

A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF KEY CONCEPTS IN ISLAM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE  
OF IMAMS

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## ABSTRACT

The continuous occurrence of terrorist attacks in the name of Islam has shown this ideology and its tenets are at least somewhat connected to jihadists committing attacks in its name. This ideology in terms of 13 themes was investigated by the researcher in 58 sermons outlined in the tables in the appendix. These themes include: brotherhood, death, freedom, human rights, justice and equality, love, oppression, peace and treaty, self-defense, sin, submission, terrorism and truth vs. lies. The researcher used a sample of 10 sermons from U.S.-born imams and 10 sermons from foreign-born imams as the basis for the analysis for the theories and themes. Conducting a thematic analysis of U.S.-born and foreign-born imams' sermons, the researcher uncovered their true interpretations of these themes. Following this, the researcher investigated the imams' speech codes.

The researcher found that imams who were born in the United States focused more on religious speech codes compared to the international imams who focused more prominently on cultural speech codes. In terms of social codes, foreign-born imams seem to be more focused on relationships, while those born in the United States focuses more on religious conduct. In terms of religious codes, foreign-born imams seem to have a checklist of requirements in how to act, including referencing believers vs. disbelievers and historical aspects of the codes, while those born in the United States focused on more codes that referred to everyday activities, people and the kind of conduct that a Muslim should have. In terms of cultural codes, foreign-born imams seem to have an immediate need to physically defend against outside forces. This is compared to the United States-born imams, who discuss how to better oneself, how cultural aspects are a distraction and how Muslim converts are more inspirational than the Muslim-born since the converts actively rejected their cultural norms in favor of Islam.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Objective of this Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the sermons of *imams* who were born inside and outside the United States. An *imam* is a Muslim scholar or cleric who can edict Islamic laws across the world. The analysis will focus on how the *imams* define and interpret certain concepts in Islam. In addition, analysis of speech codes used by both U.S.-born and foreign-born *imams* will be conducted to examine if there is a significant difference.

This study is framed from a qualitative, thematic analysis perspective. To completely understand how this study was conducted, an in-depth overview of the theories that will be used to analyze the concepts will be investigated to preface the content with a direction of study. These theories include Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. Subsequently, a description of Islam and the West will be provided, with terminology explained to frame the rest of the literature review and analysis. More precisely, the beginnings of Islam—including the history of the religion, its holy sites, linguistic symbolism, and other aspects—will be explained. The extensive reviews will be necessary so as to analyze the *imams*' interpretations of the concepts that follow.

First, thirteen key concepts in Islam—(1) brotherhood, (2) death, (3), freedom, (4) human rights, (5) justice and equality, (6) love, (7) oppression, (8) peace and treaty, self-defense, (10) sin, (11) submission, (12) terrorism, and (13) truth vs. lies—will be examined within *imams*' sermons. The unit of analysis will be sermons of Muslim clerics. Next, the method section will extensively explain how this thematic analysis was conducted in terms of steps, tactics, and the modes of thinking that this writing employed. This will be thoroughly reviewed to give context to the completed analysis of *imams*' sermons.

Finally, after transcription of imams' sermons are completed, an analysis of these sermons will be conducted using Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory, looking for themes of the thirteen concepts that were reviewed in the first half of this study. After the analysis, any additional information that fills in the gaps will be assessed and added to the review or analysis. By this point, it is the author's hope that the research questions (at the end of this introduction) will have been sufficiently answered while also leading to a future subject on which this research can build.

### Units of Analysis

The units of analysis in this qualitative study are sermons of Muslim *imams* and clerics. According to the Collins English Dictionary (2011), a unit is a "single undivided entity or whole" (cited in Chenail, 2012, p. 266). This means that the entirety of the video or transcript will be analyzed. Although some of these units of analysis will not be "official" (as in an official visit to a university or an official interview), an explanation of the time, place, and context of each selected unit will be explained.

Chenail (2012) explained in depth how qualitative researchers follow a process of tracking their own movements through either field notes or a journal. In this study, the researcher will follow the method of using a color-coding schema on printed out sermons, instead of using a line-by-line measure because the lines will not be equal due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control. Put another way, if a transcript was created from a sermon in terms of a normal 8.5in. x 11in. piece of typing paper, the data would be constrained to be coded in the lines created by the paper. Instead, it will consist of looking at an entire sermon as one unit. These sermons are called *khutbahs*.

As is with other words in Arabic, Urdu, Kurdish and other Islamic languages, the same or similar words are spelled differently. The same is true for *khutbah*. According to Alwan,

Mukheef, al-Salim (2014), *al-khutbah* comes from the word *khataba* “which means "a calamity" or "an important event" (p. 24). Further, the authors refer to *al-khutbah* as “the faculty of finding all ways of persuasion on any subject” (p. 24). The researchers combine different perspectives and conclude sermons must have “the following aesthetic features: 1) selective use of words, 2) linguistic devices such as: rhetorical question; simile, metaphor, metonymy and elliptic sentences; 3) citation of Biblical/Qur’anic and poetic verses [and] 4) clarity, force and elegance” (p. 26).

This previous definition explains in a broken-down form, that a *khutbah* is a persuasive sermon that uses certain linguistic devices. It is a platform for *imams* to dictate messages and religious understanding to those who are listening. Another researcher delivers three definitions of a *khutbah*, as he refers to it, as a formal speech including *Qur’anic* verses and sayings, religious stories and “recommended actions and advice” on a specific subject (Khader, 2017). In this interpretation, this researcher is relaying Allah’s words directly to the *ummah*, and then giving his own interpretation on the subject. This researcher differentiates between a *khutbah* and a *khotbat al-Jumua*, which is a formal, Friday sermon at noon.

### Why Are *Khutbahs* Important to Study?

This study surrounding the investigation of sermons or *khutbahs* is important for many reasons. Analysis of this kind of communication to large Muslim audiences can: provide more information and context to Islam and how Muslims live their lives; provide Muslim populations with information that by attempting to understand their religion, researchers and law enforcement can aid in pinpointing and exterminating radicalism within their religion and communities; and finally, analysis can aid in understanding *imams*’ and clerics’ viewpoints and potential actions that may be detrimental to the United States or the worlds’ civilian population in general.

