani Fi Kitabihi Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal ᶜArdh Wa Taqwim*. Riyadh: Dar Al-Watan, pp. 48-86.

At the beginning of Islam, the civilizations (populations) were large, and sedentary culture existed in them. The sciences were then greatly cultivated there, and the people were widely versed in the various technical terminologies of scientific instruction, in the different kinds of sciences, and in posing problems and (inventing new) disciplines. They exceeded (all) who had come before them and surpassed (all) who came after them.[28]

Prophet Muhammad PBUH, who encouraged the culture of *Iqra',*[29] *al-Nazr,*[30] *al-Taʿaqqul*[31] and *al-Tafakkur*[32] in Muslim ummah had cultivated the development and proliferation of Islamic sciences into its many branches within the passage of time. In subtopic 1.4, this issue will be clarified in detail to depict the discussion of religionswissenschaft in many Islamic sciences namely: Quranic exegeses, hadith commentaries, historical texts and many more. The emergence of writings on *Marjaʿ al-Ulum al-Islamiyyah* or *Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah* (sources of Islamic sciences) also assists one's reference for the non-purposive treatises in Muslim religionswissenschaft.[33]

Thirdly is the ubiquity of discourse on religions in many pursuits of knowledge and sciences of all time. By ubiquity, we mean that the discourse on religion is not just specifically concentrated in the study of religion. Whereas, the discussion of religion is very much

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28 Ibn Khaldun. 1967. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Trans by. Rosenthal, Franz. Princeton: Princeton University Press. vol. 2. p. 434.

29 *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, Surah Al-Alaq 96: Verse 1-5.

30 *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, Surah Al-Ghashiyah 88: Verse 17-20.

31 *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, Surah Al-Yusuf 2: Verse 2&109, Al-Anbiya' 21: verse 10 and Al-Hadid 57: verse 17.

32 *Al-Quran Al-Karim*, Surah Al-Nahl 16: verse 11, 44 and 69.

33 Examples of writings for *Marjaʿ al-Ulum al-Islamiyyah* or *Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah* (sources of Islamic sciences) are in the likes of: Abd Al-Wahhab Ibrahim Abu Sulayman. 1986. *Kitabah Al-Bahth Al-ʿIlmi* Wa *Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah.* Jeddah: Dar Al-Shuruq; Al-Zuhayli, Muhammad Mustafa. 1992. *Marjaʿ al-Ulum al-Islamiyyah.* Beirut: Dar Al-Maʿrifah and Al-Marʿashali, Yusuf ʿAbd Al-Rahman. 2006. *Masadir al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah Wa Nizam Al-Maktabat Wa Al-Maʿlumat.* Beirut: Dar Al-Basha'ir Al-Islamiyyah.

flexible and gelatinous. Sometimes, we could subscribe to the science of history to read religious origin and development, or philosophy to unveil the ideals of religion, or sociology to make sense on why and how religious people work in religious society. In a sense, this is the most profound guiding indicator that reveals this categorization or taxonomy for the Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft.

In other words to illustrate this reality, religious aspects or data are not only related to the study of religionswissenschaft or the comparative study of religions. As a result of that, we could find today numerous theories and methods of understanding religion that are rooted in many disciplines of modern academia such as theology, history, philosophy, psychological, sociology and anthropology.[34] To think that religious aspects and data are only subject to the study of religionswissenschaft or the comparative study of religions is dichotomizing, which subsequently leads to pathologizing, as to borrow the words from Abraham Maslow (1908-1970).[35]

In such a case, by purposiveness, we aim to allude to the opuses and writings of the Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft, which their main and primary purpose of creation is for the study of religion/s. Conversely, by non-purposiveness, we aim to allude to the rest and remaining works of the Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft, which the study of religion/s is undertaken not as the main reason of its creation. As such, this will open us to a new vista and paradigm at looking into the heritage of Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft.

