TIMES

The Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies Post-Graduate Forum

WELCOME TO TIMES FORUM SYMPOSIUM 2018

Thank you for being part of the TIMES Forum Symposium at the University of Birmingham. We are delighted to be welcoming delegates for what promises to be a stimulating and enjoyable conference.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

Photography :

We will be taking photographs, and possibly some videos, during the Symposium, which will mainly be used in TIMES promotional materials. If you do not wish to feature in any of the photographs, please make this known to the organisers.

WiFi :

You can access the University of Birmingham's WiFi network.

Network name: WiFi Guest
Password: uniofbham

Venue :

All the day's activities will take place in **Muirhead Tower** (Red Zone, R21 in the **G15 Lecture Theatre on the ground floor.**

Prayer Room :

For your convenience, we have booked room 118 (1st floor) of Muirhead Tower for anyone who would like to make use of it for prayer. In addition, there is the main campus prayer room with wash room facilities located in the Guild of Students (Orange Zone O1).

Don't Forget to Tweet!

Feel free to share online about your attendance, experience and anything interesting you see, hear and learn throughout the day. You can follow us on Twitter @TIMES_Forum.

Please join in and extend the discussion by using the hashtag #TIMESPG18

We hope you enjoy the Symposium

Best wishes,

Amna Nazir, Hanan Fara, Neelam Hussain, Tasawar Bashir, Omama Hamashsa & Narmin Ismayilova

(TIMES Forum Symposium Committee)

Programme for TIMES Forum Symposium 2018

9th May 2018. 09.00-17.30

Venue: G15 Lecture Theatre, Muirhead Tower, University of Birmingham

09:00 - 09:30 **Registration**

09:30 **Opening Remarks**

09:45 – 10:45 **Keynote Address**
Prof. Shaheen Sardar Ali, Professor of Islamic Law, Warwick Law School: **Autonomous Aspirations? Re-Reading the CEDAW Drafting Process and Examining Muslim Women's Contributions**

10:45 – 11:55 **Panel One: Reconstructing History**
Josef Linnhoff, University of Edinburgh:
Christianity as Muslim trope: the place and function of Christianity in the writings of Muhammad b. 'Abdul Wahhab

Gabriel Polley, University of Exeter:
The Nablus Bell Riot: Palestine's First Anti-British Uprising

Omama Hamasha, University of Birmingham:
Reconstructing the past: Ibn al-Qayyim's approach in critiquing accounts of *maghāzī* (battles) in his book *Zād al-Maʿād*

Doaa Baumi, University of Birmingham:
The Challenge of Scriptural Reasoning to Muslims: Examining the So- Called *Isrāīlīyyāt* in Classical Islamic Literature

11:55 – 12:15 **Break**

12:15 – 13:15 **Panel Two: Muslim Identity in Minority Contexts**
Hafza Iqbal, Coventry University:
Exploring the social evolution of Sufism and the role of Sufis within Muslim societies in history

Ayesha Khan, University of Cardiff:
'Tariqa' or 'Tariqas'; Exploring Post-Tariqa Sufism

Shahnaz Akhter, University of Warwick:
Insecuritizing from Within: Seeking security within new migrant communities

13:15 – 14:15   Lunch

14:15 – 14:45   Workshop
Neelam Hussain, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham:
Arts and Objects from Mughal India

14:45 – 15:25   Panel Three: Contemporary Debates on Muslim Women
Mahmoud Ali Afifi, University of Lancaster:
Bint al-Shāṭī: A Tradition-Based Voice for Women's Emancipation

Jennifer Eggert, University of Warwick:
"Resist by all means": Understanding the participation of female fighters in Harakat Amal

15:25 – 15:45   Break

15:45 – 16:45   Panel Four: Emerging Perspectives in Islamic Legal Theory
Marzieh Kaivanara, University of Bristol:
Unwilling to the 'Will': A Contribution to the Understanding of the Body in Shi'a Iran

Khalid Aljifry, University of Birmingham:
The Jurisprudence of Reality in Bin Bayyah's Thought

Belal Abu Alabbas, University of Oxford:
Uṣūl al-Fiqh of 9th-Century *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*: al-Bukhārī a Jurist