In terms of the first point, this can be important because culture matters when different groups inhabit the same country and pledge allegiance to the same flag and values. This last point is important because in August, Siraj Ibn Wahhaj, son of *Imam* Siraj Wahhaj (whose sermons are included in this analysis), was training adults and children “to fight against non-believers through techniques including rapid reloads and hand-to-hand combat” (Brown, p. A1). This was occurring in a compound in New Mexico. While none of Wahhaj’s sermons that were analyzed in this study were found to contain any hints about the impending attack, if some had, it might have led the researcher to believe an attack was a serious possibility and refer the *khutbah* and *imam* to law enforcement officials.

### Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** What are the differences in meanings of key Islamic concepts between international *imams* and U.S.-born *imams*?

**Research Question 2:** Do international *imams* and U.S.-born *imams* use different speech codes when discussing key concepts in Islam?

### Rationale for Conducting this Study

This study is important because of the way Western society and its perspectives influence and interact with the rest of the world—particularly Islam—today. By 2040, Muslims will be the second largest religious group in the United States, behind Christians, and it is unknown if the values of these two religions will be able to co-exist peacefully or if one must have the upper hand. By analyzing the thirteen concepts in Islam and exploring how classic and modern *imams* preach about said concepts, an understanding of where the United States is headed within a generation will be achieved.

### Preview of the Main Points

This study begins with a review of the theories that will be applied to the *imams'* sermons. The theories are Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. What follows is a more in-depth look at Islam, in terms of the religion's roots, its holiest sites, and factions of Muslims: Sunni vs. Shia. An explanation of how speakers use symbolism and deception in their language is provided to give context regarding how this analysis will be conducted. This sets up the most extensive part of the literature review, which is the review of the thirteen key concepts in Islam. After explaining the key concepts within Islam, thematic analysis will be described so as to give a preview of how the data will be analyzed. Last, the author will discuss the research methods used to conduct this qualitative thematic analysis.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines multiple theories that will be applied to key concepts within Islam. This will hopefully explain the beliefs Muslims (and people under the guise of Islam) hold while simultaneously uncovering the reasons for actions they take in the name of their religion. Theories rooted in communication and sociology include Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. They will be applied to key concepts within Islam. In addition, both symbolism through language and linguistic deception will be discussed at length. The result of this analysis will be a stepping stone for analyzing sermons by U.S.-born and internationally born *imams* and clerics.

### Speech Codes Theory

Developed by Philipsen (1992), Speech Codes Theory is a framework for communication in a particular speech community. By and large, it examines the method by which groups of people communicate with each other on the basis of social, cultural, gender, occupational, or other factors (Kotani, 2016). As Bylund, Peterson, and Camerson (2012) explain, “Speech Codes Theory proposes that individuals encounter multiple speech codes during their lifetime; these speech codes are related to the people and relationships of that culture” (p. 264). Although culture is often associated with nationality or ethnicity, Philipsen (1992) identified culture as a “socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meanings, premises and rules” (p. 7). This means that culture can be a group of people who do certain activities together, such as a motorcycle gang. Motorcycle gangs would most likely have speech codes that they employ and, by the same token, only members of such gangs would understand those speech codes.

Although every human has a distinct way of speaking, almost everyone attempts to adhere to his or her respective cultural rules to achieve civil interaction. There are three defining characteristics of this theory. First, one must observe cultural behavior to explain the meanings of speech and writings. Second, analysis of speech is necessary to explain the behaviors of a certain group. And third, the general understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction is important. This theory is implicit and explicit in every society.

In the United States, a Judeo-Christian society, implicit actions such as responding to someone when they greet you with a similar greeting, or extending your hand when someone extends his or her own to shake hands when beginning or ending an interaction, is a common cultural practice. Explicitly, one can look at the relationship between two or more people in the interaction and observe ways they attempt to improve interaction or maintain the relationship, depending on the goal of the interaction. A student is expected to respond politely and professionally when a professor enters the classroom. Most good friends have interacted for an extended amount of time where they can understand what each other is trying to communicate with few hints.

#### *Application of Theory*

U.S. customs and rules are not necessarily followed in other countries with different cultures, or even in different parts of the United States. According to Philipsen, Coutu, and Covarrubias (2004), “to understand a particular culture, to teach it to someone else, or to use it in daily life, requires one learn that culture as its own thing, because it is not precisely the same as other cultures” (p. 56). There are codes within cultures that have been created by humans. They change, adapt, and form most daily interactions. They are better known within the culture from which they stem. An article by Chornet and Parr (2017) describes an interaction between good friends who are also work colleagues, where they are deciding who will pay the bill for the meal

they had together. Friend 1 takes initiative and pays at the bar while Friend 2 says “Thank you very much!” when learning of this. Friend 1 responds, “Don’t be stupid!” and “playfully but forcefully” (p. 2) push[es] his friend out of the way. Friend 2 thinks Friend 1’s reaction was not necessary and became frustrated because of the unreciprocated code he understood from their relationship.

Speech Codes Theory was actually created to extract meaning from a plethora of information (Philipsen, Coutu, & Covarrubias, 2004). This can be seen in Chornet and Parr’s (2017) explanation of Zaidman’s (2001) study where an Indian manager described Israelis’ speech patterns and declared the group tough, blunt, and impatient based on their way of speaking. Although this theory has been created and is meant to be used in certain situations, the expected outcome by the user is not guaranteed. In a perfect world, all factors always fit together to ensure the preferred outcome when using a theory, but Philipsen (1997) explains this assumption is not necessarily correct because in real life, humans do not “behave as cultural automatons” (p. 147).

#### *Breakdown of the Theory*

For researchers to be able to use the information they gathered in the field and analyze the target population, Philipsen et al. (2004) provides six propositions of how speech codes are used. The researcher employed these six propositions, in addition to using Gudykunst’s (2005) interpretation because they were much more specific in regards to each proposition. Proposition 1 explains, “*Wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code*” (p. 58). This makes sense when a scenario is broken down. When immigrants travel to live in America, they usually think they should go to places where people of their culture reside to get acclimated to the country more easily and to have familiar people around them to feel socially accepted. Voyer (2015) explains how Lewiston, Maine, became a hot spot for relocating

Somalis between 2000 and 2004. Voyer (2015) continues to explain that migration was sustained because of the knowledge immigrants had of the heavily concentrated immigrant nature of the area. A religious nature and high parent oversight characterized this area. Novotny and Hasman (2015) expand on this notion that cultural proximity matters when immigrants move to the United States, as well as other factors such as the migrants'/immigrants' skill, their resources, and political factors. This is exemplified in the way they speak their native language—they express their socio-cultural values in addition to utilizing their own speech code. Symbols and meanings are “distinct” (p. 58).

