

REPORT/PROCEEDING

Madrasa Discourses, a project of advancing scientific and theological literacy

- Javed Akhtar

Muslims in the past witnessed a fall in their intellectual life. Hence, Muslim theology (ilm-ul-Kalam) and religious thought (al-Fikr al-Islam) suffered a great loss. It happened due to the lack of efforts on the part of the ulema to re-explain Islam in their contemporary idiom. In succeeding times, Muslims had to face a bigger challenge of the cultural and political domination of Europe and of new knowledge developed by science and technology. This created a wary situation in which Muslims needed a newer and fresher explanation of Islam. This called for an effort on the part of ulema and scholars to discover what impedes the appeal of Islam to the young age and mind in order to create its relevance in modern times.

With this aim in view the Summer Intensive of Madrasa Discourses (MD), a project of advancing scientific and theological literacy, themed as “South Asian Madrasa Tradition- Exploring Neglected Histories & Unravelling New Possibilities” was held from 16th to 18th July, 2021, under the auspices of the “Institute of Religious and Social Thought” (IRST), New Delhi as the holding of winter and summer intensives are an important part of the Madrasa Discourses (MD).

This report describes its purposes and activities of the programme. A bevy of Islamic scholars participated in the two-day intensive with the intention of reconstructing the Islamic thought in the present time. Of the invited scholars, who were to speak on various topics, they all represented the various streams of expertise on religious thinking in India and abroad. As it owes its origin to a realization that religion has not been playing its proper part in our society. Therefore, something must be done to make practical and effective use of its potentialities for the good of all mankind.

I

The 12th and the 13th centuries for the first time in the history of Muslims witnessed a fall in their intellectual life. Muslim theology (*ilm-ul-Kalam*) and religious thought (*al-Fikr al-Islam*) suffered a great loss. It happened due to the lack of efforts on the part of the ulema to re-explain Islam in their contemporary idiom. In succeeding times, Muslims had to face a bigger challenge of the cultural and political domination of Europe and of new knowledge developed by science and technology. This created a wary situation in which Muslims needed a newer and fresher explanation of Islam. This called for an effort on the part of ulema and scholars to discover what impedes the appeal of Islam to the young age and mind in order to create its relevance in modern times.

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II

MD, a project of advancing scientific and theological literacy in Madrasa Discourses, conceived in 2017. Through this initiative Prof Moosa and his teamⁱⁱ wanted to introduce the scientific literacy in Madrasa. As a reform initiative, it moved from history to science to theology, or past (history) to present (analysis) to future (reconstruction) and successfully completed the arduous journey of five years.ⁱⁱⁱ It marked its ending in July 2021 with its 10th and last Summer Intensive Workshop held at Lemon Tree, Gurugram, Haryana, India. Since its conception, this brilliant project continues to attract a number of madrasa graduates and is committed to initiating a fresh phase of revitalising the Indo-Islamic intellectual heritage.

Of the seven invited scholars, who were to speak on the topics (stated above), they all represented the various streams of expertise on religious thinking in India and abroad. The details of the programme are as follows:

The activities of the programme began with a welcome dinner in the night of July 16, at the dining hall of Lemon Tree Hotel, Gurugram. Most of the participants were present and made use of this opportunity to get introduced to one another and to the faculties of Madrasa Discourses. After the Dinner was over, they went to their allotted rooms in the Hotel which was to be the venue of the programme for the next two days.

The first session of the programme was held in the spacious hall of the Hotel. After extending a cordial welcome to the cohorts and other guests, Dr. Waris Mazhari, Assistant Professor in the Deptt. of Islamic Studies at Delhi’s Jamia Hamdard University, who also serves as a Lead Faculty of the Madrasa Discourses project in India, extended a cordial welcome to all the participants on behalf of “Madrasa Discourses.” He made the inaugural address and set the agenda for the next two days. He said that it is naturally a matter of great encouragement for the members of the Project and its active well-wishers that so many distinguished scholars have been able to attend the programme and their valuable contribution to the elucidation of the theme proposed for discussion, “*South Asian Madrasa Tradition-Exploring Neglected Histories & Unravelling New Possibilities*.” The four wonderful presentations were scheduled for this long day session and its reading had already been cyclostyled and distributed among the participants.

