

ISLAMIC LITERATURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Juan R. Francisco

Perhaps one of the most important events in the cultural history of the Philippines is the coming of Islam, a religious belief which in many ways changed the whole belief systems of the early Filipinos, particularly among the Magindanaw, the Maranaw and the Tausog in Mindanao and Sulu. So pervasive was the influence of this religious orientation upon these groups of early Filipinos, that they, through the centuries, have been identified apart from the Filipino Christian. This is more or less the result of the deep conflict that exists between Islam and Christianity, which consciously and unconsciously had been carried over to the Philippines by the Spaniards, who have had to contend with Islam for seven centuries in their own homeland. Nevertheless, this confrontation is not to be construed as entirely without meaning; rather this was inevitable considering the events connected with the Christian, as well as the Islamic expansion in the east. Both enriched the culture of the early Filipinos, and to this time they are still contributing to that enrichment particularly in the field of religious literature. It is of great significance that like the Christian religious literature, the Islamic literature of the Filipino Muslims had, in one way or another, provided a very broad perspective of the new system.

The subject of this brief essay is the Islamic literature of the Filipino Muslim. Antecedent to the presentation of the literature, I wish to give a brief historical account of the coming of Islam in the Philippines. The influx of Islam into the Philippines can only be understood in terms of its penetration into the great Malaysian regions.¹ This influx, however, has to be viewed in the perspective of the various theories that underlie this historic-religious phenomenon that swept through the whole area, from the time Islam turned its attention to the East as an area of expansion.

Cesar Adib Majul, the most important scholar in Islamic studies in the Philippines and perhaps the whole of the Malaysian region, gives us a very comprehensive view of the various theories that purport to underlie the islamization of the present population of the area.² It is from his works that the review of these theories shall be made.

¹The term *Malaysia* is not used here with a political meaning, rather it is used as a geographic term to indicate the whole area known to be populated by the Malay race. Cf its use in my *Indian influences in the Philippines* (University of the Philippines, 1964).

The most common which is also known as the classical theory is the *trade theory* which explains the introduction and initial spread of Islam in the Insular and Peninsular Southeast Asian region. This means that Islam, together with the traditional materials for merchandize, was brought by Muslim traders.

Majul cites Tome Pires on these merchants' role in the introduction and early expansion of Islam ---

Some of them (merchants) were Chinese, some Arabs, Parsees, Gujaratees, Bengalees and of many other nationalities, and they flourished so greatly that Mohammad and his followers determined to introduce their doctrines in the sea-coast of Java (together) with merchandize.³

Majul gives a very extensive elaboration on this reference to clarify the generally ambiguous statement, but it is not the purpose of this essay to deal with such clarifications.⁴ It is sufficient to say that on the basis of this theory Islam reached the shores of this regions not through a single nationality, but more through convergence on the single activity of trade and traffic which more or less characterized the encounter of cultures in the past.

Complementing the Trade Theory is the *Missionary Theory*. According to Majul, "the Muslim professional missionaries accompanied or followed the Moslem traders. And this is not to deny that conversions had possibly been made by the traders of either Koranic prescriptions or other motives."⁵ He further writes, that like the Trader Theory, the Missionary Theory can not entirely explain the influx of Islam. According to him two elements must be considered:

. . . The receptivity of the rulers to conversation and their interest in having others follow their adopted faith, and the receptivity of the native populations in accepting. The first . . . points out to political and economic elements involved in the conversion. The

²I am deeply indebted to Dr. Cesar Adib Majul, foremost authority on the History of Islam in the Philippines, for his studies on the subject, and on whose work the background of the present essay had been based. See his "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," *Proceedings*, Second Biennial Conference, International Association of Historians of Asia (IAHA), Taipei, Taiwan, October 6-9, 1962, pp. 339-398.

³In Majul, *ibid.*, p. 349.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 350 ff.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

latter suggests that Islam must have had a quality that made it attractive to the peoples of Malaysia, or rather that it satisfied some expectations or needs of the people.⁶

Both these two elements of the Missionary Theory are further elaborated in the two other theories that Majul discusses.

The next theory is the *Political Theory*, which for convenience, I shall call Politico-Economic Theory due to distinct economic overtones. Majul based this theory upon an analysis of Jacobo Cornelise Van Leur's studies in Indonesian trade and society. For some time, the Hinduization of Java has been anchored on the colonizatin theory, but Van Leur attacks this view by looking at the situation at the time and considering "the Indonesian ruler on Java as a person who had royal investiture conferred on him ---what a powerful sacral legitimation in the eyes of persons coming overseas from India, in the eyes of strangers and perhaps of southern Indian rulers ---and a mythological Indian genealogy assigned to him by the Indian priesthood. . ."⁷ An analogous situation occurred, according to Van Leur, when the Moslem traders reached Java. He argued that "the Moslem traders served to legitimize the independence of the petty chiefs from a central authority or simply initiated or established a new dynasty. Those legitimizing the rule of the prince and the ruler himself are viewed as partners in the exploitation of the agrarian population and in the control of the international trade."⁸ Furthermore, he argued, according to Majul, that "the ruler would guarantee the economic position and privilege of the Moslems while these, in turn, would accept and support the rule or dynasty of the ruler and deal or share with it in all economic ventures. It is very clear, too, that both the Moslems and rulers profited from such a system."⁹

Majul gives further elaboration of this theory, but suffice it to say, there really existed a "collusion" between the rulers (who desired a share in the economic returns of the international trade) and the Moslem merchants (who needed the protection of the rulers in the land where they conducted their activities). This relation developed to a point whereby the ruler, together with his court, in order to have an inexhaustible source of economic power to support his rule, had to adopt the new faith, with the view of keeping the friendship of the Moslem traders, who at the same time provided the new legitimization factor in the former's hold of power.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 374.

⁷Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 374-375.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 375.

⁹*Loc. cit.*

In very brief and precise manner, Majul describes the Crusader Theory—

... This theory asserts that the spread of Islam in Malaysia came about as an answer to and against the coming of the Christians to the area, initially the Portuguese. To these can be added the Spaniards and to some extent later on, the Dutch. This theory views the conflict between Portuguese and Moslem traders as a continuation of the wars of the Crusaders fought in Arab lands and in Spain and extension of the wars between the Turks and Christian princes.¹⁰

This theory also views "the conflict between the Portuguese and Moslem princes and traders as a manifestation of a conflict between Christ and Mohammed." Specifically, the conflict between the Filipino Moslems and the Spaniards, as the theory views it, "reflected that such a conflict was an extension of the wars of the Crusades, more specifically between Spanish Christian and Moor, which had already been resolved in Spain by the end of the fifteenth century."

Whatever is said of the introduction and initial expansion of Islam in the Insular and Peninsular Southeast Asia, as reflected in the various theories that attempt to explain this influx, the most important point that need be given more attention is whether or not Islam had been accepted by the native population for its ideological worth. The theory of the ideological worth of Islam is not incompatible to and therefore complements the Missionary Theory, according to Majul. I would not, however, stop here. For this theory provides meaning to the Crusader Theory, in that the confrontation of the European Christians and the local Muslims manifested in essence the worth of the new faith for the latter, perhaps having only a shallow understanding of it owing to its being only accepted recently in their history, resisted with all their vigour the incursions of Christianity.

Majul, in explaining this theory, draws inferences from Willem F. Wertheim's thesis on the acceptance of Islam in Southeast Asia, particularly in reference to Indonesia. He cites Wertheim—

Islam gave the small man a sense of individual worth as a member of the Islamic community. According to Hindu ideology he was merely a creature of lower order than the members of the higher castes. Under Islam he could as it were, feel himself their equal, or even, in his quality as a Moslem, the superior of such of them as were not Moslems themselves even though he still occupied a subordinate position in the social structure.¹¹

On the basis of the above citation, Majul further interprets Wertheim's

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

view which "claimed that many Moslems saw in their new Faith 'a strong unifying force ---- a kind of prenationalism' to the extent that Islam can be regarded 'as the fermenting agent for the revolutionary process which has taken place in the twentieth century. "

In further elaborating this theory, Majul probes the acceptance of Islam deeper by adverting to C.A.O. Ven Nieuwenhuijze's alternative view in rejecting the Trader Theory vis-a-vis the introduction of Islam, that "the Islamization of Indonesia represented not only an attempt to depart from Hinduism and Buddhism, as these two systems were not only incompatible with the 'aboriginal Indonesian way of thought,' but an effort as well as to do away with the Hindu caste system. It was Islam which filled the vacuum left by the rejection." This seems to support Wertheim's thesis.

Perhaps side by side with the above, the coming of Islam tallied with the fall of the power of Majapahit and also with the prestige of Hindu-Buddhist concepts and their appurtenances. Islam provided the new prestige associated with the ruling power who were already converted into the new faith. "But that is not all," according to Majul. "The new religion had its mystical attractions."