The Purposiveness of Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft
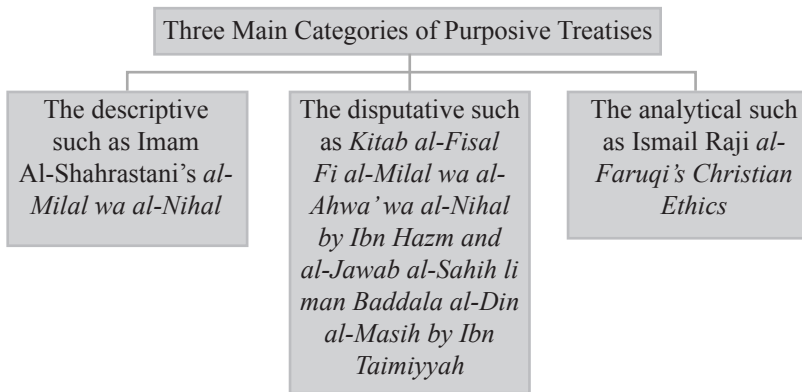
The purposive sources here refer to the study of religion/s that are undertaken as the main or primary reason of their creation. They are also known as the focused, systematic and direct treatises on other

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34 Doniger, Wendy. 2006. Study of Religion. In *Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. pp. 1031-1033.

35 Maslow, Abraham H. 1986. *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences*. New York: Penguin Books. pp. 11-18.

religions. They are the works that are intentionally produced and devoted towards studying other religions. Muslim scholars already produced the purposive treatises on other religions since eighth or ninth century. However, this does not dispute the fact that Muslims already engaged in *religionswissenschaft*, in various situations and approaches, as early as in the time of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his Companions. Some of these facts are already analyzed by Kamar Oniah in her *Early Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft*.[36]

Many approaches and styles are found in these purposive treatises. Some of them are descriptive in nature; some are disputative, polemical and apologetic, which involve defending, refuting, and extensive criticism; while some others are analytical, involving serious studies of certain aspects of other religions. The treatises produced by Muslim scholars on other religions are not necessarily limited only to one particular style, for some of them employ different or mix of styles and approaches. This section will discuss three main categories of purposive treatises: the descriptive, the disputative and the analytical treatises.

Three Main Categories of Purposive Treatises		
The descriptive such as Imam Al-Shahrastani's *al-Milal wa al-Nihal*	The disputative such as *Kitab al-Fisal Fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* by Ibn Hazm and *al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala al-Din al-Masih* by Ibn Taimiyyah	The analytical such as Ismail Raji *al-Faruqi's Christian Ethics*

Figure 2: Three Main Categories of Purposive Treatises

The descriptive treatises of Muslim *religionswissenschaft* refer to those treatises, which are intentionally devoted and focused

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36   Kamar Oniah. 2003. *Early Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization.

on other religions using descriptive method, devoid of refutation and criticism. The main objective of descriptive treatises are to offer general introduction and description about other religions. In the modern time, this kind of treatises can be found in the textbooks on comparative religions. Some of them offer introduction and description of various religions, while some other only focus on one particular religion. Among the best example for this first category is Imam Al-Shahrastani's *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*.

The disputative treatises of Muslim *religionswissenschaft* refer to those treatises, which are intentionally written for disputative purpose. These treatises are either to defend Islamic teachings or to refute teachings of other religions. Hence, these kinds of treatises could be either apologetic or polemical in nature. In early Muslim *religionswissenschaft*, disputative treatises are obvious as the *al-Radd* ("Refutations") treatises. These kinds of *al-Radd* treatises are intentionally devoted to refute or criticize some aspects of other religions. Among favoured aspects of other religions that are criticized and refuted by the early *al-Radd* treatises are the theological (especially those related to the concept of God, particularly in Christianity) and scriptural aspects (e.g., looking for discrepancies, contradiction and faulty data).[37] Example for early Muslim disputative treatises are *al-Radd ᶜala al-Nasara* by Abu ᶜIsa al-Warraq, *Kitab al-Fisal Fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwa' wa al-Nihal* by Ibn Hazm, and *al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala al-Din al-Masih* by Ibn Taimiyyah.