The morning session of the workshop opened with the first interactive discussion by Dr. Mohiuddin Ghazi on “*Negotiating the Political Philosophy of Islam between Text, Context and History*” with MD students. The main points of the discussion were: 1) The influence of Islam on Muslims’ political thought has been winning the attention of numerous scholars for quite a long time. However, a little attention has so far been paid to the study of political

practice. 2) To address the disparity political thinkers developed the theory of *ijma* (consensus). The legitimacy of the authority of the ruler was made heavily reliant upon the provision that the Muslim community recognised his dispensation as consistent with the Shariah. 3) Already in several Muslim countries, secular nationalism exercises a greater impact on the minds of the educated classes than religion. Effort to reconcile the two are still continuing. The point most emphasized in the discussion which followed was Islamic principles of political organisation, in keeping with the needs of the modern age, could be deduced from the practice followed by the Prophet and the Caliphs. During the discussion, several questions and doubts were expressed. Dr. Ghazi, in his reply, tried to clarify those suppositions and doubts. He also cited the case of some classical Islamic scholars (e.g., Abu Yusuf in his *Kitab-al Khiraj* and Ibn-e Khaldun in his *Muqaddama*) who had tried to base their concepts of the Islamic state on the early Islamic practice and had come to conclusions differing on some essential points.

Dr. Mahmood Kooria, visiting professor, Leiden University, the Netherlands & Ashoka University India, another venerable speaker of the day spoke on “*Matriarchal Islam^{iv} and Ulema: Discursive Traditions in Malabar and Lakshadweep.*” Connecting the Indian Ocean and Islam, Dr. Kooria explained how those who live by the maritime follow Islam with an adherence to the *Shāfiʿī* school of thought and with an allegiance to Sufi orders such as the *Qādirīyah* and *Rifāʿīyya*. There are millions of matriarchal Muslims living by the Indian Ocean from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Comoros and Tanzania. Their matriarchal customs have been pitted against Sharia as a classical example of customary laws being contradictory to the Islamic laws. But does it indeed contradict?

Male Muslim maritime traders and itinerants stayed in one place for months, depending on the monsoon, whence they married into local communities. These marriages worked because of the matriarchal practices in which men could come and go while women stayed home and owned the property. This socio-economic stability for women gave them the upper hand in personal and social spheres. The matriarchal system shows up in the field of Islamic law as it works differently from the patrilineal/patriarchal approach assumed by the Arab jurists. It has been portrayed as a classic example of “customary” laws contradicting “Islamic” laws. The praxis such as men get little to no share in inheritance directly seems to contradict the Quran. But does it indeed contradict? Most scholars jump to say it does, whereas the communities say it does not. He explored how and why Indian Ocean Muslim jurists (both male and female) resolved the perceived contradictions through legal reformulations of the matriarchal system within Islamic frameworks.^v In this talk, Madrasa graduates—perhaps for the first time—were acquainted with the matrilineal culture and customary laws in a sharp contrast to the patriarchal conceptualizations of Islamic Sharia, especially in the context of today’s Malabar and Lakshadweep.

Prof. Irfan Ahmad, the next speaker who has taught at various European universities, delivered an in-depth online lecture titled as “*Modes of Critical Thinking and Self-Critique in*

Islam: An Interactive Session on 'Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace'.

Prof. Ahmad makes the far-reaching argument that potent systems and modes for self-critique as well as critique of others are inherent in Islam—indeed, critique is integral to its fundamental tenets and practices. Challenging common views of Islam as hostile to critical thinking, Ahmad delineates thriving traditions of critique in Islamic culture, focusing in large part on South Asian traditions. Drafting an alternative genealogy of critique in Islam, Ahmad reads religious teachings and texts, drawing on sources in Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, and English, and demonstrates how they serve as expressions of critique. Throughout, he depicts Islam as an agent, not an object, of critique.^{vi}

In *Religion as Critique*, Ahmad questions the frameworks used to define “critique” by arguing that it is not that critique is absent in Islam, rather, “it is about the inability of our prevalent frameworks to recognize and study the principles and practices of critique already at work in Islam.” In posing the question, “Can Islam Ever Accept Higher Criticism?” His lecture demonstrates multifaceted thriving traditions of critique in Islam, laying bare the principles, premises, modes, and forms of critique at work. It discusses believers in Islam as dynamic agents, not mere objects, of critique, for which the standard word in Urdu is *tanqīd* or *naqd*. This has given participants a valuable insight into a number of important issues related to the subject.