Proposition 2 states, “*In any given speech community, multiple speech codes are deployed*” (p. 59). Philipsen et al. describe these multiple speech codes in terms of people communicating as different races and even different social classes. They go on to describe another study where the subjects classified certain communication as “correct” communication and “incorrect” communication based on what communication styles they used (what they viewed as “correct”) and discarded (what they viewed as “incorrect”). It is even broken down to show the term “classes” can refer to professors as one and administrators as another in a certain setting. In this example, the setting is a college or university. Proposition 3 declares, “*A speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric*” (p. 61). Philipsen goes on to explain these speech codes are original to their respective cultures and each culture has created a set of communicative tools.

Proposition 4 states, “*the significance of speaking is contingent upon the speech codes used by interlocutors to constitute the meanings of communicative acts*” (p. 62). Put another way, Philipsen explains that the significance of a sentence depends on the meaning the speaker gives to the sentence. Proposition 5 reads, “*the terms, rules, and premises of a speech code are inextricably woven into speaking itself*” (p. 62). Theoretically, this means these rules cannot be

removed from speaking. It is impossible for them to be mutually exclusive. An example from an online dictionary describes that many businessmen see golf and business as always linked, and golf cannot be removed from business and vice versa. This example can be seen as an active definition. A definition that involves the act of speaking could be that one can pick up on the rules of a speech code during a normal interaction via verbal and social cues. Proposition 6 can better explain these speech code rules.

Proposition 6 reads, “*the artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining, and controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communicative conduct*” (p. 63). Philipsen and Coutu (2005) determine that the question proposition 6 answers is: “How do speech codes influence communicative conduct?” (p. 63). Essentially, speech codes can explain a situation and shape social actors’ actions based on the coherence of the code, social legitimacy of the code, and how well the code is spoken. This can be broken down as the evaluation of speech codes as effective or ineffective. A researcher put this in more perspective when he claimed a framed socially accepted code is more persuasive than those codes that are not framed as such (Gudykunst, 2005).

Although these propositions do not work in a vacuum and change depending on an interaction, the previous six rules could be a roadmap to civil interaction. Spradley (1980) states that “culture, the knowledge that people have learned as members of a group, cannot be observed directly” (p. 10). Instead, we make inferences about culture, based on evidence gathered from two types of human activities: What people do (cultural behaviors include communication) and what people know (cultural knowledge) (cited in Chornet & Parr, 2017). Using Spradley’s belief, Speech Codes Theory will be applied to analyzing the sermons of American born and

foreign born *imams* and their beliefs about certain concepts in Islam. Another theory called Symbolic Interactionism will be used to attempt to build on this research.

### Symbolic Interactionism

Fundamentally, Symbolic Interactionism implies humans act in certain ways because they react to the actions for which they give a certain meaning. As Solomon (1983) explains, symbolic interactionism focuses on the process by which individuals understand their world. It assumes people interpret the actions of others rather than simply reacting to them. The elicited response is a function of the meaning attached to such actions (Blumer, 1962), which is, in turn, mediated largely by symbols. Thus a person's relation to physical (objective) reality is mediated by the symbolic environment (p. 320).

Glaser and Strauss (1964) give an example where nurses and doctors do not tell terminally-ill patients they are dying to maintain the "psychological well-being" of the patient (cited in Carter & Fuller, 2015, p. 5). The nurses and doctors decided to not tell the patients they are dying because they believed that the patients would not live life to the fullest. Thus, the doctors and nurses mediate the patients' relationship to the real world or physical environment.

The previous example can relate back to Speech Codes Theory in that the speech codes were respective to each culture. The doctors had their own interaction rules between each other and a separate one when engaging in a doctor-patient relationship. The difference, though, is that Symbolic Interactionism focuses largely on symbols of an interaction when forming an interpretation (Handberg, Thorne, Midtgaard, Nielsen, & Lomborg, 2015). Meaning is created through social interaction. This differs from Speech Codes Theory, because Speech Codes Theory looks at how culture socially constructs meanings. Symbolic Interactionism focuses on symbols. Geertz (1994) explains that, once behavior is seen as symbolic action, culture cannot be

seen as patterned conduct. Handberg et al. (2015) explains that symbolic interactionism is rooted in pragmatism and sociology, and it builds on:

Three simple assumptions: (a) people strive and act toward what represents meaning for them, (b) meaning arises out of social interaction, and (c) meaning is being dealt with and modified through interpretive processes. Thus, a central feature of SI is the inseparability of the individual and the context within which the individual exists. (p. 1023)

Although the researchers stress that this refers to behavior in a health context, it can be applied as a general behavioral context as well.

Another example relates to the research in this thesis in regards to different cultural groups. Swidler (1986) states “people organize their social behaviours using cultural values, beliefs, norms, and symbols. Symbols are cultural toolkits that form the standards for normalizing behaviours and evaluating social behavior” (cited in Ukasoanya, 2014, p. 155). This statement makes sense for any culture. People act depending on how and what they believe. The reason is that individuals are active interpreters of their world and do not operate according to pre-determined assumptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 27). This implies that students’ personal interpretations they attach to the action may be more of a factor in predicting their behavior than the actual events themselves (Ukasoanya, 2014).

Ukasoanya’s (2014) statement that people’s interpretations of an event may determine their behavior more than the actual event relates directly to the Islamic beliefs (to be analyzed later on) of the clerics and politicians who claim Islam is peaceful while continued terrorist attacks and human rights abuses in the name of Islam are not only very prominent, they also are claimed to be in defense of and for the sake of Muslims. Yet, this paper will show that this can be described as a perceived reaction rather than an actual one. Muslims’ reaffirmation of their belief in Islam—e.g., by seeing the religion as honorable and defense in nature—segues into another theory that will be used to analyze the sermons: Social Identity Theory.

## Social Identity Theory

Developed by Tajfel (1978), Social Identity Theory is the classification that people place on themselves and others based on a multitude of different factors, such as occupation, ethnicity, and gender, to create in-groups and out-groups. Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) explain that an in-group is a set of people who abide by a participant's beliefs and standards while an out-group is one that has perceived differences regarding different categories. People strive to be accepted and become part of a superior group via a personal and social identity. Rodriguez (2016) explains that if someone sees themselves in a negative way, then they become motivated to find a way to increase their positive view of themselves. As stated by Rodriguez (2016),

A person's self-concept derives from two principal sources: personal identity and social identity... Social identity includes the group affiliations that are recognized as being part of the self, such as one's image of oneself as a Protestant, a blue-collar worker, or a conservative.

