

## ISLAMIC LITERATURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

### I. Islam into the Philippines

The coming of Islam changed in many ways the belief systems of the early Filipinos, particularly the Maguindanao, the Maranao and the Tausog in Mindanao and Sulu. So pervasive was the influence of this religious orientation that, through the centuries, they have been identified apart from the Filipino Christian. This is the result of the conflict between Islam and Christianity, which was carried over to the Philippines by the Spaniards, who have had to contend with Islam for seven centuries in their own homeland. This confrontation, however, is not to be construed as entirely without meaning; rather it was inevitable because of the Christian as well as 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 religious literature. Like Christian religious literature, the Islamic literature of the Filipino Muslims had provided a very broad perspective of the new social and religious system.

The influx of Islam into the Philippines can only be understood in terms of its penetration into the greater Malaysian regions.<sup>1</sup> Various theories underlie this historico-religious phenomenon that swept through the whole area, from the time Islam turned its attention to the East as an arena of expansion.

Cesar Adib Majul, the Filipino scholar in Islamic studies gives us a very comprehensive view of these various theories.

The most common is the *trade theory*, that Islam, together with the traditional materials for merchandise, was brought by Muslim traders. Majul cites Tome' Pires on these merchants' role:

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<sup>1</sup>The 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).

Some of them (merchants) were Chinese, some Arabs, Parsees, Gujaratees, Bengalees and of many other nationalities, and they flourished so greatly that Mohammed and his followers determined to introduce their doctrines in the sea-coast of Java (together) with merchandise.<sup>2</sup>

Majul elaborates on this ambiguous statement,<sup>3</sup> but it is sufficient to say that Islam reached the shores of this region not through a single nationality, but through the converging of trade and traffic which 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."<sup>4</sup> He further writes, that like the Trader Theory, the Missionary Theory cannot entirely explain the influx of Islam. According to him two elements must be considered:

. . . The receptivity of the rulers to conversion 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 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.<sup>5</sup>

The next 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 Jacob Cornelise Van Leur's studies in Indonesian trade and society. For some time, the Hinduization of Java has been anchored on the colonization theory, but Van

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<sup>2</sup>In Majul, *ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 350 ff.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 374.

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 legitimization in the eyes of persons coming overseas from India, in the eyes of strangers and perhaps on southern Indian rulers — and a mythological Indian genealogy assigned to him by the Indian priesthood . . ." <sup>6</sup> 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." <sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup>

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.

In a 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

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<sup>6</sup>Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 374-375.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>8</sup>*Loc. cit.*

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 Crusades fought in Arab lands and in Spain and extension of the wars between the Turks and Christian princes.<sup>9</sup>

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 expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia, what is important is whether or not Islam was 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, who perhaps having only a shallow understanding of it owing to its being only accepted recently in their history, resisted with all their vigor 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 them-

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<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 387.

selves, even though he still occupied a subordinate position in the social structure.<sup>10</sup>

Majul further interprets Wertheim's 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 the C.A.O. Van 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 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 therefore the prestige of Hindu-Buddhist concepts and their appurtenances. Islam provided the new prestige associated with the ruling powers who were already converted into the new faith. "But that is not all," according to Majul. "The new religion had its mystical attractions." He continues to say:

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 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 is the professional missionaries probably did.<sup>11</sup>

It is easy to understand why the new converts to the faith fiercely resisted Christianization and "demonstrates that Islam could, in effect,

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<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 383.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 386.

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." The ideological worth of Islam cannot be sullied.

The introduction of Islam in the Philippines is shrouded in myth and legend, at least according to the accounts contained in the *salsilah* 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 century, 1380 to be exact.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, it would take more than a hundred years (until 1980) for Islam to spread from Sulu to the Maguindanao area. Within the period Islamic states were established with Sulu through the coast of Zamboanga to the mouth of the Rio Grande of Mindanao and up the upper reaches of this great river.

As late as the period of Spanish paramountcy in the Islands, dynastic rise and fall among the Muslim states was somehow the main feature of the history of the Islam. However, the spread of the faith continued through the efforts of the sultans, who were the traditional protectors of the faith, and "stray" missionaries who reached the islands. Mosques were built; *panditas*, *imams* and *luamas* were the major preservers of the faith. These functionaries were more or less credited for the firm stand they took in their holy war with the intrusive Spanish Christianity, which checked Islam's advance to the north and contained 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 in Mindanao and Sulu. Perhaps another fifty to about eighty thousand are in various parts of the country. We can only speculate that our present Muslim population would now approximate more than three million.

