

Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia

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1968

The University of Chicago Press

Chicago & London

Preface

Chapter One – Two Countries, Two Cultures – Page 1

1 – Defining and Measuring religion is embarrassingly hard. This book will measure it in Indonesia and Morocco and see what differences appear in the character and history of these two nations' Islam.

2 – Distinguish religious feeling and institutions that sustain it. CG will ultimately look more at institutions than feeling.

2-3 Kenneth Burke once pointed out, "It makes a great deal of difference whether you call life a dream, a pilgrimage, a labyrinth, or a carnival."

3 – If we don't measure institutions, the result is to remove religion not merely from scholarly examination and rational discourse, but from life altogether. That is if you don't look at institutions, where do you see religion? In the sky?

A big question: How do men of faith react when the machinery of faith begins to wear out? What do they do when traditions falter?

4 – This book will compare Indonesian Islam with Moroccan Islam. Islam is what makes them the same, but paradoxically, it is also what makes them different.

Morocco got Islam a lot earlier. The contact was MILITARY with the Ummayyads with the 7th century only 50 years after Mohammed's death – not peaceful and by trade as in Indonesia.

5 – The famous reforming dynasties were Almoravids, Almohads, Merinids.

7 – In Morocco, each phase of civilization began with a breaching of the gates by an ambitious local chieftain whose religious zeal lifted him up. War and fighting were the basis of reforms.

The tribes and cities interacted in Morocco. But, the point is that both were turbulent in Morocco.

Morocco had no settled agricultural people like Indonesia.

8 – Morocco's leitmotiv is strong-men politics and holy man piety.

9 – Indonesia is totally different; it has been a peasant society with an overpowering heartland, Java.

11 - The national archetype is a settled, industrious, rather inward plowman of twenty centuries. In Morocco civilization was built on nerve; in Indonesia, on diligence.

Originally Indonesia is not Islamic but Indic. In Indonesia Islam did not construct a civilization, it appropriated one.

12 – In Indonesia Islam is multivoiced. In Indonesia, Islam came by sea, not on the heels of conquest but by trade. And, it came from India, not out of Arabia. So, it was a modified Islam to begin with.

Islam was more emphatic creed we associate with real Islam on the outer Islands.

13 – The peasantry mixed Islam with folk religion, the gentry pantheistic etherealism, the tradition classes, more ethereal than the peasants, but more not as harsh as middle easterners.

14 – Over 90% of both nations' populations are Islamic.

15 – Modernity is challenging Islam. The key to modernity is "multiformity." Morocco will have more trouble with this because they are rigid.

16 – Unlike the Western confrontation with modernity, the predicament in these two Islamic nations is less a matter of what to believe as of how to believe it.

17 – CG sees modernity as inevitable. He says the questioning, the doubt, is only in a small minority, but it is growing.

In Morocco this shows up as a disconnect between religious life and everyday life that leads to self-deception. In Indonesia the reaction has been to make Islam even more ethereal.

18 – But he admits both nations still "cling to" classical symbols.

19 – To chart religious institutions is to write a "social history of the imagination."

In the next chapter we will look at the classical religious styles in Morocco and Indonesia.

20 – The 3rd chapter will look at the interaction between religious and social change.

21 – We see big change in the non-European world – it concerns what one might hope for in life. It is not westernization in that few Moroccan's have had any contact with the West.

"Modernization" means "changes in classical religious styles and such developments as rationalized

forms of economic organization, the growth of political parties, labor unions, youth groups, and other voluntary associations, revised relations between the sexes, the appearance of mass communication, the emergence of new classes, and many social novelties.”

This is all generally known. Only by going beyond this to particulars can we get away from banalities.

22 – He wishes to say that the Islamic interface with modernity is ours.

Chapter Two - The Classical Styles – Page 23

23 – Social sciences make categories and thus fall into the “pigeonhole” disease.

“Dentology,” btw, is the worship of trees.

Often there aren’t any pigeons in the pigeonholes.