The last lecture of the day one session was that of Dr. Usha Sanyal, visiting Assistant Professor of History, Wingate University and a prominent American researcher on Madrasas and Islam in South Asia, who spoke of “*Navigating Tradition and Modernity in Muslim Girls’ Education: A Tale of Two Institutions*”.

This online lecture was mainly concerned around the three main questions that she put up in her purely academic conversation with the MD participants, they were as follows: 1) Is Muslim religious education in South Asia “traditional” or “modern”? 2) How do South Asian Muslim women navigate tradition and modernity in religious institutions? 3) How does their increased religious knowledge impact social relations with their families and in society at large?

To answer these questions, she brought two case studies. The first case study was a girl’s madrasa in Shahjahanpur, West UP. It is a residential madrasa. In which the girls are between 12-18 years old; most study for the 6-year Fazila course. Their socioeconomic background is working class: their fathers work in the informal sector and their mothers are homemakers. The second case study consists of online Quran classes offered by Al-Huda. Dr. Sanyal herself was a participant-observer from Dec. 2009 to Oct. 2013, as a registered student. In this online madrasa, the students were middle-class diasporic South Asian women living in Canada, the US, UK, and elsewhere. They were college educated, spoke English and a South Asian language. Many had worked or were still working in the corporate world. Many were married with young children.

To answer to the question, is the Madrasa “Traditional” or “Modern”?, she said it is both. It is traditional in the sense that the syllabus is based on the *Dars-e Nizāmi* syllabus, adapted to girls’ needs and shorter than the syllabus for boys’ madrasas. It is also traditional in the emphasis on *fara’iz* (duties) of Islam (*namaz, roza, halal, haram, adab* and so on). And it is linked with *maslaki* identities in South Asia. The purpose of girls’ madrasas in South Asia is to promote the welfare of the Muslim community (*qaum*) because they will inculcate Muslim values in the home; as educated girls, they will become good Muslim wives and mothers.

To the question, what is “Modern” about Girls’ madrasas, Prof. Sanyal answered that the modernity of Muslim girls’ madrasas today lies in their social impact. The way the girls interact with their families and how they view themselves and their role in society changes as a result of their exposure to Muslim religious texts, to their teachers, and to other students from different parts of India. She also said religion is not separate from the secular world, but the two are interwoven in multiple ways.

This long day session came to an end with the informal discussions & Dinner.

The next day, bringing the Summer Intensive full circle, Dr Waris Mazhari talked of “*Rationalist Disciplines in the Muslim Intellectual Tradition in India: Past and Present*”. Dr. Mazhari, in his stimulating Urdu presentation, carefully traced Indo-Islamic’s rationalist disciplines (*ma’aqoolat*) from Sultanate times to the pre-partition.

Dr. Mazhari dwelt on how the rationalist disciplines developed in medieval India and received royal patronage during the time of sultans of Delhi particularly in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq (1351 AD). After the fall of Multan, medieval India witnessed the entry of prominent scholars such as Sheikh Abdullah and Sheikh Aziz Ullah in Delhi and Sambhal. And also, in the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar, the arrivals of transcendental Ulama and scholars from Iran such as Fathullah Shirazi (1589 AD) played a pivotal role in developing and promoting the *ma’aqoolat*.

The learned speaker also categorizes the rationalist disciplines in the Madrasa curriculum into two key phases. First phase begins with Qazi ‘Azud al-Din Iji (1355 AD) and the influence of his disciples. The second phase includes the influence of Jalal al-Din Davani (1502 AD), also known as Allama Davani and his partisans. He also pointed out the main causes behind the prevalence of such *ma’aqoolat* oriented Indian madrasas. They were greatly funded by Mughals, located far away from the epicentre of Islam, the role of the esoteric movement, the rationalist intellectual heritage of the scholars of Iran and Transoxiana, the leaning of Akbar towards philosophy, and themingling of philosophy in the Hindu tradition and Islamic mysticism. He called this period is the golden age of the rationalist disciplines.