It is clear that the theory of Islam's ideological worth is not at all incompatible with the other theories, for it especially complements the missionary theory, especially the variation theory, especially the variation dealing with Sufism. It is not enough to have the propensities for mysticism, for in its particular Islamic form it must be introduced and taught. And this the professional missionaries probably did.¹²

For this it is easy to understand why the new converts to the faith fiercely resisted Christianization, and "demonstrates that Islam could, in effect, satisfy deep spiritual impulses, or society's search for greater cohesion." Islam's willingness "to accommodate elements which are not incompatible with it or which, in time, are capable of being amended so as to be consistent with it, can be a reason for its ready acceptance among many diverse peoples." On this, the ideological worth of Islam cannot be sullied, and while it is not my purpose in this essay to argue for it, I am inclined to the view that Islam had proved itself in its being accepted by more than 200 millions of people in both the insular and peninsular Southeast Asian regions

So far there have been no references, in the foregoing account of the theories on the introduction of Islam in Malaysian to the dates relative to this event. In recapitulation, however, these shall be referred to for an historical perspective. In the process, therefore, it is best to

¹²Ibid., p. 386.

advert to Majul's because of its precision and clarity, for in this attempt, "the complete truth about Islam's introduction and expansion in Malaysia is found in a judicious synthesis of all of them." The synthesis, according to him, may be along the following:

... At the beginning of the ninth century, after they had monopolized the trade between India and Egypt, the Arabs began to dominate the Nanhai Trade. This means that by the end of the ninth century they controlled the maritime trade between Egypt, India, Malaysia and China. The Arabs had established various settlements in the coasts of India and the Western part of Malaysia and few in China. Although they intermarried with the local population, they, in general, lived outside the adat of the peoples among whom they lived.

As trade expanded, the Arab traders were joined by the Moslem Indian merchants, principally Gujeratis. Possible individual conversions were made by sayyids and pious traders either by marriages or by familiar contacts. With a flourishing of the settlements of the Moslem traders in Malaysia, their mullahs and learned men joined them. These, in turn, began to effect further individual conversions. The fall of Baghdad in 1258 brought about an exodus of many learned men and theologians to the neighboring Moslem countries as far as India, further intensifying Islamic preaching activities the effect of which were already established themselves. A counteraction to the political reversals of the fortunes of Islam was a vigorous revival of missionary activities along peaceful and persuasive techniques.

By the end of the thirteenth century, the coastal principalities of North Sumatra became Islamised. On account of their religious zeal, Sumatran rulers effected conversions, not without some element of coercion. The intensification of the international trade on account of increased needs in Europe and the Middle East brought about a greater number of Moslems to Malaysia. The benefits of the trade accruing to the rulers of the sea coast principalities increased, and some of them became traders themselves or partners with the Moslem traders. An identity of economic interests and frequent contacts brought about further alliances by marriages between the Moslem traders and the families of the rulers.

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the rulers of Malacca had been introduced to become Moslems through offers of a family alliance with Pasai and expressions of the willingness of the Moslem traders to patronize the port of Malacca. Malacca and Pasai became the theological centers in Malaysia, and Javanese missionaries studied in these emporia. They also served as headquarters for other missionaries, places from which they spread to other areas. The increased

exposure of the rulers to the international trade and the articulation of the people in it aroused economic expectations among them with corresponding cultural changes. Different Malaysian groups which had been steeped in traditional values so as to be considered closed societies, were now being exposed to powerful forces of change. To avoid a possible social disruption due to a threat against their traditional values, the peoples began to adopt Islamic values as replacements for their traditional values. Besides satisfying deep spiritual aspirations, Islam was also associated with rulers, who symbolized power, as well as with affluent traders who were viewed as representing a higher and vigorous civilization. Islam, too, was looked up to as an ideology that did away with some fetters of the past like the caste system. Besides, it provided a sense of belonging to a wider community that transcended regional and insular barriers. It was an international religion associated with traders dealing in an international trade. However, the initial type of religion propagated by the Moslem missionaries who accompanied the traders was such that it did not represent a radical discontinuity with familiar mystical doctrines or elements of the past. By the end of the fifteenth century, the petty rulers of the coastal principalities of Java had become Moslems. They viewed their Moslem patrons as powerful friends allied with them by both marriage and economic interests, and in time they began to assert their independence from the central authority of Majapahit. The destruction of Majapahit at the end of the fifteenth century was also defensible in terms of liberal and convenient interpretations of Islamic principles. The petty rulers, too, utilized their connections with the centers of Islam to legitimize their rule and dynasties. In time, Islam would become deeper and more intense among the rulers and the people.¹³

With the above as background, I now turn to the more specific account on the introduction of Islam into the Philippines. The theories that underlay the introduction and expansion of Islam in greater Malaysia, as synthesized by Majul, apply also to the Philippines. However, I would like to present details of this phenomenon as it found itself finally settling in this part of the greater Malaysian region.

The introduction of Islam in the Philippines is shrouded in myth and legend at least according to the internal accounts contained in the *salsilahs* or genealogies of the Philippine groups that accepted the new religious orientation. The earliest studies made on the introduction of Islam, or more precisely, the coming of persons purported to have initially introduced the faith put the date to be in late fourteenth

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 394--396. No paraphrasing of the above citation could have improved upon the summary of Majul.

century, 1380 to be exact.¹⁴ This is the traditionally accepted date of the influx of Islam into the Sulu Archipelago. Apparently, it would take more than a hundred years for Islam to spread to the Magindanaw area; it would be about 1490. Without this period Islamic states were established from Sulu through the coast of Zamboanga to the mouth of the Rio Grande of Mindanao and up the upper reaches of this great river.

From the initial introduction of Islam in the Philippines to as late as the period of Spanish paramountcy in the Islands, dynastic rise and fall among the Muslim states were somehow the main feature of the history of this phenomenon in the Islands. However, apart from these events, the spread of the faith among all the peoples in the area through the efforts of the Sultans, who were the traditional protectors of the faith, and also "stray" missionaries who reached the islands in early times, continued unhampered. Mosques were built in all the areas where the faith had taken root. *Panditas*, *imams* and *ulamas* were the major preservers of the faith. These functionaries were more or less credited for the firm stand these Filipino Muslims took in their holy war with the intrusive Spanish Christianity, which checked the former's advance to the north of the archipelago and played the most important role in the containment of the Islam in the Sulu region and in the Mindanao areas.

According to the 1960 Census of the Philippines, there are about one million three hundred thousand seven hundred eighty seven Muslims located in Mindanao and Sulu. Perhaps another fifty to about eighty thousands are located in various parts of the country. Since the 1970 Census is not yet published, we can only speculate that the present Muslim population of the Philippines would not approximate three million or more.

Islam in the years before the 1940's may be described to be in the state of lethargy due perhaps to the situation of the country — for the period was one of intensification of Christian expansion throughout the traditional areas of Islamic influence. The Philippine Muslims were more or less in the state of anxiety and doubt about the intentions of the new rulers. This is so because the institutions introduced by these rulers, such as public education and the new system of governmental organization were instruments of conversion to Christianity. But the years after the restoration of Philippine independence by the United States of America up to the present have been a period of significant activity in the Muslim communities in the country. It (the American regime) is a period of renaissance, characterized by the many developments both in the public and private sectors at least

within and without the Muslim communities.

While it may not be denied that there were already indications of Muslim institutions having been established for the propagation of the faith, as well as Muslims themselves having contributed to this propagation in pre-1940's, the period after saw the intensification of the activities designed to further propagate as well as spread the faith. During this period, there is an increase in the number of *madrasah* schools¹⁵ whose function was primarily to teach the Muslim youth the fundamentals of the faith, and prepare them for the task of spreading its teachings. These madrasah schools may be found in practically every Muslim community of importance. There is also an increase in the number of pilgrims to Mecca during the season of the institution of haj. Apart from the haji's personal spiritual experience that he gets in the pilgrimage, he brings back with him new ideas about his faith, which he uses to intensify his religious life, and which in the long run would also influence the lives of his own community.

With the increased knowledge of the faith and with the intensification of religious experience through the madrasah and the haj, outward manifestations of these are seen in the increasing numbers of mosques built in these communities. Corollary to these developments came the increased demands for knowledgeable members of the communities to perform the functions of the workers of the faith. Hence, an increasing number of Muslim youth are being sent to study Islam in institutions of higher learning in the Middle East, like the Al Azhar University in Cairo, or in South Asia, like the universities in Pakistan that offer university degrees in Islamic learning. The corresponding prestige that these factors contribute to the status of both the community and the individual lends itself to the reification of the experience in the faith which to a very large extent serves to further create all these factors for the intensification of the faith.

From outside the Muslim communities, there are also factors that contribute to the present resurgence of Islam in the Philippines. One of these factors may be the aid that the public sector gives the Muslim peoples of the country as well as the full recognition of their rights as Muslims in a predominantly Catholic country. The establishment of the Commission on National Integration, which takes care of the interest of the national minorities (of which the Muslim peoples of the Philippines are classified) has created awareness by the Filipinos of the Muslims, and hence a better understanding and feeling for the latter. This in more ways than one has helped in the renaissance of the Muslim peoples of the country. Added to this continuing under-

¹⁴ See Najeeb M. Saleeby, *History of Sulu*, pp. 42-45.

standing are the conversions, relatively minimal in number though it may be, of many non-Muslims—mostly Christians—to Islam. Apart from these conversions, there are also a growing number of sympathisers of the faith, as well as those who have a fundamental knowledge of Islam, although they have not publicly professed their "submission to the will of Allah."