16:45 – 17:15	**Research Relay:**
	Kamile Akbal, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University:
	The Stoical, Aristotelian & Islamic Sides of al-Nazzam's Theory of Latency
	Samra Mursaleen, University of Coventry:
	The Impact of Dr Qadri's Counter-Terror Networks: a case study of Minhaj al-Qur'an UK
	Sophia Butt, University of Birmingham:
	The Edicts of *Marājī* vs the Concerns of Iraqi Youth Today
17:15	**Concluding remarks & presentation of Best Paper Award**
17:30	**End**

TIMES Forum Symposium 2018

Speaker Profiles

Prof. Shaheen Sardar Ali, Professor of Islamic Law, Warwick Law School:

Autonomous Aspirations? Re-Reading the CEDAW Drafting Process and Examining Muslim Women's Contributions

Abstract: The ratification process of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) brought into sharp relief the chasm between the rhetoric and the reality of women's rights worldwide. This treaty, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 18 December 1979, has been hailed as an international bill of women's rights and is the most comprehensive treaty in the field, with 188 ratifications. But it is also the treaty that, upon signature and ratification, generated the largest number of reservations from states. Among those states entering reservations, some Muslim states specifically mentioned Islam and Islamic law as their reasons, while others did not invoke religious grounds. A third group of Muslim states ratified CEDAW without entering any reservations at all, or to Article 29 alone, while a fourth group (Iran and Somalia) have neither signed nor ratified the treaty.

Literature on CEDAW in relation to Muslim states has focused almost entirely on their reservations which, as stated above, are neither similar nor homogeneous. The plurality of positions and interpretations adopted by these states demonstrate the complexity of Islamic legal traditions as well as the political nature of the reservations. In addition, there are widely held assumptions as to why reservations were rendered.

In response to the gap in the literature and to the widely held assumptions, this paper, based on two of my publications, has a dual aim. First, it highlights the inputs of delegates from Muslim states during the drafting process of CEDAW. It critically engages with the archival records of the CEDAW drafting processes to demonstrate that not only did the delegates of Muslim states actively participate, their contributions were pragmatic as well

as aspirational. Muslim women delegates were present not simply as 'passive witnesses' but as active participants – negotiating, challenging, and contributing. Despite their ideological, political, cultural, and religious diversity, their role was part of a complex and multi-layered process of diplomacy, alliance making and consensus building.

The second aim of this paper is to take a step further to examine the 'complex' and 'multi-layered' *nature* of the participation of Muslim women delegates. In so doing, it goes beyond existing explanations behind reservations and questions the widely held assumptions that consider the participation of Muslim women delegates as 'weak' or 'subservient' to political and cultural factors. By using a lens of 'relational autonomy', the chapter *analyses the nature of participation by examining the participants*. It explores and brings to the fore the profiles of Muslim women delegates who led their national delegations at the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It enquires into their political standpoint and develops an understanding of the extent to which their contributions could be labelled 'autonomous' or 'subservient' to the demands of political diplomacy. This exploration has tremendous relevance to the academic debates that explore law-making process by examining the lawmakers.

Research Profile:

Shaheen Ali has has written extensively in the field of Islamic law, human rights, women and child rights. She was formerly Professor of Law, University of Peshawar, Pakistan for twenty-five years and Director Women's Study Centre at the same university. Shaheen served on the National Commission of Inquiry on Women as well as the Prime Minister's Consultative Committee on Women in Pakistan. She also served as the first woman cabinet Minister for Health, Population Welfare and Women's

Development in the Government of the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan (formerly known as the North west Frontier Province) and the first Chair of the National Commission on the Status of Women of Pakistan.

Shaheen has consulted with a range of national and international organisations including the British Council, DFID, NORAD, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNDP to name a few, as well as providing expert legal opinions in the area of Islamic law in UK and US courts. She was also a member of the British Council Task Force on Gender and Development and a founder member and Co-ordinator of the South Asian Research network on Gender, Law and Governance (SARN). Shaheen is joint editor (with Professors Javaid Rehman and Amir Majid) of the Journal of Islamic State Practices in International Law and member of the advisory board of the Journal of Gender Studies.