24 – We will look at two stories as being archetypical of the national Islamic characters of Indonesia and Morocco.

25 – The figure that characterized the Indonesian conversion was Sunan Kalidjaga, who likely didn’t exist at all.

27 – At home, he’d been a thief who stole from his mother till she had nothing. He then moved to market thievery. Till he meets a Muslim, Susan Bonang who turns a tree to gold and jewels. The Muslim doesn’t care about the riches though. Sahid wants to learn such a great philosophy. Bonang says, okay, wait here until I come back. It takes decades for Bonang to return. Kalidjaga waits through storms, etc. When Bonang returns, he says, I have nothing to teach you about Islam, you know more than I do by dint of your having waited through such turmoil – your meditation while waiting.

Thus, Kalidjaga, who converted Indonesia to Islam, learns Islam without reference to the Koran. Rather it is enlightenment though a sort of detached stoicism. He became a Muslim because he had reformed, he didn’t reform because he was a Muslim.

29 – The Moroccan figure is Lyusi. He is historical. He lived around 1691, which coincides with the rise of the Alawite dynasty. He doesn’t get in harmony with life, as Kalidjaga, he struggles against it.

The last Berber dynasty had died in the 17th century. All splintered into a collection of smaller polities with holy men of one sect or another leading. A spiritual cauldron where “doctrinal ardor and rustic violence produced vivid personalities.”

Kalidjaga was immobile. Lyusi travelled relentlessly.

30 – Whereas others would not wash a master's clothes because the master (teacher) was diseased, Lyusi did and then drank the water and became a "Baraka." A holy man who had extraordinary physical courage, absolute loyalty, and moral intensity.

32 – 30 years later, he was invited in by a King who treated him as a guest. Lyusi broke his plates to protest the mistreatment of slaves, then refused to leave the kingdom. When the King confronted him, he nearly killed the king via a miracle. Begging for mercy, o let the King go, he asked to be

34 – 35 Lyusi recognized as a Sherif (don't like it) [not wealth or office] – a descendant of the Prophet and entitled to the appropriate honors, privileges, and respect.

So Lyusi has the force of the warrior and the virtue of the saint. And thus he actually reinforces the Leitmotiv of Moroccan history.

This sets the stage for lots of dynamic holy men with Baraka leading small groups all over Morocco. Saint worship is rampant there.

35 – Both figures, Lyusi and Kalidjaga are profoundly conservative, defending received forms of religious consciousness in the face of radical social and political challenges. And it is the very incursion of Islam that makes this defense necessary.

In Indonesia, Kalidjaga defends the "doctrine of the Exemplary center," wherein the king himself is an image of divine order and the paradigm for social order.

Thus, from the traditional Indonesian POV, the royal court's main function is to disseminate civilization by displaying it.

37 – Spirituality, Kalidjaga shows, is not equally distributed among men. The mere fact of inequality means there is a "high" and "low" a sacred and a profane.

The God-King should honor the supernatural beings, the supernatural beings, the Supreme Nothingness. The king is this world's point of worship.

38 – This creates the "Theater State" in Indonesia.

This fits in well with stable agrarian life. Agriculture surpluses fed people who did political theater.

39 – This fits, very importantly, with events of everyday life. So it continued. But then came the sudden explosion of the trading classes and arrival of foreigners, not just the intrusion of Islam (which the upper class could have absorbed).

40 – In reaction to Islam and the disruption of trade, the theater forms grew more important, there is a recourse to tradition. Their rituals were now ostensibly Muslim. But, extremely traditional. This is what Kalidjaga initiated.

41 – In Dutch hands the civil servants were the heirs of the former ruling class, a “white-collar aristocracy.” The court theater continued as a retreat – in some ways purer still.

42 – The blocking of international trade, by the Dutch, meant an increase in domestic trade. The trading class brought Koranic morality – only this – to the interior, via the bazaar.

The more recent Islamic revival, which we look at later, was a counter – tradition to the duration of the court.