There are two groups that emerge: the in-group or the out-group. Tajfel and Turner (1979) observed that everyone operated in an "us vs. them" thinking, with Strelan and Lawani (2010) coming to the conclusion that everyone involved is both a victim and perpetrator. The latter part of these two thoughts is reduced now-a-days to the underperforming statement, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

These in-groups and out-groups and "us vs. them" mentality were examined in multiple studies. One study by Wohl and Branscombe (2005) looked at the Jews and the remaining feelings of the Holocaust depending on the situation. First, the researchers found that forgiveness was given toward the perpetrators when the Holocaust was framed as an attack against humans. However, when the condition became the Germans being the aggressor toward the Jewish people, forgiveness was not found. As they concluded in regard to terrorism: When there is an in-group and an out-group, forgiveness and reconciliation are far less likely. In



Strelan and Lawani's (2010) study, they tested this assumption, but the in-group and out-group were Islam and the West—more specifically, Muslims and Westerners who identified as Australian. It used the same frame as Wohl and Branscombe's study. Strelan and Lawani's hypotheses were:

- Participants in the human ingroup condition will be more forgiving of terrorists than those in the social ingroup condition (Hypothesis 1a)
- There will also be a main effect for what we call “salient identity”—the extent to which a person identifies as Muslim or Westerner. Given the terrorist acts we prime were carried out by Islamic extremists, social identity theory suggests Muslims will be more likely than Westerners to forgive terrorist acts carried out by fellow Muslims (Hypothesis 1b).
- Muslims will be more forgiving than Westerners at both the human and social priming levels (Hypothesis 1c)
- participants in the human ingroup condition will be more forgiving of past conflicts than those in the social ingroup condition; Hypothesis 4a)
- Westerners will be more forgiving of past conflicts than Muslims (Hypothesis 4b).

#### Muslims vs. the West

The results of Strelan and Lawani's (2010) study show how the in-group and out-group mentality remains true to this day. They continue: Hypothesis 1a proved true because Westerners held more negative feelings toward Muslims and Muslims held more negative feelings toward Westerners, which was more negative feelings than either group held toward their own group. Muslims were also seen as “more forgiving of communities perceived to support terrorism” (p. 64). The authors found that the group would respond as more positive, behaviorally, if they framed terrorist actions with a human identity aspect. The study also found that Muslims see themselves more as victims than do Westerners. They were less willing to acknowledge negative statements about their in-group but were no more forgiving than Westerners of terrorists. This seems to make sense when thinking about how Muslims most likely blame the United States for the Iraq war and other violence in the Middle East since the 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Because in-group and out-group classifications are inevitable, it might be impossible to

reclassify one's self. Nevertheless, how likely are we to see Muslims take responsibility for the attacks that have been perpetrated in the name of Islam?

### The Meaning of "In-Group" in Islam

Will the in-group hold its own in-group responsible? The meaning of "in-group" entails different things for different groups. In Islam, one could point to a poll referenced in a 2008 *The New York Times* article by Noah Feldman, claiming that around 60 percent of Egyptians, Pakistanis, and Jordanians believe that *sharia* should be the only sort of law in their country. The ones who subscribe to this belief would be the in-group and the ones who do not would be considered the out-group. A more recent poll conducted in 2017 by the Pew Research Center revealed that the majority of American Muslims (64% or 2,144,000 people) say there are multiple interpretations of Islam, while 31% (or 1,038,500 people) only see one true way of interpreting Islam. This smaller group believes that the traditional interpretations of Islam are the true version of Islam (Sciupac, 2017). Although the study did not give its sample size, this is still an alarming percentage of American Muslims believing there is only one interpretation.

Another example of the in-group vs. out-group difference in Islam is reflected in the treatment of the Ahmadiyya sect within Islam. The Ahmadiyya is a religious sect in Asian countries like Pakistan and Indonesia and African nations like Tanzania and Nigeria. Ahmadiyya Muslims have been persecuted for their religious beliefs. They believe that there will be a new prophet after Muhammad (Irawan, 2017). In both 1980 and 2005, the Indonesian Council of Clerics decried this sect as deviant, because they believed different things about Islam. This created an in-group and out-group between the Ahmadiyya, who make up "less than 1% of the total population of Indonesian Muslims" (Irawan, 2017, p. 165) and an undescribed group of Muslims that the Indonesian Council of Clerics claim to represent.

## Islam

The following is an in-depth look at one of the world's most populous religions. This section will lay the groundwork for the concepts about which this thesis will gather information from *imams* before analyzing and concluding about the *imams*' perceptions of this religion. In a religious context, Islam means voluntary submission to [Allah] (Lewis & Churchill, 2008). However, as will be explained further, submission within Islam is not voluntary.

Muslims are the followers of Islam. They fall into two major groups, Sunni and Shia (or Shi'i). A more in-depth look at the Sunnis and Shias is discussed below. Although Johnson (2016) explains submission only refers to submission of Muslims to Allah, this word has become supplemented to mean many things. Current understanding of Islam is that it has multiple paths that are shown to the world. To some, submission refers to Johnson's statement, which was trying to say: Follow Allah with all of one's heart. However, submission also refers to the adherence to strict Islamic code and the idea that straying too far from the line could mean danger to anyone accused of being too lax. What follows includes an overview of Islam, including some history, basic facts, and understandings as well as the necessary overview for this thesis to give a comprehensive review.

### *History of Islam*

According to Tzeferakos and Douzenis (2017), Islam began with the Prophet Muhammad listening to Allah in a cave near Mecca. Johnson (2016) believes it was *Jibra'il* (i.e., Archangel) Gabriel who visited Muhammad. Attempting to move from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD, Muhammad began to develop a large following in Islam (in every part of their lives). Adam was recognized as the first Muslim. However, according to Peters (2003), Muhammad's intent was not to found a new religion but instead to tell others to return to Allah's word, known

as the Quran, and restore faith. This migration to Medina is known as *hijrah* and is believed to be the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The migration created multiple warzones, putting Islam as a powerful, political force. In 632 AD, Muhammad died without appointing a successor.