Josef Linnhoff, University of Edinburgh:

Christianity as Muslim Trope

Abstract: There is growing scholarship on the life and thought of Muḥammad b. 'Abdul Wahhāb (d. 1792), founder of the 'Wahhabi' movement. Yet this literature has, so far, entirely overlooked his engagement with non-Islamic traditions. This paper redresses this by piecing together the scattered references to Christianity found across Abdul Wahhab's works. This uncovers a remarkable theme; 'Abdul Wahhāb engages Christianity solely as a means of sharpening polemics against Muslim opponents. The idiom 'in greater unbelief than the Christians' (*akthar kufran min al-naṣāra*) is routinely used against Sufi's, scholarly opponents, Bedouin and the Shi'a. There is no other use of Christianity, no citations from Christian sources and no evidence that 'Abdul Wahhāb ever encountered Christians. As is clear, Christianity functions to serve intra-Muslim polemics, to throw into sharper relief the perceived unbelief (*kufr*) found within the Muslim community. This paper furthers our understanding of perhaps the most significant and controversial figure of modern Islamic thought. This analysis provides a clear instance of how engagement with the religious 'other' can, in fact, be simply a means of reinforcing *internal* theological arguments.

Research Profile: *Josef Linnhoff is a PhD student and Teaching & Research Assistant at the University of Edinburgh. His PhD thesis examines the range of Muslim interpretations of the doctrine of shirk ('association with God') in classical & modern Islamic thought. Drawing on a number of prominent Muslim figures, from ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab (d. 1792), Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), among others, his thesis explores what it means to 'associate' something with God, and how has this 'association' been defined? A close reading of these figures reveals how the notion of shirk can be seen as a uniquely condemnable, yet highly nebulous, category in Islamic thought.*

Gabriel Polley, University of Exeter:

The Nablus Bell Riot: Palestine's First Anti-British Uprising

Abstract: This paper seeks to retell the story of Palestine's first anti-British uprising, the "bell riot" in Nablus in April 1856. Anti-British actions in Palestine are often considered as falling within the timeframe of the British Mandate period, and as a response to British support for Zionist immigration. However, as this paper will show, Britain's influence in late Ottoman Palestine was such that it already inspired resistance from the Palestinians long before Britain's eventual occupation of the country.

Using sources such as traveler Mary Eliza Rogers's *Domestic Life in Palestine* (1862) and British consul in Jerusalem James Finn's *Stirring Times* (1878), the paper reconstructs the events around the bell riot: the increase in foreign presence and display of European flags in Nablus, and finally the ringing of a church bell and the murder of a local man by a British missionary. The spontaneous demonstrations also exhibited anti-Ottoman sentiments, and whilst they soon descended into violence directed against local Christians, the episode sheds new light on patterns of resistance to colonization in Palestine. This paper will provide a glimpse inside resistance in late Ottoman Palestine, whilst critically evaluating the British voices which became the record of the events.

Research Profile: Gabriel is a PhD candidate in Palestine Studies under Professor Ilan Pappe at the University of Exeter. His interests centre on Palestine in the late Ottoman Empire and British colonial desires in this highly contested and increasingly colonised space. Using British travel narratives as the primary source, Gabriel's doctoral research interrogates the image of Palestine, informed by highly Orientalist and Christian Zionist ideologies, formed by travellers from 1840 to 1914. He has also had the privilege of teaching Exeter undergraduates in political theory and modern Palestinian history, from the British Mandate period to recent developments.

Omama Hamasha, University of Birmingham:

Reconstructing the past: Ibn al-Qayyim's approach in critiquing accounts of *maghāzī* (battles) in his book *Zād al-Maʿād*

Abstract: It has been observed that there are extensive methodological approaches in writing Islamic history, especially the Prophet's biography (*Sīrah* literature), which has led to the presence of weak and fabricated accounts in Islamic encyclopedic histories, such as *Tarīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī 839–923CE and *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* by Ibn Kathīr 1300-1373 CE. The Battles (*Maghāzī*) and Biographies (*Siyar*) accounts form an important part of the Prophet's biography, these accounts are considered as a combination between historical and *Hadīth* materials. One of the extensive biographies of the Prophet is *Zād al-Maʿād fī Hadī Khayr al-ʿIbād* (Provisions for the Hereafter, on the Guidance of the Best of Servants, Muhammad) written by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292–1350CE).