43 – The Lyusi system, going back to Morocco, was embodied in “Maraboutism.” Marabout means fasten, bind, attach.

It follows leaders with “Baraka” or personal presence, force of character, or moral vividness.

45 – The rise of the Alawite dynasty, represented the supremacy of the genealogical view of Baraka over the miraculous.

46 – All Moroccan empires started as reformist sects.

47 – But just as the Indic tradition continued, however disguised in Indonesia, the vision of the wonder-working saint continued in Morocco.

48 – The sherifian principle of religious legitimacy continued under Islam. Saint worship.

The stabilization of social and cultural stabilization of the Moroccan traditional culture of maraboutism is called “Sufism.” Sufism is whatever brings Islam into line with local traditions.

Sufism brings Islam in line with the maraboutism indigenous to Morocco. In the Middle East it stands for bringing the Koran in line with Arab pantheism. In Indonesia, restating Indian illumination in Arabic phrases. In West Africa, Sufism, continued sacrifice, possession, exorcism, and curing as Muslim rituals. In Morocco, continuing worship of the saint, “les homes fetiches.”

49 – The cult of saints centered on the tombs of dead marabouts and involving the definition of sacred lineages.

Generations can go by with no true marabout.

51 – Ernest Gellner wrote that Berber Islam is what the marabouts do.

By 1939, about a fifth of French Morocco belonged to one of the 23 leading brotherhoods. The marabouts did all from blood letting, to charming snakes to mutual flagellation to the famous sufi twirling.

Newer entries, like Lyusi, took a more spiritual approach to their lineage, but it was marabout with lineage and Baraka nonetheless.

53 – The King himself / the Sultan has traditionally been a marabout. Both a strong man and holy man – and a guardian of holy descent. The Alawite do rituals that tie the leader to Lyusi.

54 – Islam is:

In Indonesia: inwardness, imperturbability, patience, poise, sensibility, aestheticism, elitism, and radical disillusionment of individuality.

In Morocco: activism, fervor, impetuosity, nerve, toughness, moralism, populism and an almost obsessive self-assertion.

Chapter Three – The Scripturalist Interlude – Page 56

56 – It seems a heresy to say religions change, as they devote themselves to the timeless. But they do. But, whatever happens to a people happens to their faith and the symbols they use to form and sustain it.

In this chapter we'll look at the Indonesian Sukarno and the Islamic Sultan Muhammed V. Between the last chapter's exemplary figures and this chapter's central figures lies the industrial revolution, Western intrusion and domination, the decline of the aristocratic principle of government, and the triumph of radical nationalism.

57 – How to explain cultural change? Numbers? Typology?

58 – There are as many typologies as there are typologists. The world-acculturation model sees all moving westward, which it may not be, and it makes the culture that receives this process passive. The indigenous culture just gets seen as a barrier.

59 – But each of these approaches describes the results of change, not the mechanism. We want to know not what happened, but how. This is to do, in a sense, history backwards. Knowing how it turned out – we think – we look for the inevitable steps that led to it.

60 – Kierkegaard said Life is lived forward but understood backwards.

As Illuminationism in Indonesia and Maraboutism in Morocco are besieged by the secular left and "scripturalism" from the right.

The traditional ways continue, but they are no longer secure in their dominance. Their adherents feel themselves embattled. They are embarrassingly out of date. Piety remains, but assurance does not.

61 – There has been little increase in skepticism, in atheism and agnosticism [he repeats this lack of change in belief a couple of times, but still intuits the end of tradition as inevitable.]

The people do not doubt the religion, they doubt its hold on them. The question is no longer "What shall I believe?" but "How shall I believe in it." [what are implications for behavior, he means]. People are not sure what to do with their continuing belief in God.

The "Religious" is belief. "Religious – mindedness" is celebrating that belief, rather than the belief itself. It is a response to doubt. How to have an Inward natural Indonesian life or one of moral strictness as in Morocco? Go about your life and celebrate religion on Fridays or via displays.