Although there are different beliefs about who the successor should have been (mainly between the Sunnis and Shias), Muhammad's death did not stop the spread of Islam. Muslim rule extended to North Africa and eventually across Asia and India. This process began with the belief of Vandal Arianism. Vandals were an East-Germanic tribe (Brittanica Encyclopedia, 2012). The term "Arianism" began to be attributed to groups of theologians who disagreed with the creed of Nicea. Despite this, Arianism eventually became a reference for anyone who strayed from orthodox teachings (Giles, 2015). During this time, when Vandal Arianism was fully established, Christianity was all but extinguished—only small areas of little to no influence remained. This is why Speel II (1960) believes that Vandal Arianism split Africa from the Roman Empire. This relates to Islam because Speel II purports that Vandal Arianism was closer to Islam than Christianity and that this group overtook European land.

Johnson (2016) states that the Ottoman Empire ended in 1683 with the failure to overtake Vienna, Austria. This mass migration and takeover represents the goal of Islamic fundamentalists today: the achievement of the Caliphate (an Islamic system of world government) and the return to Salafism (the "golden age" of Islam). Hence, the real objective of Islam is to capture the entire world under Muslim rule. According to a Pew Poll in 2010, "at least half of all Christians in every country surveyed expect that Jesus will return to earth in their lifetime, while roughly 30% or more of Muslims expect to live to see the re-establishment of the caliphate, the golden age of Islamic rule." The poll was based on 25,000 face-to-face interviews in 19 sub-Saharan African nations.

During and after moving to Medina, Muhammad became more violent and radicalized. According to Bukay (2007), Muhammad moved through stages in his life, progressing from peaceful existence to a defensive-war-only mindset, culminating in an aggressive fight against anyone who did not believe in Allah, the one true God in the eyes of Muslims. Although the literature up to this point has discussed the beginnings of Islam as a religion, what follows is a look into the fundamentals of Islam in terms of prayer and pilgrimage. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, there are five pillars of Islam (Rahman, Mahdi, Schimmel, Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). These are essential duties for every Muslim. *Shahadah* is the Muslim profession of faith; *salat* means ritual prayer, which is to be done five times a day; *zakat* is a tax to benefit the poor; *sawm* is the fasting during Ramadan; and *hajj* is the major pilgrimage to Mecca (al-Modarresi, 2016).

### *Holy Sites*

There are three major sites considered holy by Muslims: Mecca, home of the Prophet; Medina, the city to which Muslims relocated when forced from Mecca due to persecution; and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, believed to be the oldest Islamic building in existence (Johnson, 2016). There are rules regarding Mecca in Islam. Some of these rules fall under the five pillars of Islam. The pillars that reference Islamic holy sites include the second and the fifth. The second pillar, called *salah*, “are prayers adherents say while facing Mecca five times daily at regular hours and also at the main service held each Friday at a mosque” (Johnson, 2016). *Zakat*, or a monetary tax, is the third pillar. The fourth pillar is the fasting during Ramadan. The fifth and final pillar is the *hajj*, which signifies a Muslim’s pilgrimage to Mecca, one which every able-bodied Muslim must take in his or her lifetime.

Mecca is seen as a highly regarded holy city in the religion of Islam, if not the holiest city (Nasr, 2005). This is because it is widely considered the Prophet Muhammad's birthplace. But, according to the New World Encyclopedia (2016), Mecca was established, whether socially or religiously, as the holiest city before the Prophet Muhammad came to be. The holiness comes from the Ka'bah and The Black Stone. The encyclopedia explains that the Ka'bah is a religious center, equated to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for the Jewish people. The Black Stone is symbolic because it has been said that this black stone, which was originally white, turned to black "through absorbing the sins of the thousands of pilgrims who have kissed and touched it" (New World Encyclopedia, 2016). There are other holy sites in Mecca, but these two are the most venerated.

Medina is a city also considered a holy site. This is considered a holy site because it is the end of Muhammad's *hijrah* and eventually his resting place (Trofimov, 2008). After Muhammad attempted calls for social justice, he and his followers were excommunicated. "The Prophet and his followers were persecuted and were the subject of boycotts and death threats. In 622 CE, Muslim families began a migration (*hijrah*) to Yathrib, later known as Medina" (Johnson, 2016). After settling, Medina is where Muhammad became more radical and began preaching about violent Islam. In addition, Medina is seen as a holy site for another reason. Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, or the *Mosque of the Prophet*, is located in Medina. This is considered the second holiest site in Islam, after Masjid al-Haram (Trofimov, 2008). Masjid al-Haram, *The Sacred Mosque*, surrounds the Ka'bah which is where Muslims pray to every day. Al-Masjid an-Nabawi, or *The Prophet's Mosque* is the specific location of where Muhammad is buried (Ariffin, 2005).

Jerusalem is another holy site in Islam. "Jerusalem is the first of the two *qiblas*, and the third (after Mecca and Medina) of the most sacred land" (Matthews, 1936). Talhami (1996)

explains there is evidence that Muhammad chose Jerusalem as a holy place for Muslims precisely because it was a holy place for Christianity, or People of the Book. The author explains that having Jerusalem as a holy site taught followers the challenge of religious tolerance and what it felt like to defend a holy site. Talhami (1996) goes on to explain why Muslims regarded Jerusalem as holy. He explains the angel Gabriel awoke Muhammad one night and took him to a shrine in the city before taking him to heaven, allowing Muhammad to lead other prophets, including Jesus, in prayer. Followers were skeptical of this recitation, because Jerusalem is a month's journey. They remained skeptical until Abu Bakr, the first caliph, asked Muhammad to recite for him what he saw. After he described Jerusalem, their doubts were quelled.

#### *Sunni vs. Shia Muslims*

There are two factions of Muslims: Sunni and Shia. Sunni Muslims make up 85% of the global Muslim population, while the latter 15% are the Shia faction (Salem Encyclopedia, 2016). Sunnis believe that the community was supposed to choose Muhammad's successor instead of the Shias' belief that Muhammad already chose Ali and that the decision should be respected. Sunnis, unlike Shias, do not give *imams* or religious leaders a stature of divinity (Salem Press Encyclopedia, 2016). Disregarding this major difference, the remaining differences involve issues such as inheritance and the number of times a day a Muslim prays. There have been many conflicts between the groups, whether it be after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein or during the Syrian Civil War. The Syrian conflict is still continuing to this day (Salem Press Encyclopedia, 2016).