Before the 1940's, Islam was in lethargy due perhaps to the Christian expansion throughout the traditional areas of Islamic in-

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<sup>12</sup>See Najeeb M. Saleeby, *History of Sulu*, pp. 42-45.

fluence. The Philippine Muslims were anxious about the intentions of the new rulers because the institutions introduced by them, such as public education and the new system of governmental organization, were believed to be instruments of conversion to Christianity. But the years after the restoration of Philippine independence by the United States have been a period of significant Muslim activity. During this period, there was an increase in the number of *madrasah* schools<sup>13</sup> 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.

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 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 universities in Pakistan.

From outside the Muslim communities, there are also factors that contribute to the present Islamic resurgence. The public sector gives the Muslim peoples 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 a greater awareness by the Filipinos of the Muslims and a better understanding and feeling for the latter. Added to these are the conversions, relatively minimal though they may be, of many non-Muslims — mostly Christians — to Islam, increasing the number of sympathizers of the faith, as well as those who have a fundamental

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<sup>13</sup>See Dominador Nunag, *The Madrasah Schools of Marawi*. Unpublished Master of Education thesis. University of the Philippines, 1970.

knowledge of Islam, although persons in this sector have not publicly professed their submission to the will of Allah.

Islam, because of its adaptive traits, has been able to take root in a culture orientation relatively alien to its milieu.<sup>13a</sup> The conflict it had with Christianity was not altogether meaningless because 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 isolation, but this did not deter its full efflorescence. This, perhaps, may be seen in the character of our Islamic literature.

## II. Categories of the Literature

Studies on the Philippine Muslims have been confined to their history, law and political systems and perhaps a little on their folk-literature, which certainly is indigenous. If there were any on the religious literature, these works are still unknown, except perhaps for a few khutbahs or prayers published in journals or magazines. To quote one of my correspondents:

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 are just developing. Thus, all that we have here are materials on the faith, written for all Muslims, by foreign Islamic scholars.<sup>14</sup>

These materials are generally written in English, but not in the languages<sup>15</sup> that the Philippine Muslim speak. There are a few that have been translated into English, but the original texts are not now available.

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<sup>13a</sup>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."

<sup>14</sup>Mukhtar Muallam, *Personal Correspondence*. Jolo, Sulu, August 29, 1970.

<sup>15</sup>Tausog, Maranao and Maguindanao.

Such is the state of religious writings on Islam among the Philippine Muslims.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the present state of Islamic writing in the Philippines may still be compared to what Najeeb M. Saleeby found among the Muslims some 60 years ago:

. . . The Arab 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.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the above, some of the literature on Islam are primarily explicatory, not necessarily aimed at the Muslim himself, but to the non-Muslim Filipinos perhaps with the purpose of conversion or to make these groups understand Islam. However, the greater bulk of this literature is for the Muslim who may not possess a profound understanding of his own faith.

the general classification of Islamic literature as produced by Filipino Muslims may be divided into five categories – (1) *Khutbahs*, (2) Koranic exegeses, (3) Explicatory Statements about Islam, or Lectures that explain Islam as understood by the Believer for non-non-Believer, (4) *Salat*(prayers), and (5) Songs.

### Khutbahs

Written for the most important religious feasts are *khutbahs*. And perhaps the most important khutbahs are those delivered during the celebration of *Id El-Fitr* and of the *Maulud An Nabi*. Some, however, are delivered during the regular Friday prayers in mosques.

For instance, on the occasion of the Maulud An Nabi, in 1968<sup>18</sup> based on the Prophet's prayer to Allah on the eve of the Battle of

<sup>16</sup>It is not impossible to find oral literature, but it would take some time to collect these.

<sup>17</sup>Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup>In *Philippine Muslim News*, vol. 2, no. 2 (July 1968), pp. 22, 24-25.

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 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 earth!<sup>19</sup>

The Battle of Badr was crucial to the survival of this small band of believers. Indeed, the community in the eyes of Allah is the best and needed to be preserved.<sup>20</sup> 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 that day.

But the Battle of Uhud nearly demolished the Muslim community because of the greed of the warriors who plundered the enemy camp. Again, the Holy Prophet, in spite of his wounds, rallied 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

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<sup>19</sup> Another version of the prayer according to Majul is collected by Bukhari,

i.e., Allahuma, shouldst thou desire to forget it, thou will not be worshipped.