Ibn al-Qayyim has a significant and important critical approach. This study attempts to explore the most important features in his approach, and to uncover the weaknesses and strengths in his methodology in dealing with such accounts. The next stage will be to try to develop a modern historical and *Hadīth* critical approach, inspired by Ibn al-Qayyim's approach taking advantage of Western approaches to historical criticism, aiming to contribute to the rewriting and reevaluation of Islamic historical narratives for the contemporary context.

Research Profile: *I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Birmingham. My interest lies broadly in the area of ḥadīth studies and Islamic history. More specifically, my current research focuses on ḥadīth criticism, both sanad and matn criticism, within the work of Ibn al-Qayyim on the biography of the Prophet in order to investigate how he used hadith criticism to reconstruct the historical accounts.*

Doaa Baumi, University of Birmingham:

The Challenge of Scriptural Reasoning to Muslims: Examining the So- Called *Isrāīlīyyāt* in Classical Islamic Literature

Abstract: Despite the increasing number of Muslims participating in the scriptural reasoning project, the question of Muslims' position vis à vis non- Islamic scriptures is imperious. While scriptural reasoning requires participants to read various scriptures in the light of each other, I argue that the proposed methodology might be problematic in the light of Muslims' position towards non- Islamic scriptures. The proposed study aims to re-examine the so- called *isrāīlīyyāt* in the Islamic literature. The genre despite being studied by both Muslim and Western scholars, they contributed little to the scholarship. I argue that the current approach is reductionist one. Inspiring by the position of Calder in which he argues that the technical term has been developed later by Ibn Kathīr, this paper aims to illustrate the development of the genre through three different phases. The first is the formative period of Islam; it reflects the early Muslims' Ahl al- Kitāb discussions and how those oral narratives have been treated in the written traditions. The second however offers an account on the emerge of the systematic term starting from Ibn Taymiyya's time, 13 CE and how those non- Islamic elements were excluded. The third, illustrates how those non- Islamic narratives were Islamized by Ibn Taymiyya' pupil, Ibn Kathīr and his methodology on the proper treatment *isrāīlīyyāt*.

Research Profile: *Doaa Baumi is currently a first year PhD student at the University of Birmingham, Department of Theology and Religion. My area of interest is comparative religion, and inter- religious dialogue. I am interested in the question of Muslims' position vis à vis non- Islamic scriptures. Particularly, I am examining early Muslims involvement with the non- Islamic scriptures, which later came to be known Isrāīlīyyāt.*

Hafza Iqbal, Coventry University:

Exploring the social evolution of Sufism and the role of Sufis within Muslim societies in history

Abstract: Modern scholarship surrounding Sufism has concentrated, primarily, on differing Sufi orders or *turuq*. This paper endeavours though to explore the Sufis and their social and political activism in Muslim history, as opposed to merely their religious and/or spiritual significance. The author hopes to investigate the lived experiences of Sufis, in general, in the history of Islam, and the understanding of the nature and function of Sufism for its practitioners in the Muslim communities they belonged to. That is to say, the author hopes to understand what the theory of Sufism has inspired, in terms of social activism, for its practitioners, as well as the well-documented religious "piety" which Sufism is generally known for. Through investigating the significant Sufi leaders and historically significant events/occurrences which had Sufis as central figures, the author hopes to shed light upon the evolution, social significance and development of the Muslim world through the lens of the Sufis. The aim of this particular work is to expand and contribute to the significant wealth of scholarly writing around Sufism in the modern academic sphere. The author hopes to do this by adding a historical analysis of the Sufis within the ummah and their social significance as well as their theological or religious significance, which is well-documented.

Research Profile: *The focus of my current research is the historical development of the Sufis within Muslim societies as opposed to the theory or theological underpinnings of Sufism itself. My area's of interest include the theological foundations of Sufi thought and practise. Also, the modern migration of Muslim communities into the Western world, and consequently the development of Islam therein and the hybridity of Islam as a cause of this.*

Ayesha Khan, University of Cardiff:

'Tariqa' or 'Tariqas'; Exploring post-tariqa Sufism

Abstract: Research on contemporary Sufism has shown how traditional modes of *tariqa* are now changing to adapt to a modern global context, with distinctive styles of Sufism emerging since the twenty-first century. This has given rise to multi-*tariqa* Sufi conferences, post-*tariqa* Sufi movements and different individual articulations of Sufi practice and identity. In the earlier periods, Sufism in Britain was mostly practiced within specific communities who maintained the Sufi traditions of their places of origin, including their association with Sufi *tariqas*. However, today young British Muslims are exploring Sufism in new and innovative ways.