#### *Jihad*

As we can see with the basic disagreements between Muslims and "The West," especially after looking at Strelan and Lawani's (2010) study regarding in-groups and out-groups, there are different ideological understandings of reasons for the Iraq war and who is to blame for the

conflict. Muslims believed they were justified in attacking the West after the United States invaded Iraq, because they perceived their actions as an act of self-defense, while the United States thought they had the right to invade because they believed Saddam Hussein had WMDs (weapons of mass destruction) and because of the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Many pundits were also asking, was it because the United States wanted oil in Iraq? At this point, it does not matter because *jihad* has been the justification for many of the attacks on the West that have been seen. Shah (2009) believes that “as a result of jihad, the honour, life and property and places of worship are protected. It eliminates injustice, oppression, fear and harassment, savagery and lawlessness and terrorism and the wronged gets relief” (p. 549). From this perspective, *jihad* is an act of justice. The Quran even states that Allah loves those who fight against those who are against Islam (Quran 4:95; Quran 49:15).

#### *Principle of Abrogation in the Quran*

It is important to note that *jihad* has been portrayed as an act that has two sides, similar to a coin. This is the basis for many who say that Islam is not violent at its base or that it is the religion of peace. Nullifying these excuses, however, the Quran itself has later verses that nullify the Prophet Muhammad’s early peaceful verses and teachings. This is called the Principle of Abrogation (Burton, 1990). According to this principle, verses that were added later in the Quran supersede—hence, abrogate—earlier verses in that holy text. Earlier verses tend to be more peaceful and poetic, whereas later verses are more violent and condone (even encourage) war and violence against infidels and the People of the Book (e.g., Jews and Christians) (Bonner, 2008). This all means that later, more violent verses have precedence and authority over earlier, more peaceful verses. Put another way, peaceful verses have no value to a true, devout Muslim because Medinan verses abrogate Meccan verses. Historically, the Prophet Muhammad was more peaceful in his earlier times in Mecca (Lewis & Churchill, 2008).



The Quran actually acknowledges the Principle of Abrogation. One verse, Quran 2:106, states the following: “Whichever *ayat* [verse] we instate or cause to be forgotten, we replace it with that which is better than it or similar to it. Did you not know that Allah is Capable of all things?” Another verse is Quran 16:101, which states “When We ‘badalna’ one *ayat* in place of another, and Allah knows best about what He brings down, they say, ‘You are merely a fabricator!’ Indeed, most of them do not know.” This is the Islamic reform movement that occurred from the eighteenth to twentieth century, “interested in renewing devotion and adherence to the major principles of Islam (*ijtihad*)” (Burnidge, 2012, p. 591). Nineteenth-century reformers wanted Muslim followers to return to Muhammad’s teachings and the “principles of the first Islamic community,” or *ummah* (Burnidge, 2012, p. 591). This argument supplants the following analysis of the two sides of jihad.

#### *Ijtihad: A Reform Movement in Islam*

By definition, *ijtihad* refers to a re-interpretation of the Quran (Hallaq, 2005; Kayadibi, 2017). “In Islamic literature, *ijtihad* carries two distinct meanings. In its more general meaning, *ijtihad* is associated with the expansion and renewal of Islamic law. In its more specific meaning, *ijtihad* is a juristic tool ... used to interpret the Basic Code” referring to the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Khan, 2003, p. 345). Khan continues on to explain that the Qur’an is holy and therefore no word or meaning of the book is allowed to be changed or its sequence re-arranged. This is important because this belief relates directly to the Principle of Abrogation. Because none of the verses or entries may be altered, then it should be the understanding that the earlier peaceful, Meccan verses become negated by Muhammad’s later teachings. Further, Khan refers to the Qur’an as pure and that what separates it from other religious texts and teachings is that Muslims believe the Quran is the “true copy of the oral text” (p. 351).

There is peaceful *jihad* and violent *jihad*, according to Biscontini (2016). In the 1930s, Abdul Ghaffar Khan was the leader of a movement called the Kudhai Khidmatgar, which was a large number of Pashtuns. This movement was in response to the campaign of Indian independence from Britain as well as a campaign of civil disobedience (Kurtz, 2011). Kudhaid Khidmatgar became an ally of Congress and Gandhi's independence movement, even though they were originally intended to be a social and economic movement. This, combined with Ghaffar Khan's childhood upbringing of devout religiosity and adherence to non-violence, led Ghaffar Khan to resist against the British. Ghaffar Khan along with "his grandfather and father were ... part of a Muslim *jihad* against British rule" (Kurtz, 2011, p. 247). Badshah Khan claimed that the Kudhaid Khidmatgar was the peaceful resistance, while there were other violent resistances taking place against British forces. Khan also explained that there was peaceful and violent Islam. One scholar Rami G. Khouri compared the U.S. Civil Rights movement to human rights movements in the Muslim world. Khouri was not able to give examples of these human rights movements in the Muslim world, however—they must be hidden well, because the only crusades seen from Muslims are violent ones of oppression and hatred toward to the United States and her allies.

#### *Lesser Jihad vs. Greater Jihad*

There has been a narrative by the American Left (those who fall to the left of the political spectrum) that Islam, is above all, a peaceful religion and that Americans do not understand Islam and Islam has no connection to terroristic tendencies. Matusitz (2013) explains that there is a greater *jihad* and a lesser *jihad*. Greater *jihad* is the internal struggle that a Muslim has when deciding what is right, while lesser *jihad* "refers to the external, physical effort to defend Islam (including terrorism) when the Muslim community is under attack" (p. 13).

Referring to this separation, one can see a good example of lesser *jihad* at the Women's March, on January 21, 2017, held the day after the inauguration of Donald J. Trump as President of the United States. At this march, many speakers condemned Trump and spoke of how women's rights were under attack.

One speaker, Linda Sarsour, Islamist and supporter of the Democratic party, aided a call to *jihad* in front of the crowd: "I hope, that when we stand up to those who oppress our communities, that Allah accepts from us that as a form of jihad. We are struggling against tyrants and rulers not only abroad in the Middle East but here in the United States of America, where you have fascists and white supremacists and Islamophobes reigning in the White House" (Shideler, 2017). After harsh rebuke of her comments, Sarsour stated she was taken out of context. Arguments could be made that this was a call to resist President Trump similar to what Ghaffar Khan did to the British. Or others could see it being more similar to Escobar's (2012) explanation of Hizb ut-Tahrir (HUT). HUT, according to Escobar (2012), were a "pan-Islamic secret society founded in 1953 in Saudi Arabia and Jordan by a Palestinian" (p. 165) named Sheikh Taquiddin an-Nabhani, who hated democracies the West attempted to set up for Muslim nations. He was pushing a single-Muslim world order, or caliphate. Is this what Sarsour intended? Or was it just a political stunt to further the "resist" objective that democrats have clung to since the election of Donald J. Trump? Either way, peace does not seem to be a factor in the call to *jihad*.