According to Dr. Mazhari in Medieval India the rational sciences prevailed over revealed sciences. Important books, commentaries and explanations of rationalist disciplines were written here which played an important role in the formation and consolidation of the scientific and intellectual tradition of Islam in the region. The decline of rational sciences in

the Indian subcontinent has had both positive and negative effects. At the end he made an appeal that today it is important to review these positive and negative effects systematically so that a strong strategy can be formulated. He concluded with the questions as: 1) What are the pros and cons of the decline of rational disciplines in the present age? 2) Questions have been raised about the usefulness of rationality in madrasa curricula. How meaningful are these claims and questions? 3) up to what extent can this knowledge be served in the formation of new ilm-e kalam? 4) The rationale for disregarding rationality was adopted in modern times, to what extent was it reasonable? 5) Should the rational disciplines be read or treated as history only? Dr. Mazhari's lecture aroused lively interest and the audience asked what seemed to be nonstop questions but unfortunately there was no time for long discussion.

Dr. Arshad Alam, Professor of Sociology, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and a regular columnist and an author of "Inside a Madrasa: Knowledge, Power, and Islamic Identity in India", lectured on "*Madrasas and Muslim Identity in India.*" His discussion mainly centred on the structural, institutional and administrative problems in many madrasas across the country.

Dr. Alam argued that the reason why rationalist tradition could not triumph in Islam was because of their right institutional context. It was not that the Arab world lacked books or libraries or scholars but it in fact failed to develop institutions which would socially reproduce this knowledge system. The transmission of knowledge remained largely personalistic which hindered the development of faculties of teaching. Part of the problem was that the extant Muslim law did not recognise corporations which meant that colleges or university like institutions has no legal basis in the Islamic world. Moreover, the special nature of Quranic revelation which Muslims held as coterminous with God, did serious damage to any critical thinking which was contradictory to the holy text, thus impeding the development of scientific knowledge. Dr. Alam also grieved for the deeply-ridden internal malaises such as control of the upper-caste elitist Muslims, the caste politics of the rectors of madrasas, marginalisation of the lower-caste Muslims and the like. But in the following Q&A session, he had to grapple with a set of reactionary questions and criticism from a few participants.

All of the lectures of the two-day sessions dispatched many issues and questions and reflections to be discussed in the afternoon group discussion session.

After the Lunch and Zuhr prayer, the MD students were engaged in small group discussions in the late afternoons on three serious prompts created by Dr. Mazhari. They are: 1) What are the important aspects of the madrasa intellectual heritage that need to be revitalized in the present era? 2) What are the post-modern challenges faced by Muslim religious thought and how can they respond to these challenges by focusing on their own rationalist intellectual tradition? 3) What are the pros and cons of the attitude of abandoning the rational sciences, which has present in the South Asian scholarly and intellectual tradition, and what should be our stance in this regard now?

The engaging discussion cleared some misapprehension (and doubts) by bringing the points on which the participants were unanimous, after having a free exchange of ideas, can be summarised as under:

1. The present time is the age of specialisation in the different branches of knowledge. A number of new sciences are experienced dramatic growth. However, the madrasa and the modern academies and universities are unable to produce such scholars who were well versed in both, the traditional and modern sciences. They further thought, it would have been an ideal situation if such institutions were able to produce scholars who have deep understanding of both the types of sciences. However, as the circumstances are not in favour, all the participants of the programme were consent that unless the ulema and the intellectuals trained in the modern sciences worked together for the rebuilding of Islamic thought and the codification of a new 'ilm ul kalam, any progress of broader recognition and acceptability could not be possible in the way of reaching the said objective.
2. Jurists, Islamic thinkers and mujtahids have always kept the needs of the hour before them. Today, the demands and the challenges of modernity should also be taken under consideration. This is for an adequate solution of many Islamic snags in the lines and within the same limits as laid down by the Quran and Sunnah.
3. Such elements of modern sciences and western civilization which are in contradiction with the spirit of Islam, should be identified and scrutinized. On the pattern of this, after proper discussion and investigation, acceptable and substantial ends must be achieved in the context of modern need. This also should shape discussion and investigation in the new 'ilm-ul kalam'.

Two of MD students, Syed Abdur Rashid and Khadija Nausha made their reflections on the MD project.