This paper examines how the interaction between transnational Sufism and the sociological environment in Britain have led to new Sufi expression. I will discuss my ongoing ethnographic research on new Sufi expression amongst young British Muslims. The first study looks at my analysis of *naat* recitation on social media. As 'Islamic music' can be considered a form of paraliturgical worship, *naat* recitation is an oral and aural form of religious and spiritual practice. The second explores non-affiliated Sufism, based on participant observation at Rumi's Cave. Non-affiliated Sufism is when religious people today either consume the internet or move between different Sufi-affiliated organisations, as a source of religious guidance and spiritual teaching, without necessarily observing the traditions of a particular group or sect.

Research Profile: *Ayesha Khan is a PhD student at the Islam-UK Centre in Cardiff University and an executive committee member of the Muslims in Britain Research Network (MBRN). She has previously completed her BA and MA degrees in Religion and Theology at The University of Manchester. She is currently researching contemporary Sufism amongst young British Muslims.*

Shahnaz Akhter, University of Warwick:

Insecuritizing from Within: Seeking security within new migrant communities

Abstract: Kinvall argues that "ontological security is maintained when home is able to provide a site of constancy in the social and material environment"." In this paper I will examine the idea that ontological security of British Muslims is centred on an identity centred on a post-colonial model of British Muslims from the sub-continent. It argues that a transformation of identity has occurred within the British Muslim community with new migrant groups arriving largely as a result of political turmoil and war. This transformation, coupled with contestations in religious identity has seen these new migrant communities face a 'double insecuritisation.' I further argue that these new communities are ignored by the current public discourse of British Muslim groups and are othered twice, firstly through the idea of Britishness which Croft argues has "been constructed in a contradistinction to a new 17ecuritized identity,' the radical other, the 'jihadi British Muslim." Secondly, as these groups are often first come to Britain as refugees and asylum seekers they lack the ontological security of home and face further insecuritisation through the breakdown of everyday trust structures.

Research Profile: *My research focuses on the public discourse of British Muslims and seeks to understand whether there is a mutually constitutive relationship between Muslim identity and the insecuritization of British Muslims. In addition to this I am the widening participation Officer for the Politics and International Studies dept and coordinate the Colonial Hangover project which seeks to explore hidden legacies of the empire.*

Neelam Hussain, Special Collections; Dept. of English Literature / Dept. of Theology & Religion, University of Birmingham:

Arts and Objects from Mughal India

Abstract: The Mughal dynasty ruled over a large part of the Indian subcontinent for 350 years. The third Mughal emperor, Akbar the Great (r.1556–1605), was the first great Mughal patron of the arts, assembling a royal atelier, from which he commissioned numerous illustrated manuscripts that incorporate Persian, Indian, and even European elements, developing a distinctive Mughal style in the sixteenth century. This style of painting was further developed and refined during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan during the seventeenth century. Later emperors could not support the production of such sumptuous paintings as before, with a reduction in Mughal painting workshops, meaning a number of artists had to find new work. Many regional courts benefitted greatly from the influx of former imperial employees providing fresh inspiration. The aim of this workshop is to go through the history of Mughal Empire and its influence on Indian arts with reference to various arts and objects from the period.

Research Profile: *Neelam is curator of the Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts at the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham. She has recently worked on a series of exhibitions on the Birmingham Qur'an Manuscript in the UAE, helped develop an online course (MOOC) on Qur'an manuscripts and Islamic art and will be curating a forthcoming exhibition at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts on Mughal India. Neelam is also the co-ordinator of the TIMES Forum and is writing her PhD thesis on a popular medieval text, the pseudo-Aristotelian* Kitāb Sirr al-Asrār, *and its transmission to medieval Europe as the* Secretum Secretorum. *Her research interests lie within intellectual and artistic exchanges in the late medieval and early modern period.*

Mahmoud Ali Afifi, University of Lancaster:

Bint al-Shāṭī: A Tradition-Based Voice for Women's Emancipation

Abstract: `Aishah Abdurrahman is an Egyptian female Muslim intellectual who came to write under the pseudonym of Bint al-Shāṭī'. Bint al-Shāṭī's work belongs to the modern Islamic thought of 20th century Egypt; it was such a time which witnessed a surge in writing on works on *quranic* hermeneutics. Most of these works project the impact that the encounter with modernity had on Islamic modern scholarship. Bint al-Shāṭī's literary work, however, stands distinctive of the other works for its systematic and methodological structure, such a feature which her contemporaries failed to articulate in their endeavors. Bint al-Shāṭī's systematic method is, yet, cushioned in the thematic interpretive genre, which treats the *Quranic* text holistically and not as piecemeal units.