Lesser *jihad* and greater *jihad* have been broken down by scholars using a metaphor known as fighting with the sword vs. fighting with the pen, respectively. According to Torres Soriano (2012), fighting with the pen involves combatting the enemy with propaganda, whether written, spoken, or by video. Fighting with the sword involves actual acts of violence against the

enemy. One can look at the magazines that al-Qaeda and ISIS have produced as well as the propaganda videos that have been posted online as examples of fighting with the pen. Torres Soriano (2012), instead of mentioning magazines such as *Inspire*, first published in 2010, mentions the Global Islamic Media Group (GIMG) and the Global Islamic Media Centre (GIMC). GIMG was a virtual “distribution list” for “ideological and propaganda manuals” set up a couple of months before the 9/11 attacks (p. 771). GIMC was intended to “exploit the internet” and use it as a tool “for the benefit of the *Ummah*” or the community (p. 771). Lesser *jihad* can be seen more and more nowadays, especially in Europe, where stabbings, bombings, and truck attacks have seemingly become the norm.

### *Jihad vs. Terrorism*

Upon looking at lesser and greater *jihad*, one can realize that the difference may not be as obvious as it seems. Once again, lesser *jihad* is more related to *jihadism* while greater *jihad* is “fighting the evil within oneself” (Gorka, 2009, p. 1). Lesser *jihad* is translated to *jihad Asgar*, compared to greater *jihad*, which translates to *jihad Akbar* (Mamdani, 2002). Many play down the connection between *jihad* and terrorism. According to Shah (2009), “terrorism jeopardizes the very fabric of society and obliterates noble human values while jihad aims at restoring justice, equality, rule of law, respect for human beings, peace and tranquility” (p. 551). This relates again to the Principle of Abrogation, as mentioned in the section “History of Islam.” This means that the nonviolent *jihad* verses are replaced by violent *jihad* or terroristic verses. Bukay (2011) explains, “defensive warfare in Islam is nothing but a phase of ... calling all people to embrace Islam. Even for People of the Book, there can be no role except conversion to Islam or subjugation to Muslim rule. Hence, Muhammad’s statement, ‘They would not invade you, but you invade them.’”

Lesser and greater *jihad* have been explored, but according to Hamid and Sein (2009), there are four different kinds of *jihad*: of the heart, through the tongue, through the hands, and by the sword. To attain *jihad* of the heart is to be with Allah completely and escape the persuasion Allah speaks of. Hamid and Sein (2009) say this is the most significant. To attain *jihad* through the tongue and hands, one must “support the right and wrong” (p. 71). Finally, *jihad* by the sword is where physical action is taken to attain *jihad*. This physical action is more aligned with terrorism, or lesser *jihad*. This interpretation is different from Goraka’s (2009), who explains there are seven swords of *jihad*.

First, he references Muhammad’s return to Mecca from Medina, based on the necessity to organize the tribes in the city. The sword or the act of force became a factor, if necessary. Second, *ridda* (war against apostasy) became the second sword of jihad when Abu Bakr’s reign was threatened by tribes on the Arabian Peninsula. The third sword describes the granting to Muslims the ability to defy and overthrow their leader if said leader is not living as a true Muslim or in the form of pure Islam, which is known as Muhammad’s reign. The fourth sword occurred in the 1700s, when the Muslims defied and resisted Britain’s colonialism. The founder of this fourth sword was named Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabi Islam. According to Schwartz (2003), Wahhabism is a major Sunni sect of Islam that is intolerant of other faiths, including sects such as Shia Islam.

The fifth sword of *jihad* was rooted in *takfirism*, which is the excommunication of non-Muslims. This sword relies on principles by Ibn Taymiyya, who was a Sunni theologian who believed Allah wanted Muslims to live their lives according to a strict interpretation of the hadiths and the Quran. He was part of the Athari scholars, who can be described as a movement that worshipped Islam via a strict interpretation or textualist perspective of the Quran (Halverson, 2010).

The sixth sword of *jihad* did not occur until much later, born with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's professor and mentor, negated the earlier interpretations of how a holy war may begin. Instead of having it declared by a "legitimate authority," Azzam believed it could be done individually. This sixth sword was associated with resistance to the Soviets, while the United States, a new world power, as Gorka (2009) explains it, came to the forefront of Islam's far enemy. This was *jihad's* most defining reinterpretation. The seventh sword of *jihad* became known as fighting the far enemy (or the enemy who supports tyrannical regimes in the Muslim world). This fight against the far enemy culminated on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and the re-branding of al-Qaeda. Most recently, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, is the seventh sword's vehicle, because terrorism today knows no bounds.

#### Symbolism Through Language

People choose the words they say for a certain reason. Sometimes the words chosen are intended to be taken at face value, while other times there is a deeper meaning. Take, for example, Anjem Choudary, a radical British Muslim who has voiced support for radical groups and pro-Muslim tendencies. According to a 2006 *Evening Standard* article, Choudary organized people in Denmark to protest the depiction of Muhammad that occurred in a Danish publication. Attendees of the event had placards that said, "Behead those who insult Islam." Choudary responded to the outcome of the protest by stating, "The Muslims take their religion very seriously and non-Muslims must appreciate that and [they] must also understand that there may be serious consequences if you insult Islam and the prophet." One might counter this by claiming non-Muslims would not understand Islam's stance on this until they were told. Even then, in many Western countries, free speech would trump this stance almost immediately. Choudary also exclaimed, "Whoever insults the message of Mohammad is going to be subject to capital

punishment.” At face value, he is sending a message, proclaiming any backlash or criticism of Islam allows for the murder of the speaker.

### Linguistic Deception

Linguistic Deception is a method whereby people use words and language in certain ways to deceive and avoid telling the truth. In the words of Armistead (2011),

The fundamental premise of linguistic approaches to the detection of deception in statements is that when we are being deceptive, certain linguistic aspects of our speech or our writing differ non-randomly and observably from those same aspects when we are being truthful” (p. 305).