The analytical treatises of Muslim *religionswissenschaft* refer to those treatises, which offer deep analysis of certain aspects of other religions. There will be no refutation and debates in the analytical treatises. In fact, the authors of the analytical treatises make serious and objective studies of relevant aspects of religions. Although there will be no extensive personal criticism as found in disputative treatises, some critical analysis based on objective and academic approach are still offered by certain analytical treatises. In some cases, the analytical treatises offer certain contributions, either on the theoretical or practical aspects of religion/s, or even

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37   Kamar Oniah. p. 25.

on both of them. For example, there are cases where the analytical-purposive treatises offer suggestions for the improvement of certain specific aspects of religion/s. Some of them even able to formulate or systematize certain practical ways, theories, methodologies, or principles related to *religionswissenschaft*. Examples of the analytical-purposive works are too extensive to mention here. Most of academic journal articles, theses, or dissertations on different aspects of other religions fall under this category. The book entitled *Christian Ethics* by the late Professor Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986) is among the best examples that offers various aspects of the analytical treatises mentioned here. [38]

The Non-Purposiveness of Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft

The non-purposive works of the Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft here refer to the study of religion/s, which is undertaken not as the main or primary reason of its creation. For instance, the main or primary reason for one's work could be for historical activity or sociological research. However, within one's records of historical activity or sociological research, one has included the study on religion/s within this specific work. Even though the reason for the study on religion/s has not been in primacy, it is believed that many works and writings on Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft could be referred to within this second categorization or taxonomy. In brief, this is due to the many divisions of knowledge involved with the works in this second category, rather than the first one. As highlighted previously at the introduction, in the definition of study of religion by Smart and Waardenburg, the study of religion is an attempt to understand the various aspects of religion and includes all studies concerned with religious data. Hence, these religious aspects and data can be derived largely from the non-purposiveness of Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft.

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38 Al-Faruqi, Isma'il Raji. 1999. *Christian Ethics: A Historical and Systematic Analysis of Its Dominant Ideas*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen.
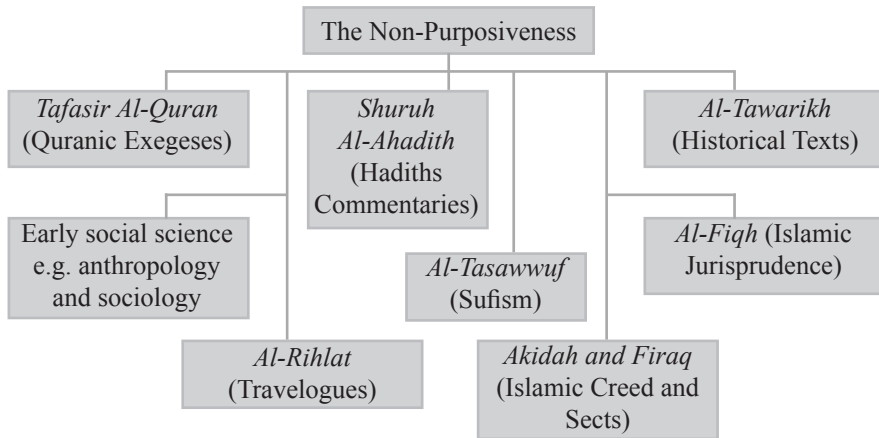
Figure 3: The Non-Purposiveness Categorization or Taxonomy

Many benefits could be gained from acknowledging this categorization or taxonomy for the Muslim heritage in the religionswissenschaft. This is epistemologically evident from learning a wisdom from George Sarton (1884-1956), a renowned American philosopher and historian of science, where he exemplifies:

> As every trained scholar knows (and superficial bibliographers forget), some of the best information on any subject is likely to be found in books devoted to large subjects or even to other subjects. For example, valuable information on Ibn Sina might be tucked in a general history of Islam or hidden in a medical journal or a metaphysical treatise.[39]

As a result, this categorization or taxonomy can assist one's reading towards deeper understanding on issues in Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft. Likewise, this categorization or taxonomy can also help one's research or study on the opinion of any Muslim scholars in the field of comparative religion. Accordingly, descriptions will be made below on samples of treatises, which cover some aspects in the Non-Purposiveness categorization or taxonomy of Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft.

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39 Sarton, George. 1975. *Introduction to the History of Science*. Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company Inc. vol. 3. p. 9.