Looking back in time since the Islamic faith was introduced into the Philippines, during which time it had to contend with the attempts of two intrusive powers to check its expansion, and even its propagation, it may be said that Islam, because of its adaptive traits, has been able to take root in a culture orientation relatively alien to its milieu.^{15a} The conflict it had with Christianity was not altogether meaningless because it (Islam), in the course of its taking root in the soil of its adopted country, took for its nourishment the life blood of those who embraced it unequivocally. It may have suffered great privations of isolation due to the circumscribing effect of the more powerful masters during the brief period of its history. But this did not deter its full efflorescence in the life of the people who took it to be a part of their culture; to give further meaning to the changing patterns of their social milieu. This, perhaps, may be seen in the character of their Islamic literature.

¹⁵See Dominador Nunag, *The Madrasah Schools of Marawi*. Unpublished Master of Education Thesis. University of the Philippines, 1972.

^{15a}Cf. Cesar Adib Majul, "Islamic and Arab Cultural Influences in the South of the Philippines," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 7, no. 2 (September 1966), p. 71. ". . . In principle, Islam in the Philippines was never truly syncretic, although it is understandable that many of the old beliefs should indefinitely be associated with it to the extent of being taken by many to be part of it."

Islamic Literature of the Philippine Muslims

Studies on the Muslims of the Philippines have been primarily confined to their history, law and political systems; perhaps a little on their folk-literature which certainly is indigenous in nature, may also be made. If there were any of the religious literature, we are not aware of it, except perhaps a few khutbahs or prayers published in journals or magazines. To quote one of my correspondents on the subject, who wrote:

Actually, here in Jolo, you cannot find Islamic literatures that are written by the indigenous Muslims themselves. Actual writings on Islam by Muslim Filipino intellectuals are still non-existent or better still developing. Thus, all that we have here are materials on the faith, written for all Muslims, by foreign Islamic scholars.¹⁶

. The Arabic alphabet was applied to the Mindanao tongue, and old Arabic and Malay books on religion and law were translated into the native Magindanao and Ranao dialects. The Moros of Magindanao have translations of the Quran, Hadeeth, some books on law, some commentaries of the Quran, some magic, and other varied literature.¹⁹

Somenow, these translations of the Hadeeth and the Qur'an seemed to have disappeared, at least in the context of Saleeby's studies, since he cited only khutbahs in his work (see below for more details on these khutbahs).

Apart from the above, some of the literature on Islam in the Philippines are primarily explicatory in nature; sometimes not necessarily aimed at the Muslim himself, but at the non-Muslim Filipinos, perhaps with the purposes of conversion or to make these groups understand the meaning of Islam. And so far as the literature is concerned it seems that the nature seems primarily for expounding Islam so that it

¹⁶Mukhtar Muallam, *Personal Correspondence*. Jolo, Sulu, August 29, 1970.

¹⁷Tausog, Maranaw and Magindanaw.

¹⁸It is not impossible to find oral literature, but it would take some time to collect these.

¹⁹Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, p. 63.

may be understood by the intellectual non-believer. However, the greater bulk of this literature aims at the Muslim himself who may not possess a profound understanding of his own faith, as it should be understood by the true believer.

The general classification of Islamic literature in the Philippines as produced by the Filipino Muslim may be divided into five categories — (1) *Khutbahs*, (2) Koranic exegeses, (3) Explicatory Statements about Islam, or Lectures that tend to explain Islam as it is understood by the Believer, (4) *Salat* (prayers), and (5) Songs.

A. One of the most important literatures concerning Islam, particularly written for the most important religious feasts of the faith are *khutbahs*. And perhaps the most important *khutbahs* are those delivered during the celebration of the feasts of *'Id El-Fitr* and of the *Maulud An-Nabi*. Some however are delivered during the regular Friday prayers in mosques throughout the Philippines wherever Muslims — local and foreigners alike — are found in great numbers.

For an example of a *khutbah* delivered on the occasion of the *Maulud An-Nabi*, I use the one delivered by Cesar Adib Majul in 1968.²⁰ Majul's central message is based on the Prophet's prayer to Allah on the eve of the Battle of Badr where the Muslim force of only three hundred warriors were arrayed against more than nine hundred, including a cavalry, of the enemy. The Prophet's prayer, with hands raised up to heaven and his soul fully aware of Allah's compassion, follows ----

O Lord! I beseech You, forget not Your promise of assistance and victory.

O Lord! If this little band be vanquished, idolatry will prevail and the pure worship of you will cease from the earth!²¹

The message drawn from the prayer is quite clear; for in the context of the developing community of Muslims the Battle of Badr was indeed very crucial in the survival of this small band of believers out there to preserve its faith, and in turn the community which professes

²⁰In *Philippine Muslim News*, vol. 2, no. 2 (July 1968), pp. 22–25.

²¹Another version of the prayer according to Majul is collected by Bukhari, i.e.,

Allahumma, I remind thee of thy oath and they promise
Allahumma, shouldst thou desire to forget it, thou will not
be worshipped.

such a faith. Indeed, the community in the eyes of Allah is the best and needed to be preserved.²² And it was in the famous battle that the fortune of that community was raised. For the Holy Prophet did not forget the promise of Allah, and reminded Him thus in the Prayer, because Allah said— "Therefore remember me, and I will remember you, Give thanks to Me, and reject me not." (Sura II, v. 152). Truly, they won the battle of the day.

But the Battle of Uhud nearly gave the Muslim community its final blow to extinction, for they were almost defeated because of the greed of a great number of the warriors who were tempted to plunder the enemy's camp. Again, the Holy Prophet, in spite of his wounds, rallied back his Believers and drove away the infidels. The Koranic reference to this battle has great significance, in the view of Majul, for it gives meaning to the sacrifices of the Prophet. The Holy Koran says

Allah verily made good His promise unto you when ye routed them by His leave, until (the moment) when your courage failed you, and ye disagreed about the order and ye disobeyed, after he had shown you that for which ye long. Some of you desired the world, and some of you desired the hereafter. Therefore he made you flee from them. That he might try you. Yet now he hath forgive you. Allah is a Lord of kindness to believers. (Sura III, v. 152)

To Majul, this Koranic reference to the Battle of Uhud is meaningful, because he believes that "Islam as a religion and a way of life demands commitment and services from all Muslims who deserve the name. The Prophet dedicated his life and work to Islam and the guidance and preservation of the Muslim Community. He never used Islam or the community for his personal advantage."²³

To the Filipino Muslims, the message is clear, meaningful and important. This community of Filipino Muslims is indeed relatively insignificant in number compared to the other community which professes to be Christian. With the eloquence of a practicing Muslim, Majul writes rather emotionally about this community

The Muslim community in our country, the Philippines, is relatively a small one. With Allah's help, should all the Muslims of

²²"Ye are the best community that had been raised up for mankind." (Surah III, v. 110)

²³*Ibid.*, p. 25.

the Philippines strive hard to develop among themselves the virtues found in our Prophet, virtues enjoined by either the Holy Qur'an or Traditions, then the Muslim community in this country will be a respected one and then and only then can the Islamic message strike a melodious tune in the hearts of others whose minds are just waiting for the Message. And this is the way things should be, with Allah's help. For is not Islam the Religion of Allah that can give the life of our nation more significance, enrichment and direction? . . .²⁴

Looking back into the two Battles (of Badr and of Uhud), particularly the message that Majul wants to make clear as he cites Koranic references to them, and as he addresses the messages to the Filipino Muslims, it is not wishful thinking on the part of Majul that these should be most important to this Community, small as it is, but one that could contribute to the greatest good to the Community and perhaps even to the larger segment of Philippine society. In other words, the message of Islam, in the context of the Philippines, is for all Filipinos, Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

On the *'Id El-Fitr*, the khutbah delivered by A. Domocao Alonto, in H. 1378,²⁵ is used as an example. Alonto starts his message with the standard "Bismi-lahi-Rahmani-Rahim, Allaho Akbar, Allaho Akbar, Allaho Akbar". The first part of the khutbah is an explanation of the term *'Id El-Fitr* in the light of the Feast after Ramadan, which in terms of the requisites of belief is not necessary, just as he makes an extensive explanation of the meaning of Islam towards the latter part of the introductory section. However, such explanations may be reminders to the Faithful that Islam and the Feast associated to one of its most important events in its history are not to be taken for granted. If we were not to underestimate the intention of Alonto in adverting to this very common event in Islam, he considers the explanations as important in the whole context of the message that he is going to make in the subsequent parts.

The main theme of this khutbah, however, revolves around the Koranic verse — "Say, We believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus and in that which was given to the prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them." (Sura II, 136) In other words, the universality of Islam recognizes

²⁴ *Loc. cit.*

²⁵ In *The Crescent Review*, Supplement to Vol. III, no. 4 (April 1959).

the validity of the words of the prophets of the past before Mohammed himself. Alonto is, indeed, explicit—

. . . . Hence, Islam is an all-comprehensive religion within which are included all the religions of the world; and similarly, its sacred Book, the Holy Quran, is spoken of as a combination of all the sacred scriptures of the world.²⁶

By this, he means the all-encompassing aspect of Islam as revealed in the last verse of the citation, "we make no distinction between any of them."

In the subsequent paragraphs, the khutbah attempts to compare the contending forces that now "plague" the present world—One, ". . . the greater mass of humanity that believes in a way of life based, although in different degrees, in an undying faith in God;" and two, ". . . a very distinct minority, that completely denies the existence of God and hopes to attain a full control of the world purely through materialism." Thus, on the basis of this contrasting philosophies, Alonto discoursed on the validity and viability of Islam in the present world conditions. He contends that "Islam can perform the task for if the unification be the true basis of human civilization, . . . then, Islam is undoubtedly the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known or is likely to know." He reinforces this idea of unification of this Islamic World into a great civilization that

. . . . Materialism, which has become humanity's ideal in modern times, can never bring about peace and mutual trust among the nations of the world. Christianity has already failed to do away with race and color prejudices.