62 – We'll look at three sources of dislocation: Western domination, the increase in scriptural Islam, and the crystallization of the activist nation-state.

Normal chronologies are deceptive, they show Islam coming to Indonesia much later than Morocco. But real western incursion to the nations in question happened in 1830.

The grand monuments of colonialism are not cathedrals, theaters, or palaces, but roads, railways, ports, and banks.

The aristocracy was shaken, but – as we've seen – the theater state continued in Indonesia and the Sultan continues maraboutism in Morocco.

64 – European colonial administrators took on the local customs to great effect. But, the one thing they couldn't become was Muslim.

65 – So, in a curious way, intense involvement with the West moved religious faith closer to the center of people's self-definition. Previously men were Muslim by circumstance, now it was a policy contra-colonialism, they were "oppositional Muslims."

But not only were the West and Christianity rejected for intrusion, the traditional patterns were rejected for not standing up to them. Thus fundamentalist scripturalism attacked maraboutism and illuminationism.

In Indonesia the religious student – Santri – led the movement to scripturalism.

66 – In Indonesia, after the history in the prior chapter, the peasants remained devoted to local

spirits, domestic rituals and family charms. But they were still considered "Muslim." The santri went scriptural – that is they tried to bring in real Islam. Remember Indonesians don't speak Arabic.

67 - Many started, with increasing ease in transport to go to Mecca.

68 – It took centuries for this movement to go from mere sprinkling of Arabic terms into pre-existing rites to fundamentalism. Thus, eventually, the santri attacked the theater government and that sort of traditional form that Kalidjaga represented, as un-Islamic.

69 – In western reformation, we stepped backwards to go forwards. The puzzling aspect of scripturalism, CG tells us, is its stepping backwards just to go backwards. By seeing modernism in the Koran, Islam becomes a justification for modernity without itself actually becoming modern. It represents something, it cannot believe, something totally dislocated from modern life.

70 – Though broadly similar, the move towards a schoolmaster's Islam played out differently in Indonesia and Morocco. Arabic is the language of Morocco. Pan-Arabism is big in Morocco.

Indonesians can't read the Koran and are not pan-Arabists as they are not Arab.

And, the Moroccans could look back to being in (though on the peripheries) great empires. Indonesia was near the Mughal, but, it hardly touched them.

71 – It is easier to revive your own past than import someone else's and revive that.

Yet, despite their reading Arabic, it would be a mistake to overrate Moroccan scholasticism. As a popular movement, scripturalism is no older in Morocco than in Indonesia, and not more learned.

Islamic scripturalism has been circumscribed, though, to a narrower circle in Indonesia – largely due to language.

72 – By 1900 the battle between scripturalism and maraboutism was on. Sultans now collected anti-sufis as they previously collected Sufis (like the legend story King collecting Lyusi).

73 – In both Indonesia and Morocco, the ground for nationalism was prepared by Salafi purism. The first nationalist movements came out of this revival. But after independence, the scripturalists found themselves politically disinherited.

74 – With Sukarno the Theater state returned to Indonesia. With Muhammed V maraboutic kingship returned to Morocco.

75 – The Moroccan monarchy is the key institution in the Moroccan religious system.

77 - A religious community verified the choice of those around the throne. Their religious confirmation gave the Sultan religious legitimacy – He was both Marabout and Islamic.

78 – The decisive contest in Moroccan independence happened between the Sultan and the scripturalists and the Sultan won.

79 – Royal nationalism won.

With the Berber Decree the French united all factions against them. It took the Berbers out of the jurisdiction of the Sharia courts.

80 - But, the sultan's refusal to sign prefabricated decrees got him exiled by the French. Upon his return he was a real Moroccan hero – a Sultan and a nationalist hero – A morabout.

81 – This marabout formulation happened in no other nation. If Ghandi had become president of India, that might not be true, but Nehru did.

Sultan Muhammed V showed tension between his roles as holy man and strong man. He unveiled his daughters but secluded his wives. He wore western clothes in private and Arabic clothes in public. He rationalized the government, but revived traditional procedures of court.