Tafasir Al-Quran or Quranic exegeses is one of the intensive and extensive sources on Muslim Scholarship in religionswissenschaft. Al-Quran is the most reliable source of knowledge in Islam. Thus, many prominent Muslim scholars refer to the Quran in explaining the teachings of other religions and describe their study of other religions in relation to the verses of the Quran. For example, the word *din* or religion derives 9 times in the Quran. Whilst, *al-Yahud* or Jew 7 times, *Hadu* or Jews 10 times, *al-Nasara* or Christians 3 times, *Ahl al-Kitab* or the People of the Book 31 times and *al-Mushrikin* or polytheists 24 times. These samples of terminologies are widely used in the study of religions. In this case, best reference could be made to the *Tafasir Al-Quran* to unveil its meanings and to understand the views of Muslim scholars upon it. These *Tafasir Al-Quran* include: Al-Maturidi's (248-333H) *Ta'wilat Ahl Al-Sunnah*,[40] Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi's (544-606H) *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*[41] and Wahbah Al-Zuhayli's (b. 1932) *Al-Tafsir Al-Munir*.[42]

The same manner could also be found when it comes to *Shuruh Al-Ahadith* or Hadiths commentaries. If Al-Quran Al-Karim is regarded as the primary source in Islamic epistemology, hadith then is secondary. Rasulullah PBUH, the Prophet, being the receiver of God's verbatim is thus, the most authorized commentator of Islamic teachings vis-a-vis the other religions. Rasulullah PBUH acts, words and standpoints on interreligious issues can be made intelligible with reference to the *Shuruh Al-Ahadith* or Hadiths commentaries. These treatises include: Al-Nawawi's (631-676H) *Al-Minhaj*[43] and Ibn Hajar Al-ᶜAsqalani's (773-852H) *Fath Al-Bari*.[44]

Al-Tawarikh or historical texts are also included as one of the category in this taxonomy for the Muslim heritage in

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40 Al-Maturidi, Abu Mansur Muhammad. 2005. *Ta'wilat Ahl Al-Sunnah.* Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-ᶜIlmiyyah.

41   Al-Razi, Fakhr Al-Din. 2001. *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' Al-Turath Al-ᶜArabi.

42 Al-Zuhayli, Wahbah. 1418H. *Al-Tafsir Al-Munir Fi Al-Aqidah Wa Al-Shariᶜah Wa Al-Manhaj*. Dimashq: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Muᶜasir.

43 Al-Nawawi, Abu Zakariyya Yahya Ibn Sharaf (1424H). *Sahih Muslim Bi Sharh Al-Nawawi*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-ᶜIlmiyyah.

44 Al-Asqalani, Ibn Hajar. 2000. *Fath Al-Bari Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Riyadh: Dar Al-Salam.

the religionswissenschaft. This is evident by referring to some Muslim historical treatises, which also address the study of religion/s in their contents. However, this proposition should not be taken as an overgeneralization to all Muslim historical works. Some Muslim historians did include findings and discussions on religionswissenschaft in their writings and some perhaps do not see the need to do so. Examples of historical treatises for this instance are: Ibn Al-Athir's (d. 630H) *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*,[45] Ibn Kathir's (701-774H) *Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah*[46] and Ibn Khaldun's (732-808H) *Diwan Al-Mubtada' Wa Al-Khabar*.[47]

In *Al-Fiqh* or Islamic Jurisprudence, views and findings on Muslim religionswissenschaft could be referred to in the issue of Muslims and non-Muslims relations in the *Al-Siyasah Al-Shar^ciyyah* or in the issue of *Ahl Al-Kitab*, which were touched by many *fuqaha'* (Islamic law jurists) from the earliest among the companion, Imams of *al-madhahib al-fiqhiyyah* to the present Muslim professors of Islamic *fiqh*. While in *Akidah* and *Firaq* (Islamic Creed and Sects), reference could be made to treatises such as Abu Nu^caym Al-Asbahani's *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah*[48] and Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi's *I^ctiqadat Firaq Al-Muslimin Wa Al-Mushrikin*.[49] The same also goes to the remaining divisions, such as *Rihlah Ibn Jubayr* (539-614H)[50] or *Rihlah Ibn Battutah* (703-779H),[51] the Sufi metaphysical treatises of Ibn ^cArabi (561-638H)[52] or ^cAbd Al-Karim Al-Jili (767-826H)[53]

45 Ibn Al-Athir, Muhammad Ibn Muhammad. 1987. *Al-Kamil Fi Al-Tarikh*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-^cIlmiyyah.