On the basis of this, Alonto believes that "Islam is the only force which has already succeeded in blotting out those distinctions and it is through Islam only that this great problem of the modern world can be solved." And the two major problems of this world, he argues, are those of wealth and sex, which, to him, have already found their solutions in Islam. "And by solving these and a hundred other problems which puzzle the minds of men today, Islam, as its very name indicates, can bring true happiness to the human race." To this end, Alonto addresses a plea for blessings to pour upon the Philippines, her people, her leaders, and many other things from Allah.

As a true believer in Islam, Alonto sounded very much as one whose main concern is the preservation and expansion of the faith throughout the world. He is, indeed, a missionary. To him, there-

²⁶*Ibid.*

fore, the only salvation of this world from all the vicissitudes of existence is Islam, and to Islam all must go, a process of returning.

From Najeeb M. Saleeby's *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, there are found two *khutbahs*, which in contrast to the above described sermons, give an idea of the kind of message delivered during the time they were pronounced.²⁷ One of the *khutbahs* was delivered for the feast of *Ramadan*, on Friday, the 29th of Rabi-el-Akhir, in the 1321 Hejira. It commences with the usual Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim introduction, followed by the recitation of the various attributes of God, all that God promises He gives, followed by praising His Name, and a plea for peace for all his messengers throughout the world. Then, it describes the most important obligation that one who undergoes Ramadan—Zakat (almsgiving), its benefits to the giver, for the Prophet said, "On this day give charity for everyone, for the young, and for the old give a measure of flour or a measure of dates, a measure of rice, a measure of raisins, or a measure of barley, or whatever you eat on this day give as charity for all the people who are of your religion, of your nation and under your law. This will atone for your sins and all your misdeeds during the days of fasting." For "he who fasts the month of Ramadan and withholds his measure of charity on the feast day, his fasting shall not be acceptable to God, and he shall not reach heaven, but shall be stopped halfway between earth and heaven."

Then a plea for the blessings from Allah upon the Holy Prophet, Monammad; then it also sends a plea to Allah for his blessings upon the defenders of the Faith in Sulu who had gone beyond this life. These defenders consist of the various sultans who rule Sulu from the time Islam was introduced in the archipelago through the present. The oration ends with a prayer, before which the orator professes acceptance of God . . . "Thou art my God, the God of Truth and Lord of the Universe." The prayer is itself a supplication for all—

O God, set right our leaders and our nation, our judges, our rulers, our learned men, our lawgivers, our wise men, and our old men. Aid them in righteousness, and guide us. O God, destroy the enemies of our religion and unite the hearts of the faithful. Free the captives and pay the debts of the debtors. Relieve the distressed and forgive the living and the dead. God grant peace and safety to us and to the pilgrims and to the travelers on land and on sea who are of the people of Mohammed, for Thou art the most powerful, the best Master and the best Helper.

²⁷ Saleeby, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-107.

O God, drive away famine and distress, and disease, and iniquity, and oppression, and all calamities, and all evils outward and secret that may exist in our country especially and the countries of the Mohammedans in general, for Thou hast power over everything. Our Lord, forgive us and forgive our brothers who preceded us in the faith, and cast away from our hearts all jealousies and ill feeling toward the faithful. O God, our Lord, Thou art kind and gracious and generous and compassionate and able to forgive.

Saleeby writes that in the original Sulu Arabic text of this khutbah, it was written in the six semi-circles.

The other khutbah was delivered on a Friday, the date of which is not indicated in the text. It begins after the usual "Bismillahi, etc." with the orator's testimony of God's oneness, and ownership of the "heavens and the earth and all that is therein." He also testifies to Mohammed's apostleship, he being sent by Allah to guide all people to the true religion. But the main theme of the oration is drawn from the concept that "Friday is the chief of all days," declared by God that "the day Friday is the chief of all days." It is greater than the day of Ramadan and the day of el-Adha and thy day of Ashura." It further describes the benefits of doing things on Friday, e.g. "Charity on Friday is preferable to all charity. Good deeds done on Friday are preferable to all good deeds." In contrast, "... evil done on Friday is the greatest evil that can be done."

Above all, Friday "... is the beauty of all days and years. It is a pilgrimage that the poor can make once every seven days. Its observance intercedes for the offender before the King of Unbounded Knowledge."

The khutbah continues with the usual blessings beseeched of Allah, for His Prophet and his immediate followers, the Sultans, and ends with a prayer quite similar to the one found at the end of the khutbah mentioned and described above.

B. Koranic exegesis seems to be the most important exercise of Philippine Muslims in their attempt to interpret the Scriptures not only to the Muslims themselves who may be ignorant of the basis of their religious beliefs but to the non-Muslims as well. Because of the many exegetical writings on the Koran by a number of Philippine Muslims, I shall use for the purpose of this brief essay only five paradigms to illustrate this type of Islamic literature in the Philippines. Since these explanatory notes on the verses from the Koran are brief, I shall cite them in extenso for the purpose of clarity. This citation would somehow have certain bias because I shall be referring to only one author who had attempted such.²⁸

1. And who is better in religion than he who submits his whole life to God, and he who does good (to others)? (Surah IV, v. 125)

And seek the Abode of the Hereafter, and neglect not thy portion of the world. (Surah XXVIII, v. 77)

Peace is the real essence of Islam. The true Muslim is he who has attained peace. The first line above quoted from the Qur'an points out the two principal aspects of this Peace: peace with God, and peace with man.

Peace with God means complete submission to the will and commands of God. And Peace with man signifies the doing of good to one's fellowmen.

How does the Muslim submit his self to God? By adhering to a true faith—*iman*, in the language of the Qur'an. This faith consists in the belief in God and His Angels, belief in His revealed Books (Scriptures) and His Apostles, and belief in the Hereafter and the measure of good and evil.

At the same time that he adheres to his true faith, the Muslim dedicates his life to good actions. God is the mainspring of all good actions. Because of his love of God which is the primary cause for submitting to His will and commands the Muslim is spurred to great efforts to do good—good to himself and good to others. He then adheres to a discipline or way of life which will engender the doing of good.

Prayer, fasting, paying *zakat* (poor rate) and the pilgrimage (performing *hajj*) constitute the four pillars upon which the doing of good rests. These are the fundamental institutions or practical ordinances of Islam. And these pillars stand on the bedrock of the Islam [sic] faith whose first cardinal principle is enunciated by every follower thus: 'I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.'

Although compliance with the primary injunction to submit to God is uppermost in the observance of the faith Islam, on the other hand, enjoins adherence to a balanced life. So in the next line we note that the Muslim is exhorted not to neglect his part in society and

²⁸Yusop M. Tan, "Lines from the Holy Qur'an," in the *Crescent Review*, vol. III, no. 2 (February 1959; p. 22; no. 3 (March 1959), p. 27; no. 4 (April 1959), p. 27; no. 8 (August 1959), p. 2; vol. IV, no. 1 (January 1960) p. 27.

The sequences in the quotations follow that of the above documentary citations; hence no documentation is made after every item in the Koranic exegesis.

he is urged to devote what he has acquired by the grace of God for his spiritual uplift.

This clearly shows that Islam strikes at a happy medium ground by which to approach the ultimate goal of life. In other words, Islam preaches and upholds the principle of the golden mean not as a compromise but as a positive way of fulfilling the natural law.

The Muslim who keeps to this way of life shall certainly find material happiness and an inward satisfaction not unlike the feeling of one showered with heavenly bliss.

2. Behold, your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to create a mortal from dust: So when I have made him complete and breathed into him My spirit, bow down to him. (Surah XXVIII, v. 71-72)

Behold, your Lord said to the angels: Surely I am going to place in the earth a ruler. (Surah II, v. 30)

And when we said to the angels: Bow down to Adam, they bowed down (all of them), except Iblis: he was one of the unbelievers. (Surah II, v. 34)

. . . We find in these symbols a light illuminating our way delving into the significance of the revealed words of God. A light, so to speak, of new understanding and appreciation.

. . . They are abundantly significant for us now as they were when first revealed to the Apostle Muhammad 1,400 years ago.

What symbols do these particular verses convey?

"Dust" symbolizes the lowly and humble origin from which mankind sprang. But happily for man God picked him out of His creation and gave him a place of distinction. Into him God breathed His spirit. To him God commanded the angels to bow down in obeisance.

We are struck with no little wonder that the angels who are supernatural beings are commanded to submit to man who is of lowly origin. By the light of interpretation, however, we are shown as in broad daylight the symbols for which the angels stand. Angels represent the powers of good. When man has attained to perfection by virtue of his knowledge of things divine as signified in this case, by his being made complete and by God's breathing into him His spirit, these powers of goodness are made submissive to him.

"Spirit" here signifies divine inspiration that is latent in man. It means soul, or will, or intelligence, or conscience or what-

ever we may wish to call the quality that distinguishes man as a rational animal. It is this spirit that endows man with vast capabilities for knowledge so that the forces of nature are made subservient to him. The accomplishments of man in the modern times tend to fulfill this prophecy.