This paper will investigate Bint al-Shāṭī's literary method in connection with the broader context of *tafsir* development in 20th century Egypt. My investigation will draw on Bint al-Shāṭī's feminist ideas to demonstrate the extent to which the literary-thematic approach enabled her to better articulate a forward-looking authoritative position on the status of women in Islam, as she established a middle ground between the conservativeness of classical interpretation and the modern trends of western hermeneutics.

Research Profile: *I am currently studying my PhD in Religious Studies at Lancaster University. My topic deals with the feminist interpretation of the Quran. I received my undergraduate education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in Islamic studies and English translation. I received my MA in Islamic Studies from Claremont Graduate University in California, USA 2012 on the topic of gender violence. I have recently presented a paper on the issue of wife beating in a workshop held at al-Mahdi Institute of Birmingham. I am currently leading a research project for a charity social organization on domestic abuse within the UK Muslim society.*

Jennifer Eggert, University of Warwick:

"Resist by all means": Understanding the participation of female fighters in Harakat Amal

Abstract: Despite several decades of research on gender and war, many publications on political violence continue to overlook the roles and experiences of women. In particular, the fact that women are actively involved in armed political groups tends to be omitted. Instead, many publications focus on their roles and experiences as victims and actors for peaceful change. The literature on the Lebanese civil war is no exception in this regard. Despite this blind spot in the literature, women were involved in all non-state armed groups operating in Lebanon during the war. Moreover, in nearly all militias, women assumed combat roles. This was also the case in the Shia militia Harakat Amal. Based on in-depth interviews that were conducted in 2015/16 in Lebanon, this paper discusses the reasons for the involvement of female fighters in Harakat Amal during the Lebanese civil war. Looking at individual motivations, organisational characteristics, security-related aspects and societal factors, this paper compares Harakat Amal to other groups operating during the Lebanese civil war and shows how the militia included women to "resist by all means".

Research Profile: *Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert is an Early Career Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Warwick. Her research focuses (a) on female militants and fighters in Lebanon (and in Syria, Iraq and Palestine) and (b) on gender and counterextremism in Lebanon and Europe. Jennifer holds a PhD in Politics and International Studies (Warwick), an MSc in Comparative Politics/Conflict Studies (LSE), having studied for a BA in Social and Cultural Sciences at the European University Viadrina (Germany) and at Sciences Po (Paris). She also works as a facilitator of workshops focusing on counterextremism and community engagement.*

Marzieh Kaivanara, University of Bristol:

Unwilling to the 'Will': A Contribution to the Understanding of the Body in Shi'a Iran

Abstract: *God is beautiful and He loves beauty*. This narration by prophet Mohammad, regardless of its connotations, along with some other Quranic verses, is largely evoked to "prove" the view that the elevated urges for undergoing cosmetic surgery in Iran is a response to beauty-loving constitution (*fetrat*) of human beings. Drawing upon my ethnographic study of cosmetic surgeries in Tehran, named as the "nose job capital of the world", and conducting interviews with several Islamic jurists, plastic surgeons and clients of cosmetic surgery, in this study I interrogate the ways in which the tensions between the Islamic notions of the body belonging to God, God's will, and contemporary surgical cosmetic interventions are negotiated.

In this paper, I argue how contemporary medical technologies and beauty politics have informed the (trans)formation of fatwas in Shi'a Iran, which can be very peculiar and oppose the Sunni Islamic world. From an overview of Islamic fatwas that addresses new contemporary and unprecedented medical issues associated with the body, it seems that the Iranian Shi'a medical ethics and law have taken a more pragmatic or "instrumentalist" approach – and in some cases overlooked Shari'a law- in their response to the challenges posed by new medical advancements and existing desires for "beauty" and "perfection".

