

Islamic Sufism and the Orientalist System of Interpretation

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The reception of Islamic knowledge in the Western European context has not always respected the condition of objectivity. The reason is that this knowledge has been subject to a particular interpretation based on intellectual eurocentrism. Among the most important branches of Islamic knowledge that have attracted attention in Orientalist studies is Islamic Sufism, particularly its epistemological aspect which attempts to present theories specific to the Islamic spiritual experience. Through these theories, existence, the world, and the status of humans in the universe are explained within comprehensive theoretical frameworks, forming an intellectual, epistemological, and metaphysical system on the reality of existence.

Many Orientalists have been interested in these theoretical models presented by Sufi theories, and have subjected them to hermeneutical interpretations through which human perception intervenes in constructing meaning by attempting to understand texts based on the individual experience of reception. Thus, we find that the reception of Sufi knowledge in the Western European context was subject to preconceived epistemological concepts through which Orientalists sought to read major Sufi theories. Therefore, this article examines the two most important interpretive approaches used by Orientalists in the study of Sufi texts: the theological interpretive approach and the phenomenological approach.

The Most Important Orientalist Theories on the Prophetic Hadith: Presentation and Critique

Bojito Abdul-Ghani

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ملخص ملف العدد

The Prophetic Hadith occupies a second place in Islamic heritage after the Holy Quran. In fact, one cannot take the Quran without the Hadith because the latter clarifies and complements the Holy Book. The Prophet's narrations were collected and recorded since the first century by his successors and companions who sought to protect them from fabrication and forgery, and established rules and regulations to distinguish the authentic from the unsound. The Prophetic Hadith also received great attention from Orientalists who directed severe criticism at it. Orientalists have produced numerous studies and theories on this subject that are worthy of investigation, regardless of the reasons and objectives.

This article presents the most important Orientalist theories on Hadith which are present in the books and scholarly essays of Orientalism. It also illustrates how Orientalists have attempted to attack the Prophetic Sunnah with various fallacies such as exploiting texts to support preconceived ideas and shifting from partial evidence to comprehensive theories. This demonstrates the weaknesses inherent in these theories which are not able to withstand sound logical criticism. It then presents the most important appropriate and refuting responses to these theories.

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The Miracle of the Holy Quran in Modern Orientalist Studies

Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Zaraket

The verses known as the Verses of Challenge have been one of the channels of inspiration for Muslims to engage in research into the miraculous nature of the Quran. After the West «opened up» to the Quran and its sciences under Orientalism or other names, Orientalists found this topic to be worthy of research and consideration. The vast body of work by Orientalists in this field allows, and even invites, confusion regarding the method of approach and angle of vision. This essay selects examples of their attempts in order to examine them and express agreement or disagreement with them. The criteria adopted for selecting the examples and samples include encyclopedic descriptive writing, analytical writing, and material on the language and rhetoric of the Quran.

The Theory of Psychological Revelation Among Orientalists: A Critical Study

Sheikh Lubnan Hussein al-Zein

This study addresses the theory of psychological revelation proposed by Orientalists with the aim of denying the divine source of the prophetic revelation of Muhammad. It does so by providing psychological, social, and historical interpretations of the pre-Islamic environment before the prophetic mission, and of some historical incidents in the life of the Prophet, and the psychological reactions and physical symptoms which afflicted him when he received revelation. This theory has its roots in the era of the revelation of the Quran, when the infidels and polytheists of Quraysh denied Prophet Muhammad's reception of divine revelation, and claimed that it was merely a fabrication and illusion woven from his imagination and poetry, or that it was magic, or a form of madness.

This theory was later presented with a new approach and formulation, under the title of "psychological revelation," by Orientalists and atheists who denied the existence of the unseen world, as well as the connection of the prophets with that world. These individuals went so far as to say that the ideas of the claimants to prophecy were a result of their brilliance and in-depth thinking about the problems of humanity and society, and their concern for spreading virtue and justice among people. As a result, solutions sparked in their minds, and they began to think that they received these ideas from outside themselves through what they called divine, heavenly, or unseen revelation.

This study aims to clarify this theory and presents its most prominent proponents among Orientalists, as well as the most prominent fair-minded Orientalists who criticized and discussed it. The essay then aims to criticize and discuss this theory through what invalidates and contradicts it such as: definitive historical evidence, the internal content of the Quranic phenomenon, and the Prophet's position on that phenomenon.

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When we examine such orientalist writings, we find that the majority of Orientalists did not write objectively, nor did they take into account a methodology consistent with the issues under investigation. Therefore, most of the results they presented were similar in terms of causing confusion, distortion, and lack of truth, not to mention an imprecision in content and methodology. When reading the background and combining it with the objectives, it becomes clear that everything Orientalists have addressed in their studies of Islamic thought and Arab heritage is linked to the constants of the West, both ancient and modern, and is related to the «superiorist tendency» in Western thought, which is an inherent characteristic of this thought.

Orientalism and Orientalists: Evaluation and Criticism

Sheikh Hasan Ahmad al-Hadi

Orientalists have been interested from an early stage in researching and studying Arab, Islamic and Eastern heritage in general, while sometimes delving into its totalities and partialities. If it is to be accepted that this intensive scholarly effort aims to acquire knowledge for the purpose of benefiting and conveying human and cultural experiences, then why is there an absence or distortion of the scholarly, objective, and methodological aspect in research and studies which address the primary sources of Islam and Arab heritage? Why do many of them not employ a thorough scientific investigation from the sources of the “other” which they are writing about?

As a result of research and scrutiny into the goals of Orientalism and Orientalists, it has become clear that Orientalism arose as a Western tool for studying the East under the pretext of science and knowledge. However, in reality, this tool was a drawn sword in the service of missionary missions, colonial ambitions, and ecclesiastical religious ideas. This is especially true since the basic motive for Orientalism among Westerners was religious, and the strategic vision of Orientalism has been based on the Westernization of the Islamic and Arab identity and the reformulation of the East cognitively, socially, ideologically, and educationally in order to control minds, ideas, cultural components and heritage. Otherwise, how do we explain the focus on the main sources of Islamic legislation, and how do we clarify all these interpretations of revelation and the Quranic text, and the superficial understanding of the Sunnah and the Noble Hadith, and of the personality of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad.

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