<sup>20</sup> “Ye are the best community that had been raised up for mankind.” (Surah III, v. 110).

he hath forgiven you. Allah is a Lord of kindness to believers. (Sura III, v. 152).

To Majul, "Islam as a religion and a way of life demands commitment and service 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."<sup>21</sup>

To the Filipino Muslims, the message is clear. Majul writes 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 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?<sup>22</sup>

The message of Islam is for all Filipinos, Muslims and non-Muslims.

On the *'Id El-Fitr*, the khutbah delivered by A. Domocao Alonto, in H. 1378,<sup>23</sup> is used as an example. Alonto starts with the standard "Bismi-Ilahi-Rahmani-Rahim, Allaho Akbar, Allaho Akbar, Allaho Akbar." The first part is an explanation of the term *'Id El-Fitr* in the light of the Feast after Ramadan, which in terms of Islam is indeed not necessarily important, just as he makes an extensive explanation of the meaning of Islam towards the latter part of the introductory

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> In *The Crescent Review*, Supplement to Vol. III, No. 4 (April, 1959).

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 are 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 the validity of the words of the prophets of the past before Mohammed himself. Alonto is 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.”

On the basis of this contrasting philosophies, Alonto discoursed on the validity and viability of Islam. 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:

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

. . . 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.

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, 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.

Alonto sounded as one whose main concern is the preservation and expansion of the faith. He is, indeed, a missionary; to him the only salvation of this world is in Islam, and to Islam all must go, in a process of returning.

In Najeeb M. Saleeby's *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, there are found two *khutbahs*, which in contrast to the described sermons, give an idea of the kind of message delivered during the time they were pronounced.<sup>25</sup> 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 and that all that God promises He gives, followed by praising His Name and a plea for peace for all his messengers throughout the world. It proceeds to describe the most important obligation of one who undergoes Ramadan — the Lakat (almsgiving) and points out its benefits to the giver: for the Prophet said, "On this day give charity for everyone, male and female, for every free man, for every slave, 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

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<sup>25</sup>Saleeby, *op. cit.*, p. 101-107.

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, Mohammed; 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 on sea who are of the people of Mohammed, for Thou art the most powerful, the best Master and the best Helper.

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 therein." He also testifies to the apostleship of Mohammed who was 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. "It is greater than the day of Ramadan and the day of el-Adha and the 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 offenders before the Kind 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.

### Exegesis

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 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 extensively for the purpose of clarity. This citation would somehow have certain bias because I shall be referring to only one author who has attempted at some exegetical interpretations of the Koran. Insofar as the materials are concerned, he is the only author found to have made the attempt.<sup>28</sup>

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 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 himself 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. Because of his love of God which is the primary cause for submitting to His will and command, 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 *haj*) 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 Islamic faith whose first cardinal principle is enunciated by every follower thus: "I bear witness that there is no God except Allah; I bear witness that Mohammed 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 he is urged to devote what wealth 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 XXXVIII, 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 believers (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 Mohammed 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 whatever 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 his prophesy.

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. Each complement the 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 labors on and on, and no night descends with its balm to soothe the tired and aching body to a needed and 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.

Is it 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.

Is it 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 of even dying for his country.

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 a different religion. That would have confused the human mind. 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 bloodbaths whose divisive effects abide in mankind to this very day.

It was for the purpose of reestablishing His Truth that God revealed His religion to the Holy Prophet Mohammed. 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 Mohammed.

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 willfull 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 hand possesses — 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 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 a system of balance.

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

dictate its practice.

The above-quoted lines point out three aspects of life in which Islam enjoins moderation to its followers. No less than the Holy Prophet Mohammed was the first exemplar of his injunction. 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 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 to his enemies.

Temperance requires no little amount of sacrifice. But the sacrifice is its own reward.

5. If God were to punish men 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 only 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 live poorly.

How many talents wither in frustration while mediocrities occupy choice government positions. How many capable men are thrown out of jobs only to be replaced by incompetents?

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 careers are 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, from pure 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 can try to seek serene comfort in God's teachings. We can turn to the injunctions quoted above from the Holy Qur'an. 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, 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.*

This interpretation of the Qur'an appears to be 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 Qur'anic verses. Indeed, while this type of Qur'anic interpretation may be applied to secular life, yet the most important point, as enunciated by the Holy Prophet Mohammed, is that secular life is an extension of the religious life; that the Qur'an, being the basis of Islam, is the sole guide of all actions – secular or religious.