Research Profile: *Marzieh Kaivanara is a Research Associate at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Bristol. She graduated from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Bristol, in 2017, where she also obtained her MA in 2011. Her research interests and expertise include Medical Anthropology, Anthropology of the Body, bioethics, gender studies, Islamic studies, sexuality and reproductive health, biomedicine, social class, urban and disability studies.*

Khalid Aljifry, University of Birmingham:

The Jurisprudence of Reality in Bin Bayyah's Thought

Abstract: One of the major remits of Islamic jurisprudence is the legislation of mundane activities. This process requires an intricate awareness of social cultures, including how those cultures adjust and modify in differing contexts over time and place. Thus, traditional Islamic jurisprudence pragmatically has developed the concept of *Taḥqīq al-Manāṭ* that concerns with the practical application, and by which the *uṣūlīs*, as the those who frame law, and accordingly the lawmakers (the jurists), explore alternative forms of legislation to avoid potential contradictions, whether social, financial, or political, that may arise due to the application of theoretical legal rulings (*aḥkām*) without paying attention to the contextual reality. Bin Bayyah, a renowned contemporary traditionalist jurist, emphasizes this aspect of Islamic law and calls it "the jurisprudence of reality" that consistently formulates legal rulings and resolve contemporary problems, instead of, what he considers, creating difficulties by inappropriate legal perspectives that ignore the contextual reality. This paper investigates Bin Bayyah's argument via four areas: the importance of "the jurisprudence of reality", the authenticity of "the jurisprudence of reality" in reference to the canonical legal texts and the companions' legal proposition, the definition of *Taḥqīq al-Manāṭ*, and the practical mechanisms of *Taḥqīq al-Manāṭ* in *Uṣūl* methodology.

Research Profile: *I am a lecturer in Sharia Department in King Abdul Aziz University and a Phd researcher at the University of Birmingham working on the contemporary Islamic jurisprudence. I am interested in Islamic Studies, Quran interpretation, Islam and modernity, Islamic jurisprudence. I have a BA in Quranic Sciences from Islamic University in Madinah and an MA in Islamic Law and Islamic Jurisprudence from King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah.*

Belal Abu Alabbas, University of Oxford:

Uṣūl al-Fiqh of 9th-Century *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*: al-Bukhārī a Jurist

Abstract: Hadith critics and compliers of the 9th century have mostly been neglected by modern scholars of the history of Islamic law and jurisprudence and have generally been believed to have little interest in *uṣūl al-fiqh*. This absence from Western literature is partly due to an absence from the Islamic tradition itself. Only recently there has been some interest in studying the contributions of hadith scholars to the genre of law: for example, Christopher Melchert's study of Traditionist-Jurisprudents and Scott Lucas's brief outline of al-Bukhārī's legal principles in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. In this paper I argue that al-Bukhārī provides a solid outline of legal principles that operate within a system that gives utmost authority to hadiths. I demonstrate that al-Bukhārī had a coherent system of legal theories able to generate new rulings of law without relying on the Iraqi methods of *qiyās*. I conclude that al-Bukhārī held a Medinese-Iraqi (Mālikī-Shāfiʿī) tendency in legal theory and law. I also draw attention to other scholars whose works emerged within contexts similar to that of al-Bukhārī, namely al-Dārimī and al-Tirmidhī.

Research Profile: *Belal Abu Alabbas studies Islamic intellectual history. His research addresses themes such as orthodoxy, religious authority and the theory and practice of Islamic law. His current research project is the life and work of Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 870).*

Kamile Akbal, Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University:

The Stoical, Aristotelian & Islamic Sides of al-Nazzam's Theory of Latency

Abstract: Abstract: A Mu'tazili theologian and a philosopher, al-Nazzam explained the creation as the manifestation of latent. He believed that God created everything at once and put everything's future form in the very first thing. When the pre-destined time comes, new forms manifest and come to light. He believed that the creation of Adam did not precede the creation of his children. It is obvious that this theory did not come out directly from the Qur'an. He was a fond of Aristotle and he followed Stoical Philosophy too. The interaction of Philosophy and Kalam was rising in his time and the translation movement was too young to be completed. This could be the reason why he was eclectical among these philosophies.