God, in His infinite wisdom raised man from his lowly state and placed him in the earth as vice-regent, one really to rule. This symbolizes the high place to which man was destined to occupy in creation.

In spite of his attaining to perfection man, symbolized by Adam must constantly contend with the powers of evil. These powers of evil are represented by *Iblis*. By using his reason or will man can nevertheless repel this adversary as easily as clouds fleeing before the wind.

3. Surely, the religion with God is Islam. (Surah III, v. 18)

Verily, those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, and who believe in God and the Last Day, and are the doers of good, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Surah II, v. 62)

FAITH and Good Works. These two precepts sum up the creed of Islam. One without the other is substantially of no value. Both complement each other. One provides the form, the other the substance. Both constitute the warp and woof of the fabric of the religion of Islam.

What would life be with Faith alone without the accompanying good works. It would be life in a sort of never-ending day, a ceaseless treadmill existence wherein the worker labours on and on, and no night descends with its balm to soothe the tired and aching body to a needed well-earned rest.

We also would like to conceive of a man who lives in faith alone as a traveler who has not made any provisions whatsoever for a long journey. That man certainly cannot outlast the ordeal of the travel even if he were possessed with a strong will. He will starve and perish on the way.

It is enough that the lover merely professes love to the object of his affection? Certainly not. He must with unceasing devotion manifest that love in things that the loved one can see and feel and believe in order that his love will be requited.

It is sufficient for the patriot to mouth his patriotism. Most assuredly not. If indeed he is a patriot he must strive to show his love for his country in an unending dedication to the extent, for example, of even dying for his country.

but we have digressed from the theme of the above verses of the Holy Qur'an

In every age during the past God deemed it fit and proper to reveal His religion to serve as guidance for erring humanity. It is safe to assume that in His infinite wisdom God could not have sent down each time different religions. That would have confused the human minds. Necessarily the religion he must decree must be of universal appeal and be a manifestation of His divine consistency. But humanity being what it is distorted the original teachings of God's religion to suit its own selfish ends. Thus arose in every age differences in beliefs which led to animosities which, in turn, resulted in fratricidal bloodbath whose divisive effects abide with mankind to this very day.

It was for the purpose of reestablishing His Truth that God revealed His religion to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And God further emphasized it to His Apostle that the only religion acceptable to Him is Islam because it is the very same religion which he had revealed to all the prophets from Abraham to Moses and Jesus and finally to Muhammad.

God is the Sustainer and Cherisher of all the worlds. He is God of no particular tribe or nation so that He ministers only to their needs. Hence in the next verse, God tells the Holy Prophet that all peoples regardless of their religion shall be recipients of His Mercy and Justice.

4. O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to God. (Surah II, v. 172)

He has only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name has been invoked besides that of God; but if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, not transgressing due limits, then he is guiltless. (Surah II, v. 173)

Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loves not transgressors. (Surah II, v. 190)

If you feel that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, then marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or that which your right hands possess--- that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice. (Surah IV, v. 3)

TEMPERANCE. This is what the above lines aim to convey. And rightly so.

The tempo of our age is fast rising. Man overstrains himself in trying to keep pace. With the increased freedom man has attained, abetted by the compelling urge of satisfying a physical life so induced by this accelerated tempo, there is the attending danger that the excesses of man may commit in times of thoughtless and careless abandon might even destroy his freedom.

Temperance can give man assistance as a halter --- as a rein to a steed---and prevent him from plunging headlong into calamity.

It can hardly be overemphasized that the natural order of cause and effect works with constant precision in the day-to-day affairs of man. No one can escape from the consequences, good or evil, brought about by one's action. As the physical law says, "To every motion there is an equal and opposite reaction." Thus, if man fails to observe a certain approved mode of conduct, in the same manner that he fails, for example, to obey the laws of the land, it is only inevitable to expect that he shall bring undue harm, and even disgrace, upon himself and family.

The act of temperance is a manifestation of prudence. Nature itself exhibits a similar quality in the tendency of its processes in the physical world to keep to a system of balance.

In these crucial times, therefore, temperance or moderation may yet save man from a catastrophic fate which otherwise life of reckless imprudence will wreak upon himself and his society. All known religions preach this virtue. It is an elemental test in sane living. Wisdom and experience dictate its practice.

The above-quoted lines from the Holy Book of Islam point out three aspects of life in which Islam enjoins moderation on its followers. No less than the Holy Prophet Muhammad was the first exemplar of this injunction. His dedication to a life of simplicity bears eloquent testimony. At the height of his mission when power and influence stood ready at his bidding to proclaim himself absolute ruler of Arabia, he turned his back on this worldly temptation and preferred his customary unaffected and simple life until his death. When a hard-won victory in battle against his persecutors entitled him to lay claim over the lives of his captives, he chose not to execute this right, but instead extended a hand of mercy and forgiveness to his erstwhile enemies.

Temperance requires no little amount of sacrifice. But the sacrifice is its own reward; the noble soul earns it.

5. If God were to punish man for their wrong-doing, He would

not leave (on earth) a single creature. But he gives them respite for a stated term. When their term expires, they would not be able to delay it for a single hour, just as they would not be able to anticipate it. (Surah XVI, v. 61)

We grant them their pleasure for a little while. In the end shall We drive them to a chastisement unrelenting. (Surah XXXI, v. 24)

ALL MEN are created equal. This truth we hold to be self-evident. Yet, when we look around us we can only stop to wonder at the inequalities pervading man's material state. We seem to gather the impression that men, to be true, are equal in their inequalities.

What a paradox! And we become greatly perturbed. As who would not, seeing, for instance, some men or knowing some men who are proven to be outside of the concept of what we generally call honest men occupy positions in the highest stratum of society. Our natural envy for such men turns to open disgust as we see them continually enjoy their royal privilege while at the same time they are blessed with the best things in life.

On the other side of the picture, we see men of proven integrity who go through life doing honest labor, but these same men remain in obscurity and manage at best to live from hand to mouth. We can not help but be moved to pity for their unfortunate lot.

How many talents wither in frustration while mediocres occupy choice government positions? How many capable men of proven leadership are thrown out of job only to be replaced by incompetents? Such is the state of anomaly in the public service, if we were to cite examples of inequalities from this quarter.

Of course there are a great many men who are really good in every sense of the word and are enjoying worldly comfort, prestige and affluence. To such men we bow in admiration. But we also know men imbued with high ideals doing creditable service for society and their fellowmen, but whose career is cut short by so-called untimely death. Our hearts go out to such men wishing that God could have made them tarry a little longer on earth so humanity would further benefit from their good works.

In contrast we find men or hear about some men who, for purely self aggrandizement and perverted outlook, can think of nothing but work harm on society and their fellowmen. Further, to our chagrin, these same men are blessed with longer life and prosperity.

The paradox glaringly appalls us. Our conscience revolts within us. Some of us perhaps become bewildered in not being able to reconcile the seemingly flagrant inconsistencies with the truth. We raise the hue and cry only to realize that our voice is no different from that voice in the biblical wilderness. Getting nowhere we finally seek refuge in our helplessness. Our faith in all that is good is badly shaken and, obeying our natural weakness, we even resort to committing sacrilege by condemning God as unjust.

In the face of such a distressing atmosphere, we all can try to seek serene comfort in God's own divine teachings. For example, we can turn to the injunctions quoted above from the Holy Qur'an and therein we will see the light of truth shedding the principle of Divine Justice. We understand later that it is characteristic of God's justice that it is not arbitrary. It acts with infinite wisdom and mercy. Men are given respite, enough rope, so to speak, that they may mend their lives. God gives them all the allowance to use their reason. But certainly, retribution shall follow them who persist in perversion. And so by their own choice, rather than by arbitrary punishment of God, these men shall meet destruction. God appropriately says in the Holy Qur'an (XV, 4): *Never did We destroy a population that had not a term decreed and assigned beforehand.*

The inequalities shall prevail, human nature being what it is. However, we all can rest assured that God's Wisdom shall be the Lever that will mete out justice to all according to what they each deserve. There shall be no doubt about that. For God conclusively states in His Holy Book (XVI, 77): *To God belongeth the mystery of the heavens and the earth. And the decision of the Hour (Of Judgment) is at the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker; for God hath power over all things.*

Sermon-like, the above cited interpretations of the Koran appear to be deeply relevant to the existing conditions of the Philippines, when the interpreter brings to light aspects of Philippine governmental life, like corruption and scandals and anomalies, in the context of the realities of the Koranic verses. Indeed, while this type of Koranic interpretation may be applied to secular life, yet the most important point, as enunciated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, is that secular life is an extension of the religious life; that the Koran, being the basis of Islam, is the sole guide of all actions—secular or religious.

It is interesting to note that these Koranic interpretations have the nature of *khutbahs*, as I have earlier implied in the preceding paragraph. Somehow, it seems that such tendency may be explained in

terms of the developing literature along these lines. With the exception of the Prayers (Salat), which shall be dealt with in the latter part of this section, the khutbahs, the Koranic interpretations and the Explanatory Statements about Islam (see below for the discussion) at least in the context of Islamic literature in the Philippines overlap. In other words, there seem to be sharp lines of distinction between them.

C. Explanatory Statement about Islam are many and varied. They may be part of a long and extensive khutbah (see the A. Domocao Alonto Khutbah, above), or even in Koranic Interpretations (also above). These explanatory statements are intended for the non-believer in Islam, but perhaps also for the believer, who may not be fully conversant of the meaning of his faith.