These Qur'anic interpretations have the nature of *khutbahs*, a tendency which may be explained in terms of the developing literature. With the exception of the Prayers (Salat), the *khutbahs* and the Explicatory Statements about Islam overlap.

### Explicatory Statements

Explicatory Statements about Islam are many and varied. They may be part of a long and extensive *khutbah*.

I have included under this classification some attempts by Philippine Muslims to find some Koranic basis of very secular subjects like since,<sup>29</sup> or explanations of Jesus Christ's non-validity as a god as

<sup>28</sup>Yusop 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. 27 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 Qur'anic exegesis.

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

found in the Qur'an.<sup>30</sup>

I cite Qur'anic 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 L-XVII, v. 3), the concept of the solar system (Surah L XXVIII, v. 12-13).

If learning and science had opportunities for advancement under Islam: it is because the teachings of the Quran 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 And He has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and the earth.*<sup>31</sup>

Of Jesus Christ in the Qur'an :

While Christians look up to Christ as God's earthly extension, Muslims put Jesus on the same pedestal of reverence as Mohammed. It is wrong to say that either one is God. That is to say, Jesus – and Mohammed – 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 pretense to Godhood.

. . . 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.<sup>32</sup>

The above gives in very vivid terms the distribution between what the Muslims explain in the light of the role of the Holy Prophet Mohammed 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

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

<sup>31</sup>Tan, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup>Kan, *loc. cit.*

into the controversy. Rather, it only presents what the literature deals 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 attempt to explain the Faith – (a) the earlier (1927), to the non-believer, who happens to be an American army officer stationed in the heart of Muslimland 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 . . .<sup>33</sup>

The account is in four lessons originally in the Maranao. (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*.<sup>34</sup> The details of these explicatory pieces follow.

(a) The first lesson is an introduction to the Qur’an which “is the word of God, through his Prophet Mahomet, 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 Maranao before the introduction of Islam as their religion. Then it speaks of the creation of God of the Sun to light

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<sup>33</sup>Samuel 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.

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

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 Qur'an, showing that such is the will of God — "He causeth the night to enter in upon the day, and the day to enter in upon the night, and He has given laws to the Sun and to 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 Qur'anic background, I am not in a position to say at this point.

The fourth lesson has historical basis as it tells of the origins 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, caller *Muslim*, is he who submits to the Divine Will, without hesitation for the maintenance of his peace with 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 fellowmen in order to live in this world peacefully and to gain peaceful and everlasting dwelling in heaven 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, Mohammed (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 chaos.

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 world Christ. But this word is almost if not completely unknown to the Muslims themselves. This religion not only reformed human behavior but also brought man to his highest sense of morality which he has abandoned from lust for material gain.

If we look at Islam and study it carefully, we will find 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 harmoniously complement and support one another; 'nothing lacking, nothing superfluous'. Everything in its teaching is in accordance with right reasons and is set at its proper place.

There are still other parts of this piece in subsequent issues of the publication, but it seems that the foregoing citation of the whole piece would suffice for the purpose 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 for tolerance on their part of this religion, Islam.

### Prayers

The heart of any religious system 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*.<sup>35</sup> The para-

digms are derived from among the Tausog, a Philippine Muslim group who compose the main population of the Sulu Archipelago.<sup>36</sup> The *du'a* may be illustrated thus:

*Allahumma Rabbahadi-hid-dawatit tammate Wassalat-il-Qaamate ate Muhammadanil wa seelata walfade-elata 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 breakest the promise.)<sup>37</sup>

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 Ahyae Minhum wal amwat. Be rah mateka ya arhamar rahe-meen.*

(Oh Lord! Forgive us, our parents, teachers and all Muslims, living and dead. Verily, Thou are the Pardoners.)<sup>38</sup>

There are congregational prayers said during the Friday festivities, during the Eid or Hariraya festivals. The latter is known as *Salat-ul-Edi-ul Fitr*, “the Ramadan festival prayers.” Prayers are also recited during certain important “rites of 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 *Hurbah-Nikah* (Arabic *Khutbai-Nikah*), a prayer-sermon (see above for the discussion on the *Khutbah*), i.e.,