46 Ibn Kathir, Isma^cil Ibn ^cAmru. 1997. *Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah*. Hijr: Hijr Li Al-Tiba^cah Wa Al-Nashr Wa Al-Tawzi^c Wa Al-I^clan.

47 Ibn Khaldun, ^cAbd Al-Rahman. 2001. *Diwan Al-Mubtada' Wa Al-Khabar Fi Tarikh Al-Arab Wa Al-Barbar Wa Man ^cAsarahum Min Dhawi Al-Sha'n Al-Akbar*. Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr.

48 Al-Asbahani, Abu Nu^caym. 1986. *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwah*. Beirut: Dar Al-Nafa'is.

49 Al-Razi, Fakhr Al-Din.1986. *I^ctiqadat Firaq Al-Muslimin Wa Al-Mushrikin*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-^cArabi.

50 Ibn Jubayr, Muhammad Ibn Ahmad. n.d. *Rihlah Ibn Jubayr*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.

51 Ibn Battutah, Muhammad Ibn ^cAbdullah. 1928. *Rihlah Ibn Battutah Al-Musammah Tuhfah Al-Nuzzar Fi Ghara'ib Al-Amsar Wa Aja'ib Al-Asfar*. Egypt: Al-Matba^cah Al-Azhariyyah.

52 Ibn Arabi, Muhyi Al-Din. n.d. *Fusus Al-Hikam*. Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-^cArabi.

53 Al-Jili, ^cAbd Al-Karim Ibn Ibrahim. 2000. *Al-Insan Al-Kamil Fi Ma^crifah Al-Awakhir Wa Al-Awa'il*. Beirut: Mu'assasah Al-Tarikh Al-^cArabi.

and Al-Biruni's *Fi Tahqiq Ma Li Al-Hind Min Maqulah Maqbulah Fi Al-ᶜAql Aw Al-Mardhulah* as work in early Islamic social science. The reason that Al-Biruni's *Tahqiq Ma Li Al-Hind* is categorized under the non-purposive category is due to the original intention of the author, which is to unveil India to his readers. Consequently, it is included altogether in this writing many descriptions on Indian religions, customs and beliefs, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Magianism and others.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As a conclusion, the main reason for this effort is to guide the contemporary and future researchers to the great bulk of Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft. We have addressed previously, how unfortunate for us to suffer such a loss in terms of the disappearance of many precious manuscripts and treatises of Muslim religionswissenschaft. It is evident that many early Muslim scholars mastered different disciplines of knowledge and some of them were familiar or did address other religion/s. Many of them were multiskilled and multitalented, and even polymath. Their contributions are not limited to certain discipline/s in which they are widely celebrated, but rather, many of them also address issues related to Islam and other religions. Because of that, their contribution on religion/s can be traced on different disciplines and places. Hence, reference to religion should not be limited to only on the focused, systematic and direct treatises on other religions, which we call as purposive sources, but we must consider many other non-purposive sources, which are rich with fresh information on religion/s. Therefore, this categorization or taxonomy will chart the mapping of possible references for any prospective readings, researches and new findings. This categorization or taxonomy can assist one's reading towards deeper understanding on issues in Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft. Likewise, this categorization or taxonomy can also help one's research or study on the opinion of any Muslim scholars in the field of comparative religion.

In humble manner, we have to confess here that the discussions provided in this article is an early finding of our research on Muslim scholarship in religionswissenschaft. It is hoped that

this article could open a new vista and paradigm among students, researchers and academics of religionswissenschaft, towards discovering more new findings and gaining deep understanding. In such a case, further researches and contemplations are needed to justify firmly this new characterization or taxonomy of Muslim heritage in religionswissenschaft. We, as many other scholars of religionswissenschaft, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, endeavor towards a scientific and systematic study of comparative religions. In the words of Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900):

> It becomes therefore the duty of those who have devoted their life to the study of the principal religions of the world in their original documents, and who value religion and reverence it in whatever form it may present itself, to take possession of this new territory (science of religion) in the name of true science, and thus to protect its sacred precincts from the inroads of those who think that they have a right to speak on the ancient religions of mankind…[54]

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