82 – Sukarno's story in Indonesia is simpler and more complicated. He came from obscurity and invented the role of Presidency in Indonesia.

83 - He had no party organization as in Ghana, no modern civil service as Nehru had in India. No populist army as Nassar in Egypt, no indigenous bourgeoisie upon which Quezon built the Philippines, nor the tribal pride of Kenyatta in Kenya.

84 – In 1921 the Islamic Union split into a scripturalist wing and a Marxist one.

Sukarno took over the communist one, with a movement named for a supposed common sense peasant he met, Marhaen. It was primitive populism. He synthesized all sides under five points, "Nationalism, Humanitarianism, Democracy, Social Justice, and Belief in God."

86 – He then changed to "guided democracy" and tried to revise the theater state. He started building monuments, the world's largest mosque, a national monument, a colossal sports stadium. After 1960 we had the doctrine that the welfare of a country proceeds from the excellence of its capital and ruler – the theater state – back in full bloom.

87 – Sukarno's cardboard edifice collapsed in blood in March of 1967.

88 – Both Mohammed V and Sukarno are hard acts to follow. What will happen is unseen. Hassan II and General Suharto took over.

Scripturalism remains a powerful force in both nations. And, seems, CG says in 1968, to be gaining in force. He also sees Marxism in retreat.

Chapter Four – The Struggle for the Real – Page 90

90 – Four decades ago (written in 1968) a battle in anthropology engaged about what went on in the minds of savages.

Malinowski said all religious institutions were just coating on very practical decisions. The highly underrated and too-little-remembered [my adjectives] Lucien Levy-Bruhl thought savages very irrational.

91 – The debate burned out. We are all rational and irrational by turns.

92 – 93 When Malinowski concludes that religion has immense biological value because it enhances “practical mental attitudes” “one doesn’t, remembering Aztec human sacrifices or the self-immolation of Indian widows, know whether to laugh or cry.” YES!

94 – Common sense realism, GC tells us, leaves something to be desired.

95 – There is a dialectic between religion and common sense. Religion goes beyond common sense, and reinforces it.

There has been a shift in anthropology’s discussion of culture towards the discussion of symbols, on the “systems of significance.” – Beliefs, rites, meaningful objects – in terms of which subjective life is ordered and outward behavior guided.

This approach is neither introspectionist nor behaviorist; it is semantic.

96 – In terms of religion it looks at a way of interpreting experiences and the implications for conduct. We cannot isolate religion from life as “morality touched with emotion” as he quotes Matthew Arnold as saying sans attribution.

We no longer look for a universal sacredness or a religious phenomenon separated from this world with Cartesian sharpness. We look for a way of looking at the world, not an unusual object.

97 -Between the structure of reality, the way one ought to live and the way things are, there is an unbreakable connection.

Religious systems co-join the way the world is said to be put together and the ethos (the general way of life). Thus religious systems provide guides for perception and conduct.

98 – Kalidjaga in classical Morocco would not be heroic, but unmanly. Religious perspective gives us a problem of belief, the ethos side, one of conduct.

Religious beliefs are not borne of experience, but prior to it. The wonderful Alisdair MacIntyre [my adjective] says the world provides not evidence for the truth of religion, but illustrations of it.

99 – Where does the religious impulse come from? It comes from the social and psychological working of religious symbols. These precede the individual. No man must invent his own religion in order to worship.

100 – [GC seems to take “common sense” as “post-religious” and evidence-based. But we have faith in democracy and the West triumphant. That is not rationally invented, more than religion is, by individuals.]

The notion that the demand for religious conformity can produce hypocrites but not believers is simply wrong. [wonderful statement]

101- Religion helps solve what Max Weber calls “the problem of meaning.” It makes paradoxes, like the problem of evil, natural.

102 – CG admits “Even today, men who are unbelievers in the total sense, and there are very few of them, still tend to be regarded, both in Morocco and Java, less as wicked than as mad.” [CG repeats that belief has not declined again, yet he asserts modernization as a truism]. This ease with religious belief, he tells us, is on the way out.