*Al hamdo lillahe. Nahmadohoo was nastaeenohoo was nastag-firohoo was noomino behee wa natawakkalo alayn. Wa naozo billahe minsrure alfosena wamin saiyyeate. A'malena manyah de hillaho fala mudillalahoo waman yudhilho fala Hadialah. Wa nashhado allaila ha illallaho wanashhadoanna Muhamma-dur Rasullullah.*

(All praise are due to Allah. We laud him, seek help from Him we trust in Him alone, and seek protection from the evil results of our deeds. Whomsoever He guides the Right Path, none can mislead him; whomsoever He declares mislead, 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 is made particularly among the Sulu Muslims. I cite here the full process of the prayers offered for the deceased from Nawab.<sup>39</sup>

. . . 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 Qubla-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 tak-birds, 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*. Afterward, the following *durud* (*du'a*) is recited:

*Allahumma salle wasallim ala Saiyedina wala aile Saiyedina Muhammadin kama sallayta ala Ibrahimia wala aile Ibrahimia innaka hamidunmajid.*

*Allahumma 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 Mohammad and his descendants

as thou bestowed it upon Prophet Abraham and his descendants.)

Then follows the third takbi:

*Allaho Akbar.*

After the third *takbir*, the *imam* recites the following

*Du'a*:

*Allahummagfir le hayyena Wamaiyatena wa shadedana wa ghaibana Wasaghirana wakabirana wazakarina wa unsana. Alla humma manahyatahuminna Fahye alal Islame waman-tawaffaitaho minna fatawaffaho alal imane. Allahumma la tahrimana ajarahu wala taftina bahadu.*

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 . . .<sup>40</sup> from the Arabic to their language, Tausog. "Actually, some of the translations are not accurate but signify the manner in which they are understood by the relatively educated religious leaders."<sup>41</sup>

## Songs

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 madrasahs (religious schools) in key Muslim communities."<sup>42</sup>

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

Inao Tohùn 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 pupigislam  
Di ami kalipatan  
So dii kambayorantang  
Kipulapalun nami  
Ka lailahaillallah.  
Asalamoalaikom  
asalamoalaikom  
Asalamoalaikom, Guro

**Asalamoalaikom**  
**Asalamoalaikom, Alaikom**  
**i salam, morit.**  
**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.**

**Trans.:**

**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  
Peace be unto you  
Peace be unto you, Teacher,  
Peace be unto you,  
Peace be unto you,  
And so with you too, student.  
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 distinguish between what is introduced and what is genuinely indigenous, such as the utilization of certain native ideas as to signify the concepts of Islam. Note the first song, which is purely Maranao in language but with all the ideas having Islamic orientations. The second is actually the *Fatiha* in Maranao. 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.

### III. 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 has had contacts with Chinese as well as Indian cultures. Such contacts effected interesting adjustments, particularly in the receiving culture (i.e., the Philippines).<sup>43</sup> The encounters, for instance, between the Indian and the Philippine literature had enriched the latter, especially in the development of themes and motifs. For 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 has been deeply permeated by dominant Islam. This is indeed inevitable considering the fact that Islam has practically penetrated the entire cultural orientations of the people. Aspects of Islamic culture, religion and even history have been infused into the literature of the Tausog, the Maguindanao and the Maranao, Philippine ethnic groups which have accepted Islam as their religion. In other words, from the early years that Islam began to exert pressure upon the cultures of these peoples, there had been attempts to Islamize their literatures through the convenient changes in the names and titles of heroes, setting of such literary pieces like the long narratives of the Maranao, the Tausog and the Maguindanao. 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 Maranao or the *Indarapatra* and *Sulayman* of the Maguindanao 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 the piece with efficacy. He commences with the regular *Bismillahi*, 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 stories which do not carry with them such teaching that help propagate the faith.

Perhaps, there were also attempts to entirely change the characters of such folk-literary pieces and 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 Maranao:

Once upon a time there was a fly who lived in the tiny coconut kingdom called *AgamaNiyog*. 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 *torogan*. There it saw the *solotan* surrounded by wives and concubines. The fly became envious. So when it reached home, it asked God to make it a *solotan*.

So it came to pass that the fly became a *solotan*. And just like *solotans* the fly had several wives and concubines. For a short time the fly was happy. But later it got bored. It went home to its former dwelling and 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 it. 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 God," the fly said. "Perhaps if I became 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 its original form.<sup>44</sup>

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.