I have included under this classification some attempts by Philippine Muslims to find some Koranic basis of very secular subjects like science,²⁹ or explanations of Jesus Christ's non-validity as a god as found in the Koran.³⁰

Of science in the Koran, the author cites Koranic verses to support the principle pertaining to the natural law of cause and effect (Surah III, v. 189), the law of order and harmony (Surah LXVII, v. 3), the concept of the solar system (Surah LXXVIII, v. 12-13), and many other which seem implausible but which appear to be implied by our author.

In conclusion, the writer makes reference to Islam's contributions to the scientific knowledge that the world now possesses.

If learning and science had had opportunities for advancement under Islam it is because the teachings of the Qur'an are in themselves the compelling forces. These Quranic verses are highly significant in this regard: *Say: Consider what is it that is in the heavens and the earth* (Chap. X, 101); *And He has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and the earth* (Chap. XLV, 13).³¹

Of Jesus Christ in the Koran, the author of the piece of literature, presents a case in relation to His Godhood, as seen by the Christians.

²⁹Yusop M. Tan, "Science in the Qur'an, in *The Crescent Review*, vol. II, no. 1 (January 1958), p. 6, 25.

³⁰Ismael G. Kan, Jr. "Jesus Christ and the Koran," in *The Crescent Review*, vol. I, no. 4 (December 1957), p. 6, 9.

³¹Tan, *op. cit.*, p. 25

The theme of the work revolves around the following lines:

While Christians look up to Christ as God's earthly extension, Muslims put Jesus on the same pedestal of reverence as Mohammad. It is wrong to say that either one is God. That is to say, Jesus--- and Mohammad--- were both men commissioned by God to spread his divine teachings on a world being dumped down a pit of moral garbage.

Jesus was a *man*. He was no God. He himself disclaimed any pretence to Godhood.

x x x x

... "The glory of Jesus, naturally does not lie in being a God, because he cannot be a God, but his whole triumph lies in being a man, a perfect man, a holy man, and in the words of the Holy Koran, a model for the people to whom he was sent."³²

The above gives in very vivid terms the distinction between what the Muslims explain in the light of the role of the Holy Prophet Muhammad vis-a-vis the Message of God, and the Christian's concept of Jesus Christ having assumed Godhood after having delivered the Message of God. However, it is not the purpose of this essay to enter into the controversy. Rather, it only presents what the literature deal with in the light of Islam and its message according to the interpretations of Philippine Muslims themselves.

For the locus classicus of Explicatory Statements about Islam, I take two pieces which were published forty one years apart, and yet they attempt to explain the Faith--- (a) the earlier (1927) to a non-believer, who happens to be an American army officer stationed in the heart of Muslim-land in the Philippines. This piece is an

... account of the instruction given me by Pandita Oudin, ... his explanations and theories, . . . The manner of his discourse and the form in which it was given, I have carefully adhered to, in order to emphasize the attitude of superiority he could not conceal, his honest amazement of my ignorance and his complete self-satisfaction with, and confidence in, his own knowledge. . . .³³

³²Khan, *loc. cit.*

³³Samuel P. Lyon, "A Moro Fundamentalist, Some Teachings of Oudin, a Mohammedan Priest of Mindanao," in *Asia*, vol. 27, no. 2 (February 1927), pp. 112--113, 152--153.

The account is in four lessons in Maranaw language, which as published is now in English version. (b) The latter (1968) is directed to the non-believer also, but it has for its immediate audience the believers themselves. It attempts to explain "The Meaning of Islam" under the title *Know Your Religion*.³⁴ The details of these explicatory pieces follow.

(a) The first lesson is an introduction to the Koran which "is the word of God, through his Prophet Mohammed, and is the cornerstone of all knowledge." It speaks of the Earth, the Sky and the Sea, which are ordained to be what they are because of God's will. The second lesson attempts to present the concept of creation, following the ordinance that created and upholds the Earth, the Sky and the Sea. This concept of the Creation is interspersed with some stories traditional to the Maranaw before the introduction of Islam as their religion. Then it speaks of the creation by God of the Sun to light the day, and the Moon to light the night. The third lesson, a continuation of the second tells of the "shutting off of the light of the Sun in the Daytime; and of the Moon when it should be shining in the night." Of these, the *pandita* knows not, but he cites a verse from the Koran, showing that such is the will of God— "He causeth the night to enter in upon the night, and He has given laws to the Sun and the Moon, so that each journeyeth to its appointed goal. This is God your Lord."

Then he talks of the Earth being upheld by the Fish, and being heavy with Evil is supported upon the back and horns of the Great Carabao. The tremblings of the Earth is caused by the shifting of the Great Carabao to maintain its balance due to the weight of this Evil. Whether or not this part of the lesson has Koranic background, I am not in a position to say at this point.

The fourth lesson has historical basis as it tells of the origin of the Muslims of Mindanao; the introduction of Islam in the Mindanao region; and the founding of the sultanate of Cotabato by Sherif Kabungsuwan, who according to tradition "sailed from Mecca with many *paraos* filled with warriors and their women and children."

Details of the other *locus classicus* (1968) follow and being a brief piece, shall be cited in extenso. It commences with the question "What is Islam?"

Islam is an Arabic word which simply means "submission to Divine Will." It originated from the root word, *salam*, which literally means "peace." A follower, called *Muslim*, is he who submits to the Divine Will, without hesitation for the maintenance of his peace with

³⁴Hadji Jamil Yahya, in *The True Believer* (Al-Mu'min), National Coordinating Council for Islamic Affairs (NACCIA) Weekly Newsletter, vol. I, no. 1 (1968).

his Creator, Allah, and man.

Peace with Allah means complete submission to His Will. In other words, obedience to His laws in the physical, moral, and spiritual spheres. And peace with man implies, doing good to his fellowmen in order to live in this world peacefully which in turn, gives peaceful and everlasting dwelling in heavens as promised by God. These ideas are briefly but beautifully explained in the Holy Quran, thus:

Whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of Good; he will get his reward with His Lord; on such shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. (The Cow: verse 112)

Islam is the religion which the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) preached in the Arabian peninsula around fourteen centuries ago at the time when ignorance and barbarism had pervaded the lives of men throwing the world into darkness and chaotic situation.

It is also the religion that is commonly known, and quite wrongly, in the Western world as 'Mohammedanism', a name given following the pattern of derivation of Christianity from the word Christ. But this word is almost if not completely unknown to the Muslims themselves. This religion not only reformed the human behaviour but also brought man to its [sic] highest sense of morality which they have [sic] abandoned for lust of material gain.

If we look at Islam and study it carefully, we will find in it a perfect and a complete way of life. It possesses an all-embracing system of its own. It is like a perfect piece of architecture where all its parts are harmoniously complementing and supporting each other; 'nothing lacking, nothing superfluous.' Everything in its teaching is in accordance with right reasons and set at its proper place. There are still other parts of this piece, in subsequent issues of the publications, but it seems that the foregoing citation of the whole piece would suffice for the purposes of this essay.

Adverting back to the khutbah of Alonto, it seems that the above quoted explicatory note on Islam partakes of the first part of said *khutbah*. However, it may not be superfluous to say that due to the developing nature of this type of literature, as well as the faith being a minority religion in the Philippines, such tendency is not to be construed as repetitious. For this functions as both reminders to the Faithful and to those who are ignorant of the teachings of the Faith for purpose of understanding and perhaps tolerance on their part of this religion, Islam.

D. The heart of any religion system, if I may assume an air of authority, is its complex of prayers. This complex of prayers is part of the act of worship. The most important types of prayers are those that are recited during the performance of traditional acts of worship, e.g., the *du'a* and the *Salat*.³⁵ The paradigms are derived from among the Tausog, a Philippine Muslim group who compose the main population of the Sulu Archipelago.³⁶ The *du'a*, may be illustrated thus:

Allahumma Rabbahadi-hid-dawatit tammate Wassalat-il-Qaaemate ate Muhammadanil wa seelata walfadeelata wad-darajatar rafeeata wabasho Maqa mam mahmoodanil lazo wadtahoo inna ka latukleful meead.

(Oh Allah! The Lord of this call and of the prayers to be offered, bestow on Muhammad the means, the greatness, and elevate him in the most exalted place, which thou hast promised him. Verily thou, never break the promise.)³⁷

Another example of the *du'a* may be cited—

Rabbanag firlee wale wale dayya wale ustazayya wale jamiel Mominina wal Mominat wal Muslimina wal Muslimat. Al Anyae Minhum wal amwat. Be Rah mateka ya arhamar rahemeen.

(Oh Lord! Forgive us, our parents, teachers and all Muslims, living and dead. Verily, Thou are the Pardoner.)³⁸

There are congregational prayers said during the Friday festivities, during the Eid or Hariraya festivals. The latter is known as *Salat-ul-Eid-ul-Fitr*, "the Ramadan festival prayers". Prayers are also recited during

³⁵ According to Mhiuddin A. Nawab (see below), Muslim theologians speak of two distinct sets of acts for worship. One is performed when the performer is sitting, reclining or standing. This is known as *du'a* (prayer). Another set is that accompanied by certain canonically prescribed physical movements: bowing and prostrations with their appropriate recitations. This is known as *Salat* (prayers).