Abdur Rashid, in his reflection, said: *“We were able to learn and reflect on a few critical aspects during the two-day Madrasa Discourses summer intensive. We discussed how we can navigate scripture and reconnect with it to find solutions to contemporary intellectual challenges. If I were to summarize his points in a single statement, then it would be on how to reconnect with our rich intellectual history and draw on the breadth and dynamism of our tradition to find solutions to contemporary intellectual challenges facing Muslim intelligentsia and society at large.”*

While Khadija, in her reflection, said: *“It was an intense dialogue on questions of academic relevance. I am intellectually enriched by its curriculum. Not having a Madrasa background had its own challenges but it made me more aware. But I feel that the one thing that needs to be pointed out is the lack of female participation in these discussions.”*

III

The brief valedictory session which was the closing session of the programme was held. To grace this occasion two guest speakers, Prof. Mohammad Ishaque, former Head, Deptt. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and Dr. Muhammad Raziul Islam Nadvi,

Secretary Deptt. of Islamic Society Jamaat Islami Hind and Asst.Editor Tahqeeqate Islami Quarterly, New Delhi, were invited to share their valuable thoughts on Madrasa Discourses and its academic activities.

Prof Ishaque had many things to say in his long and interesting speech. He said, Madrasa Discourses has for many years rendered positive services to the students of madrasa in reviving the legacy of knowledge and research, tradition and modernity, and training them to think in the direction of harmony and balance between the two.

His address to the MD students was cemented with many concrete arguments and a number of illustrations. For instance, he quoted Marshall G. S. Hodgson:^{vii}

“Muslim are assured in the Quran, ‘You have become the best community ever raised up for mankind, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, and having faith in God’ (III,110). Earnest men have taken this prophecy seriously to the point of trying to mould the history of the whole world in accordance with it...”

He emphasized that to be fair and free from fallacy, it is absolutely essential to approach history with its retrospective glance, the spirit of the age and the tendencies of the times. If history is understood in modern concepts (such as secularism, separatism, communalism etc. as all are modern ideas) it may result in filling streets with blood. Therefore, harmony without correct understanding of history is a dream which can never be realized. In this context of history, when we ponder, the importance of tradition and modernity or taqlid and ijthihad will become clear.

While talking about tradition and modernity he quoted: *“The most forceful challenge to traditionalism came in the wake of the devastating consequences of the ‘Mutiny’ of 1857-8.”* That is why Sir Syed’s religious thought was the conservatism of the Muslims of his time, traditional religiosity and modern arts and sciences.

He further added that Muslims responded to the West’s political and cultural challenges in three ways: 1) rejection or withdrawal 2) secularism and westernization 3) Islamic modernism. It was also pointed out by him that our aim today must be to overcome the image of Islam as a fixed, dead system and to see Islam in its own right, with its own distinctive message which offers a real option to modern man. Islam in the past and the present must be seen as dealing with questions and as proposing answers to questions, of ultimate significance. Unfortunately, Islamic religious thought has been presented in such dry and merely historizing way that the breath-taking issues dealt with do not come to the fore and their ongoing significance is not revealed.

Making a more vehement plea for he wanted us to seriously consider the problems, difficulties and possibilities in the context of the current situation in India. To do this, we have to turn the pages of our history, a critical review of how we and our compatriots have viewed history will really help us understand the whole scenario.

Dr. Raziul Islam Nadvi, another guest speaker of the day, expressed his pleasure on attending the onsite Madrasa Discourses Summer Intensive Workshop. Having read both the study material of the Madrasa Discourses and its Urdu journal *Tajdīd*^{viii} or “Renewal”, he remarked that he was confident and believed in the necessary role that Madrasa Discourses was accomplishing and that there lay no trace of truth to the doubts raised by certain individuals with regards to the aims and objectives of Madrasa Discourses. According to Maulana Nadvi’s opinion, the intellectual tradition of Islam rather encourages people to acquire knowledge in various disciplines. This quest for knowledge which commenced with the Umayyad period, reached a pinnacle during the Abbasid era.

He also discarded the dichotomy of ‘Worldly’ and ‘Religious’ knowledge and believed that the distinction should be made along the lines of beneficial and non-beneficial knowledge instead by citing examples of past scholars who excelled at both types of knowledge simultaneously. In madrasas as well, there used to be a comprehensive curriculum that covered all kinds of disciplines and this curriculum was revised frequently. However, with the passage of time, the curriculum appeared narrowing the intellectual horizon of the students with its focus on rejecting the worldly sciences altogether. He emphasised that instead of looking for solutions to contemporary issues in the details of Fiqh, Muslims should turn to the Quran and Sunnah.

An interactive series of lectures and workshops exposed MD students to the new social and political realities of our age. He summed up with the hope that Madrasa Discourses would fulfil the intellectual needs of the madrasa students who often do not receive it within the current madrasa system of education.