I aim to reveal Stoical, Aristotelian and Islamic sides of his ideas on creation. Writers argue if al-Nazzam followed Aristotle or Stoa on his theory of latency. Both ways, he added an Islamic view to the theory. I will pass this argument, show only the similarities and reveal its Islamic side.

Research Profile: *I have studied theology for an MA with the subject: "Conception of God and Universe in al-Nazzam" at Ankara University. My talk today is based on this MA thesis. Now I study "the Creation in al-Amidi" for a PhD at Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University where I work as a research assistant. This should give an idea of my research interests that I try to specialise around the creation, God-Universe relation, causality etc. I care about it most, because creation is the main issue of theism, question of every rational human being and it is actual every time.*

Samra Mursaleen, University of Coventry:

The Impact of Dr Qadri's Counter-Terror Networks: a case study of Minhaj al-Qur'an UK

Abstract: Academic interest in Muslim youth, Islam and 'Islamist' terrorism increased sharply in the aftermath of 9/11 with the focus on discovering links between Islam and terrorism, radicalisation and terrorism (Deflem 2004; Gordon 2004; Silke 2004). Also the rising number of Western-born and/or -raised individuals attracted to militant Islamism has highlighted the need for further research in the field (Yousofzai & Emmerling, 2017). Terrorism researchers and counter-terrorism practitioners have for some time recognised the power of narratives to recruit individuals into violent extremist activities (Schmid, 2014). Scholars and Muslim organisations have in the past voiced their condemnation of 'Islamic' terrorists and terror attacks declaring them to be unlawful in Islam. A pressing question is whether there are Muslim scholars and organisations that are effectively countering the terrorist narrative? It is within this context that Dr Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri's counter terror work provides an important contribution to the anti-terror discourse.

Research Profile: *Terrorism researchers and counter-terrorism practitioners have for some time recognised the power of narratives to recruit individuals into violent extremist activities. Scholars and Muslim organisations have in the past voiced their condemnation of Islamic terrorists and terrorism declaring them to be unlawful in Islam. A pressing question is whether there are Muslim scholars and organisations who are effectively countering the terrorist narrative? It is within this context that Dr Tahir ul Qadri's counter terror work has provided an important contribution to the anti-terror discourse. This project will explore the impact of his works on the ideology and attitudes of British Muslims.*

Sophia Butt, University of Birmingham:

The Edicts of *Marājī* vs the Concerns of Iraqi Youth Today

Abstract: According to a study commissioned by Oxfam, 61% of the Iraqi population are under the age of 24, thus, it is imperative to identify the matters which are pertinent to this demographic. This brief presentation aims to outline the findings of a questionnaire that was issued to Iraqi youth in February 2018 wherein they were asked to reflect on what they considered to be their daily jihads, and the extent to which they relied on faith to address problems by seeking edicts (or fatwahs) from Islamic jurisprudents (Marāji). The brevity of the e-questionnaire, together with its guaranteed anonymity, meant that the innermost thoughts of the respondents were secured through surprisingly candid responses…

Research Profile: *Sophia joined the UK's University of Birmingham (UoB) in 1997 as a course writer for the distance MA in Translation Studies: she has worked as a tutor, marker and staff mentor on this programme since 2002. From 2008-2014, she directed the UoB's Business Management English Presessional Programme. Currently a doctoral researcher, Sophia is exploring counter-radicalisation discourse and its effect on the UK higher education sector. Additionally, she is affiliated to Aalto University, Finland (2006-); Masaryk University, Czech Republic (2008-); Suleyman Demirel University, Kazakhstan (2012-); and in London – King's College (2014-), BPP University (2015-), and Trinity College (2015-).*

Join Our Activities

The Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (TIMES) Post-Graduate Forum was formed to facilitate discussion amongst PGT and PGR students interested in any of the fields related to TIMES including: theology; philosophy; history; law; politics; social policy; and the arts, literature, language, and culture of the Islamic world. We have members from a range of disciplines and colleges.

We are based at the University of Birmingham, where we hold our monthly meetings, but we have members from academic institutions across the Midlands and beyond. We encourage anyone who shares our interests to join us by emailing 'subscribe' to join the mailing list, keeping up with the posts on our website, or by following us on Twitter.

Email :   timesforum@contacts.bham.ac.uk
Website :   https://timespgforum.wordpress.com/
Twitter :   @TIMES_Forum

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY AND RELIGION