³⁶ Mohiuddin A. Nawab, *Islamic Institutions Among The Tausog in the Philippines*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. University of the Philippines (January 1963), Chapters II and III.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

certain important "rites du passage" performed by the Muslims of the Philippines. For the purpose of this brief essay, only prayers for two rites shall be cited.

For the wedding ceremony, there is the *Hutbah-Nikah* (Arabic *Khutbai-Nikah*), a prayer-sermon (see above for the discussion on the *Khutbah*), i.e.,

Al hamdo iillahe. Nahmadohoo was nastaeenohoo was hastagfirohoo was noomino beheer wa natawak-kalo alayn. Wa naozo billahe minsrure anfosena wamin saiyyeate A'malena manyah de hillaho fala mudillalahoo waman yudlilho fala Hadialah. Wa nashhado allaila ha illallahoo wana sohadoanna Muhammadur Rasullullah.

(All praise are due to Allah. We laud him, seek help from him, we trust in Him alone, and seek protection from evil results of our deeds. Whomsoever He guides the Right Path, none can mislead him, whomsoever He declares misled, none can guide Him. We bear witness that there is no God, but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet.)

Prayers for the deceased during the Funeral Ceremony may be illustrated in the following citation. The citation would more or less present the full aspect of how the prayer(s) is (are) made particularly among the Sulu Muslims. I cite here the full process of the prayers offered for the deceased from Nawab.³⁹

. . . .After shrouding the prayer is offered. Those present arrange themselves in an odd number of rows in front of the dead body with their faces *Qibla*-ward (i.e., the direction towards the *Ka'ba*). When all take up the *Qiyam* standing position), the imam recites the *Niyyat* (intention):

Usalli alhazal maite arba takbiratin fardakifaya imaman lillahe tata. Allaho Akbar.

(I intend to pray the prayer for the deceased with four takbirs, for the sake of God Almighty. God is Great.)

The Imam then recites the Sura *Fatiha* (the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an), followed by the second *takbir*. Then after the following *durud* (du'a) is recited:

Allahumma salle wasallim ala Saiyedina wala aile Saiyedina Muhammadin kama sallayta ala Ibrahim wala aile Ibrahim

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 50–52.

innaka hamidunmajid.

Allahuma barik ala Muhammadin wala aile Muhammadin kama barakta ala Ibrahimia wala aile Ibrahimia innaka hamidun majid.

(Oh Allah! have mercy on the Prophet Mohammad and his descendants as thou bestowed it upon Abraham and his descendants.

(Oh Allah! bless Prophet Muhammad and his descendants as thou bestowed it upon Prophet Abraham and his descendants.)

Then [sic] follows the third *Takbir* – *Allaho Akbar*. After the third *takbir*, the *Imam* recites the following *Du'a*:

Allahumamagtir le hayyena Wamaiyatena wa shahedana wa ghaibana wasaghirana wakabirana wazakarina wa unsana. Allahumma manahyatahuminna Fahye alai Islame wamantawaffaitaho minna fatawaftaho alai imane. Allahumma la tanrimana ajarahu wala taftina banadu.

(Oh Allah! forgive our living and dead, and those who are present and absent, our men and women. Oh Allah! whomsoever thou keepest alive amongst us, keep alive in Islam and whom thou causest to die let them die in faith.)

Then follows the last *takbir* – “*Allaho Akbar.*”

Turning the face first to the right, then to the left, the *Imam* says: *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullah*, i.e., Peace be upon you and His mercy. After prayer the people raise their hands and pray silently in behalf of the soul of the deceased and for the forgiveness of his sins.

One would notice in the prayers that while these are Arabic in the general orientations, there are attempts by the Sulu Muslims to infuse these with some of their local linguistic peculiarities. Nawab writes in his work that the data he used “are reported as they were heard and as pronounced by the Tausugs of Sulu. The *Du'as* were translated by the *hajis* of the Sulu area. . .”⁴⁰ from the Arabic to their language, known in the Linguistic world after their ethnic name, Tausug. “Actually, some of the translations are not accurate but signify the manner in which they are understood by the relatively religious leaders.”⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 25.

E. While the prayers (Salat) are themselves natural to any religious faith, religious songs vis-a-vis the development of Islam in the Philippines are relatively new. According to Abdullah T. Madale, "they have become popular only after the Second World War (1941-1945) when Muslim missionaries from Egypt and Arabia arrived to help establish madrasas (religious schools) in key Muslim communities."⁴²

I cite two paradigms for this type of religious literature for the purpose of this essay, viz.:

1

Inao Tohun ami
 A kibugian ko podi
 Miyadun ko doniya
 Ago langowa kaadun
 Rakmati kamingka
 Ago rapug a riski
 Na go so kamboway a mi
 Na gowami pukilalan
 Num rokon a iman
 Go rokon na Islam
 Angkami makaogop
 A mumoliya sa Nabi

Makasapaat sa tao
 A pupugislam
 Di ami kalipatan
 So dii kambayorantang
 Kipulapalun nami
 Ka lailahailallah
 Asalamoalaikom
 asalamoalaikom
 Asalamoalaikom, Guro
 Asalamoalaikom
 Asalamoalaikom,
 Alaikom i salam, morit

Dear God
 To whom praise is due.
 Creator of the World
 And everything else.
 Give us your blessings,
 And luck
 Long Life, too
 So we can continue
 The six obligations
 And the pillars of Islam
 So that we can help
 Offer our thanks to the
 Prophet
 And serve our people
 [Who practice Islam,
 And not forget
 Our obligations
 And sway with sincerity
 God is the Greatest.
 Peace be unto you (2x)
 Peace be unto you, Teacher
 Peace be unto you
 Peace be unto you,
 And so with you too, student

⁴¹*Loc. cit.* According to Nawab, he recorded these prayers without attempting to reduce the sounds into their phonological equivalents. However, he wrote that the transcriptions are the nearest that the sounds do approximate the reduction to the system he used in the transcription.

⁴²Abdullah T. Madale, *A Preliminary Study of Maranao Folk-literature*. Institute of Research for Filipino Culture. Marawi City, Philippines: Mindanao State University (1966), p. 169.

So langowan na podi
 Na bugian no
 Allahotaallah Tohun o
 langowana alam
 Pangalimo a pungalinggagao
 Bugian niyan so gawi-i
 Pungokom
 Suka niyan bo i puding ko
 Suka niyan bo i
 punguniyan
 Toroon ka rukami so
 matito a lalan
 Lalan o siran a
 inikialimo ka
 Kuna ba so lalan so
 siran
 A miyambogian niran
 so rarangit ka
 A siran a mituridadag

All praises are for Allah
 Maker of the Universe
 Helpful and compassionate
 The days are His share.
 Judge
 I praise only He
 The Only One whom one
 can ask for help.
 Show the straight path
 The road of those whom
 You have guided
 Not the road of those
 Whom Your wrath
 They've inherited
 They who followed the
 wrong path.

There is something in these two songs that makes them as interesting as the prayers discussed above. For they indicate very significant attempts at accommodation between what is introduced and what is genuinely indigenous, such as the utilization of certain native ideas to signify the concepts of Islam. Note the first song, which is purely Maranaw in language but with all the ideas having Islamic orientations. The second is actually the *Fatiha* in Maranaw. These songs are sang in the *madrasah* schools as part of the curriculum.

Speaking of attempts at adjustment between the local culture and the intrusive cultural element that is Islam and its institutions, details of this attempt at accommodation between the two distinct cultures are discussed in the following section:

Islamic Literature and Philippine Culture

At the coming of Islam and its appurtenances to the Philippines, particularly in the southern regions, there had already been earlier encounters of the pre-Islamic Philippine culture with other cultural orientations. Philippine civilization had had contacts with Chinese as well as Indian cultures. Such contacts triggered certain conflicts between them, but which in the long run effected interesting adjust-

ments, particularly in the receiving culture (i.e., the Philippines).⁴³ The encounters, for instance, between the Indian and Philippine literatures had enriched the latter, especially found in the development of themes and motifs. For quite a long time, approximately six centuries, which preceded the years of Islamic intrusions in the Philippines, the influence of Indian literature dominated.

However, with the coming of Islam, particularly in the Mindanao and Sulu regions, the picture changed. Certainly, there were conflicts during the initial introduction of this new orientation, as evidenced by the many armed encounters between the followers of the new elements and those of the indigenous groups, and which indeed extended also into the subtle aspects of their culture, e.g. literature.

The literary outlook of the Mindanao and Sulu areas have been deeply permeated by dominant Islam. This is indeed inevitable considering the fact that Islam being a religion has practically penetrated the entire cultural orientations of the people. Aspects of Islamic culture, religion and even history have been infused into the literatures of the Tausog, the Magindanaw and the Maranaw, Philippine ethnic groups who had accepted Islam as their religion and faith. In other words, from the early years that Islam began to exert pressure upon the culture of these peoples, there had been attempts to Islamize their literatures through the convenient changes in the names and titled of heroes, setting of such literary pieces like the long narratives, e.g., the *darangen* of the Maranaw, the Tausog and the Magindanaw. Such heroes are even made to pray to Allah through the intercessions of the angels.