He further added, though the efforts of Prof. Moosa and his colleagues are significant in this regard, the students can play a crucial role in demonstrating to their peers the programme’s value and effectiveness. Whatever may happen, there is no doubt that MD is a bold initiative that is well-poised to shape the contemporary discourse on madrasa education and reform in the modern Islamic world. We hope the learning experience will be transformative to the students, shaping pioneers who may lead the “renewal” of tradition as it was accomplished in the past. The two-day programme culminated with a roadmap of future prospects and plans of Madrasa Discourses and a lavish farewell dinner.

About six papers/presentations on almost all the related aspects were presented in two days which were attended by a cross-section of Muslim scholars, intellectuals and madrasa students offline and online. Questions were put and discussions held without any mental reservation. All the participants of the Summer Intensive felt that the Madrasas Discourses had fulfilled the earnest need of the time by convening the programme and inviting scholars to think over this subject.

It happened due to the lack of efforts on the part of the ulema to re-explain Islam in their contemporary idiom. In succeeding times, Muslims had to face a bigger challenge of the cultural and political domination of Europe and of new knowledge developed by science and

technology. This created a wary situation in which Muslims needed a newer and fresher explanation of Islam.

Male Muslim maritime traders and itinerants stayed in one place for months, depending on the monsoon, whence they married into local communities. These marriages worked because of the matriarchal practices in which men could come and go while women stayed home and owned the property. This socio-economic stability for women gave them the upper hand in personal and social spheres.

First phase begins with Qazi ‘Azud al-Din Iji (1355 AD) and the influence of his disciples. The second phase includes the influence of Jalal al-Din Davani (1502 AD), also known as Allama Davani and his partisans. He also pointed out the main causes behind the prevalence of such ma’aqoolat oriented Indian madrasas.

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ⁱThe holding of winter and summer intensives are an important part of the MD project. The idea of the project was originally conceived by Prof. Ebrahim Moosa (patron of MD), himself a Madrasa graduate and now Professor of Islamic Studies in the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, and it received great encouragement and inspiration. Prof. Moosa paid a visit to various countries in Asia, Europe and America, discussed the project with distinguished scholars and ulema interested in it and obtained promise of their cooperation. Prof Moosa thinks that it is crucial to encourage madrasa students to be critically engaged with the intellectual legacy of their past. To his conviction it will broaden their perception of social and ethical issues arising out in the modern-day global society. With this purpose the programme persuades the graduates from madrasa to join MD. Therefore, the project has so far engaged over 200 madrasa graduates, professors and writers through deep interactive coursework and cross-cultural experiences.

ⁱⁱ His team in India and Pakistan includes Dr. Waris Mateen Mazhari (New Delhi, India) and Mawlana Ammar Khan Nasir (Gujranwala, Pakistan). To know more about the team, see: <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/>.

ⁱⁱⁱThe course and content taught in MD is particularly designed as a training programme for madrasa graduates to bring their training in traditional learning into conversation with modernity. This training entailed a new, pragmatic strategy to train young madrasa minds in the methodology of new ilm-e kalam, new philosophies, technological advances and post-modern sciences. So that they can be inspired to think independently and creatively by better understanding the opinions of others and better articulating their own perspectives in a contemporary idiom. It also encourages thoughtful examination of what it means to know, to understand, to believe and to exist in today’s modern world while reflecting on the perspectives of the past.

^{iv}Matriarchal Islam is a research project that aims to document all available texts, images, audio and visual materials on the matriarchal Muslim communities of the Indian Ocean littoral, from East Africa to South/East Asia. Understanding Islamic formulations of “the Indian Ocean Muslims” and the way they are understood through contestations and conciliations. (To know more visit: <https://matriarchalislam.com/>.)

^v<https://matriarchalislam.com/>. [accessed on 19.07.2021].

^{vi}Ahmad, Irfan. *In Religion as Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace*, University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

^{vii}Marshall, G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Classical Age*, vol. 1, p. 71.

^{viii} It is the Urdu-language online journal for Madrasa Discourses. It is edited by Waris Mazhari, lead faculty of the project in India, with the support of associate editor Ammar Khan Nasir, lead faculty for Madrasa Discourses in Pakistan. Tajdid is where religion meets new knowledge. (For detail see: <http://tajdid.irst.in/>).

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