Religion now provides trappings, but they are not intertwined with everyday life.

103 – The secularization of thought has led to the ideologization of religion.

Science, CG thinks, is the main driver towards secularization.

A century ago only religion could plug leaks in the hand-crafted dike of common sense, now science does it.

We like to think religion and science are not in conflict. We comfort ourselves with that thought. But the war continues and it is not likely to end soon. [CG assumes science will eventually triumph in most spheres of life – it is the common sense default, he contends].

104 – The scripturalists felt the tension between the modern and the religious before others. The move to scripture and away from maraboutism made the divide between religion and common sense day-to-day worse. The turn to scripturalization was part of ideolization, the removal of religion from everyday life.

105 – Scripturalism started as a political movement that climaxed in independence.

Some scripturalists divided the religious world from the secular. Others found precedence for the modern in the Koran. Together these moves make for a sort of Islamic deism. Thus secularization can go ahead full steam without unsettling otherworldly religion.

106 – Indonesia tried more to find modernism in the Koran; morocco to separate religion from this

world. In Indonesia the modern is religious; in Morocco, the modern is not real.

107 – With this withdrawal, religiousness towards religious-mindedness, Muhammad V and Sukarno were able to make the state an all –embracing secular religiosity.

Most of the time, problematically, even priests and anchorites, live in the everyday world and see the world in down-to-earth terms. Religion is only important in certain contexts, like ritual, removed from everyday life.

When anthropologists talk to folks about religion, it is never when they are in religious states. Worship and analysis don't go together.

109 – This problem is like Freud's "secondary revision" of dreams problem, wherein the telling about a dream is different from a dream itself.

110 – We move back and forth from the analytic to the religious. And, the religious comes to cast no more than a shadow. But, the shadow has an impact, CG says, the fusing of world view and ethos is at the heart of the religious perspective.

But in everyday life, you don't work with religious experience, but the memory of it, as with the retelling of a dream.

Both Lyusi and Kalidjaga have their religious experience away from their actions – when interrupted by another.

111 – Here CG wishes to distinguish the force and scope of a cultural pattern.

By Force, he means how, the internalization of religion, its intensity in individual's experience. For some religion is all to them; to others it is peripheral to their day-to-day.

112 - Statistically, this will also differ between societies.

By "Scope" CG means the range of contexts within which the religious impinges.

The force of religion is stronger in Morocco than Indonesia, but its scope is less. In Morocco, religion only impacts a very few parts of life, but it is felt intensely.

113 – If we ask about a religious revival, we must ask is proof of the existence of a revival found in force or scope? Are adherents getting more fervent or is it spreading however meekly into more areas of life – is mild church attendance up?

114 – In our two countries, from 1500 – 1800, there were revivals and the theater government and marabout, the shadow plays and saint worship and the way people lived were in synch.

The Indonesians and Moroccans both still have the temper of Kalidjaga and Lyusi, but the

heightened consciousness that justified their ethos is now inaccessible.

115 – The divergence between the lived world and religious one is barely started in either case (CG admits), but he sees it growing. We will have to wait a while to see the words “Allah is Dead” spoken in Morocco [but he assures us this is coming].

Religion in the modern age must be rethought. But critical reexamination of Islamic doctrine has never been even begun [the weird verb tense is his!].

116 – The disjuncture between everyday life and Islamic scripture continues, especially in Morocco, to the point of spiritual schizophrenia. The Indonesian’s move towards relegating religion to the ethereal is not prominent, but it is not halted either.

He thinks of two young men. One a Muslim going to the US to study drinking scotch, while nervously clutching a Koran. The Indonesian exemplar is a nuclear physicist who builds bombs, potentially, but spends hours obsessing on cosmology, because he needs a compass in life.

Frank O’Connor said an Irishman is never really interesting until he loses his faith. The Moroccans and Indonesians are now getting interesting.