In the public recitations of long narratives, like the *darangen* of the Maranaw or the *Indarapatra* and *Sulayman* of the Magindanaw or the *Parang Sabil* of the Tausog, the actual stories are always preceded by a long prayer, very much Islamic in nature, by the singer. He invokes Allah for his blessings and wisdom so that he could recite such a piece with efficacy. He commences with the regular *Bismilahi*, etc., he even goes through the genealogies of all the characters of the stories, which end up with the Holy Prophet Himself, and the usual greeting "Assalamualaikum, etc." precedes the recitation of the stories. These stories themselves are interspersed with Islamic concepts and phrases, which are attempts to infuse in them Islamic thoughts because the religious leaders frown upon these stories which do not carry with them such teachings as would help propagate the faith.

⁴³ For the details of these encounters and conflicts, see the works of the following students of Philippine culture and history: A.E. Evangelista, R.B. Fox, J.R. Francisco, F.L. Jocano, E.A. Manuel, H.O. Beyer.

Perhaps, there were also attempts to entirely change the characters of such talk-literary pieces as animal stories so that they would partake of traits very much Islamized, which more or less teach lessons geared towards the preservation of the values of the faith. For an example of this type of literary piece, I cite here a whole folkstory from among the Maranaw of Lanao del Sur in Mindanao.

Once upon a time there was a fly who lived in the tiny coconut kingdom called *Agama Niyog*. This particular fly was unlike the flies that we know and see around us today. This is because this fly was God's favorite. It didn't fly around to look for food. All it had to do was wish for something and God would give it.

For a time the fly enjoyed its God-favored existence. But one day as it was flying around, it unintentionally entered a palace. It was the solotan [sic] surrounded by wives and concubines. The fly became envious. So when it reached home, it asked God to make it a solotan. The fly's wish was granted in no time.

So it came to pass that the fly became a solotan. And just like solotans of other countries, the fly had several wives and concubines. For a short time the fly was happy as a solotan. But later it got bored. The fly went home to its former dwelling and it asked Archangel Gabriel to ask God to make him a prophet. Archangel Gabriel prostrated himself before God, then he said, "Dear God, the fly wants to become a prophet." After a few minutes, Archangel Gabriel heard a voice say, "Go tell him that I'll make him a prophet." And so the fly became a prophet.

But being a prophet was not an easy job, so the fly found out. It had to travel from one place to another talking to people about faith and love. The fly found out that a prophet's life was not a bed of roses. There were always people who wanted to kill it.

One day the fly really got tired of being a prophet and it called for Archangel Gabriel. "Please tell God that I no longer want to continue being a prophet."

"What do you wish to be now?" asked Archangel Gabriel.

"I want to become a God," the fly said. "Perhaps if I become one, I would be happy and satisfied."

Archangel Gabriel thought that the fly's wish was too much. But just the same he prostrated himself before God then he said, "Dear God, the fly wants to become a god now. He has grown tired of being a prophet." When God heard this He promptly changed the fly to his original form.⁴⁴

Very obviously, the story attempts to communicate to the faithful some important ideals and values of Islam that need to be propagated among its followers. Of great importance in the story above-quoted is the prominence of the Prophet, Archangel Gabriel and Allah, which brings to focus the importance of the story in the whole context of Islam and its teachings.

There are a number of paradigms that may be cited here, but owing to the lack of space, it is deemed that the above example may suffice for the present brief essay.

Concluding Remarks

To write a conclusion of an essay whose subject is still in its initial state of development and study seems ridiculous owing to the fact that literature is a living organism in a given culture. Hence, it would in one way or another give the impression of definitiveness of the present essay if at this point conclusions are drawn. Moreover the nature of this piece is merely descriptive, and an attempt to bring to focus that Islamic literature of the Philippine Muslims must also be a major concern of our literary scholars.

If after so many centuries of its nourishment in Philippine soil, its study has been a terra incognita among students of Philippine literature, it is due mainly to the many accidents of history that relegated attention to this literature in favour of other literatures seemingly more attractive to these students.

The preceding discussions on the religious literature of the Philippine Muslims, indeed, are initial efforts at presenting what has been written or what has been recorded by the practitioners of the faith. At least as the materials show, the major types of religious literature, in terms of the Islamic faith, have been covered. The only drawback to these discussions is that there are very few materials on which selection could have been made. (Of course, the space devoted to these discussion is extremely limited.) The developing nature of this literature is another obstacle to these discussions. To advert back to what my correspondent wrote about Islamic literature written by Filipino Muslims in Jolo being "non-existent or better still developing" (see fn. 16), is an indication of the lack of interest among Philippine scholars to devote substantial time to its study. However, it is hoped that the present essay may initiate a deeper study of this literature, and thereby also impel the writing of this literature.

In lieu of a definitive conclusion, therefore, a brief summary of

⁴⁴ "The Fly Who Wanted to be God," in Madale, *op. cit.*, p. 158--160.

the essay may serve to capsule what Islamic literature of the Philippine Muslims is. As background of the development of this literature, an attempt was made to present in historical perspective the beginnings of Islam in the Philippines. Shrouded sometimes in myth and legend, Islam reached the Philippines in the late 14th century, and evidences show that the coming of Christianity in the early 16th century, it had already made incursions in northern Luzon with the Manila Bay area as the main springboard. But it finally settled to make definite influences in the Southern Philippines, particularly in the Mindanao and Sulu regions. Theories about its advent are many and varied. But no one theory is acceptable in terms of its penetration in the Philippines. Majul in his studies of Islamic history in the Philippines had given a very cogent synthesis of these theories to apply to the coming of this cultural element, not only in the Philippines, but throughout the whole Malaysian region.

In the attempt to define the types of literature Islamic teachings are taught and disseminated, five have been identified, at least, in terms of the occasion for which the piece is written or orally delivered. *Khutbahs* seem to be the most important of these religious literature, for they function as the basic vehicle of reminding the faithful of their obligations and duties as members of the faith. The *khutbahs* delivered during the occasion of the feast of 'Id El-Fitr (by A.D. Alonto) and the festivities celebrated on the *Maulud An-Nabi* (by C.A. Majul) give the reader a very sharp insight as to the nature of this kind of religious literature. Apart from these special Islamic holidays, the Friday prayer meetings by the faithful in the mosques, are also occasions for the delivery of the *khutbah*.

Not as popular as the *khutbahs* perhaps are Koranic Explanations as those cited from Y.M. Tan, in this essay. Extensive as they are, they serve primarily to inform both the believer and the non-believer, of the meanings that may be drawn from the well-spring of Islam. Indeed, these explanations function as a source of the basic understanding of the religious faith, although in one way or another, they do not seem to have very wide circulation, considering perhaps the language in which it is attempted to be disseminated. It is certainly aimed at those versed in the language. However, it is not unknown that such Koranic explanations are also known to be delivered in the local languages of the Philippine Muslims---Tausog and Samal, of the Muslims in Sulu; Maranaw; in the Lanao area; and Magindanaw, in the Cotabato region. Somehow, we have yet to find texts in these local languages purporting to explain the Koran and its meaning and relevance to their culture and life of these peoples.

More important as a bridge between the believer and the non-believer than perhaps the Koranic Explanations are the Explicatory

Statements about Islam, or Lectures that tend to explain Islam as it is understood by the Believer before the Non-Believer. This is more interesting, because in this type of religious literature, the aim may be both for conversion of the non-believer to the faith, and more precisely perhaps an attempt to make the non-believer to understand what Islam is, its meaning and essence. The non-believer may not be converted in the process, but the explications may develop a greater tolerance for the faith, considering the fact that the Philippines is dominantly Christian in religious orientations. Take for instance the lecture of Pandit Oudin to an "infidel" who being Christian and a member of the conquering forces of time had managed to live in harmony with the Muslims among whom he had been thrown by accident of history. Certainly, it is significant that the Person upon whom the lecture was delivered had written down and published the lessons that he heard from this "unlettered" pandit, yet the lessons were full of wisdom.

To any religious faith, prayers (*Salat*, in Islam) side by side with sermons (*khutbahs*), are the most important type of literature. Without them, the act of worship would be meaningless. In Islam, the *Salat* are most essential considering the prescriptions of the faith. And so among the Philippine Muslims, the *Salat* constitute the most extensive of all the types of their religious literature—*Salat* are recited on all occasions, like marriage ceremonies, funeral festivities, and many other feasts, apart from the regular Friday prayers in the mosques, and the prayers that need to be said during the day, as well as other special feasts so prescribe by the Traditions. At least, our data bear out this reference, particularly among the Tausog of Sulu, from whom the data for this type of literature had been drawn.

Lastly, the songs, a latest addition to the repertoire of religious literature of the Muslims, being a late introduction seems to be comparable to the hymns of the Christians, with whom the Muslims have had encounters through the centuries. It is indeed significant considering the fact that these songs are primarily in the local languages—the paradigm being Maranaw in diction, but the theme certainly Islamic in orientation. It could not be less encouraging to find such a religious movement as Christianity in its attempt to expand its influences in the southern regions of the country, where Islam had made its impact.

In the long years of encounter between Islam and the indigenous cultures, as well as the culture that was introduced by the Spaniards and the Americans in the later years of Philippine history, conflicts were inevitable. But in the process certain adjustments had to be made by each to be able to co-exist peacefully later on. These adjustments, one of which is seen in the development of the song or hymn as

part of the Islamic literature in the Philippines, are important and meaningful. For the indigenous and the alien—Islam and Christianity—shall be in constant contact in the years to come. The alien had come to stay, and yet it has to draw its nourishment from the soul and soil of the indigenes.

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