Statement Analysis is a technique that has been used to analyze statements verbally given. Also referred to as Scientific Content Analysis and Investigative Discourses Analysis (Leo, 2008, cited in Hwang, Matsumoto, & Sandoval, 2016), this technique analyzes the words that people use and determine meaning using statement validity analysis, which is a technique declaring statements based on actual memories differ from statements based off of “fabrication or fantasy” (Hwang et al., 2016, p. 56). Hwang et al. state that this technique has been criticized because it has not been applied to languages other than German and English, and there is a need to test across other languages. Although the sermons analyzed in my study are in English, whether translated or delivered that way, the imam or cleric’s indicators of deception—extraneous information, equivocation, non-prompted negation, passive voice, and moderating adverbs—will be applied to explanations of Islamic concepts.

The following is an overview of Hwang et al.’s (2016) study that coded Statement Analysis categories from interviews with European Americans, Chinese immigrants, and Hispanic immigrants to determine what “would differentiate truthful statements from lying ones” (p. 58).

The purpose of Hwang et al.'s (2016) study was to see if Statement Analysis could differentiate between subjects' intent to commit a crime and "whether basic factors such as language and gender could affect the efficacy of SA in deception detection" (p. 67). Statement Analysis has been criticized in the past due to lack of crossover to other languages. Hwang et al. explained five indicators of a liar. These were: Extraneous information, Equivocation, Non-prompted negation (NPN), passive voice, and moderating adverbs. Extraneous information refers to information that specifically does not answer the question asked. Adams (1996) believes this may allow the subject to distance themselves from the question (Hwang et al., 2016, p. 58). Equivocation refers to vague language that can be intentionally used to deceive (Hwang et al., 2016). Non-prompted negation (NPN) can be used in statements as a way of negating or indicating they "did not" commit or take part in a crime (Hwang et al., 2016, p. 58). In a study, Matsumoto and colleagues (2013) reported that liars from different ethnic groups produced more equivocation when writing statements in English. Passive voice is another indicator of deception Hwang et al. (2016) found. In terms of grammar, passive voice occurs "when the object is the subject of a sentence. It may be used when liars attempt to conceal their identity as an actor, distancing themselves from the action of the verb" (p. 58). Moderating verbs are those that "minimize the role of the actor" (p. 58). Pre-study questionnaires were given to the participants to assess demographics, emotion, and satisfaction with life as well as the GEQ, which is a "commonly used scale to measure acculturation and ethnic identity and was included as a manipulation check for ethnic [and] cultural differences" (p. 60).

After analyzing the data, the researchers found that true statements had more "veracity indicators" than false statements and false statements had more deception indicators than true ones (Hwang et al., 2016). Plus, participants telling the truth wrote more details and had more overall information related to the incident than liars did. This study showed that statement



analysis could be used to “distinguish truths from lies across languages” (Hwang et al., 2016, p. 65). Although this study focused on written statements, another study by Van Swol, Braun, and Malhotra (2012), “examine[d] linguistic differences between lies, deception by omission, and truths for participants in an ultimatum game in which Allocators can choose whether to deceive their partners” (p. 80). The following is an overview of their study.

Van Swol et al’s (2012) study enacted the Ultimatum game where the Allocator is given an undisclosed amount of money and told to split it between themselves and the Recipient. The Recipient does not know how much money the Allocator received, only how much the Allocator is giving to them. The Recipient can question, accept, or deny the allocation. “If it is rejected, the Allocator receives nothing, but the Recipient receives a default amount (equal to 25% of the Allocator’s actual endowment)” (p. 81). The researchers explained a couple of attributes from past studies they included in their hypothesis. They said that while non-strategic linguistic cues such as pronouns “are often used in speech without much awareness, and their use is often difficult to control” (p. 82), pronoun use might indicate deception. “Liars have been found to make fewer self-oriented references and, thus, use fewer first-person singular pronouns and more third-person pronouns” (p. 82). This review of Linguistic Deception provides context for the reader to evaluate the differences in the *imams*’ interpretation of the concepts.

#### Meanings of Key Concepts in Islam

The following is an in-depth review of key concepts in the Islamic faith. The concepts are: brotherhood, death, freedom, human rights, justice and equality, love, oppression, peace and treaty, self-defense, sin, submission, terrorism and truth vs. lies. These concepts are central to the religion of Islam and the interpretation of each concept seem to differ in terms of how

Americans defined these terms in a Judeo-Christian society. These concepts were uncovered by the researcher and his advisor via reading literature on Islam and terrorism.

### *Brotherhood*

When discussing brotherhood in Islam, initial conversation does not revolve around the Sunni terrorist organization the Muslim Brotherhood. Instead, discussion and analysis will focus on how Muslims regard each other in a familial aspect and, more specifically, through prayer. Nasir (2016) explains “the idea of Muslim brotherhood and unity has always been emphasized by the imam during this persuasive discourse” (p. 76). Nasir’s study focuses on the *Eid* prayer, which according to this researcher, coincides with important Islamic celebrations such as the end of the fasting month and the observance of the *hajj*. Before Nasir’s study is analyzed, brotherhood as a custom and practice will be explained, followed by a deeper exploration into *Eid* prayer and *hajj*, for context.

As has been discussed throughout this paper Western life and Muslim life might not have similar codes and values. Assimilation to the culture one lives in is a more likely scenario, rather than the true existence of both ideologies. Rhode (2011) explains Muslim countries will never see themselves as friends or allies of the West or any non-Muslim world. Rhode puts this in the context of religiosity and military perspectives. Religiously, the author explains, the West and Muslim world will not connect due to *millah*, which is the re-evaluation and “religious tradition” according to Sabajan (2008). But, from the Quran, *Madhhab* is the Arabic word for religion while *Din* is always referred to as the act of submission to God (Neusner, Sonn, & Brockopp, 2000). *Din* will be explained more when submission is discussed. Rhode (2011) goes on to explain Islam and the West will be at odds with one another unless Muslims are forced to re-evaluate their religiosity and their interpretation of the religion. It will either be done peacefully or through military means.

Even though Muslims might feel spiritually connected and have a sense of brotherhood with other Muslims because they worship the same God, Rhode (2011) counters this belief by declaring “the demand from their prophet—and, later, political and religious leaders—again and again that they get along together indicates that they did not. In general Arabs cannot stand Persians, who look down on Turks; Shi’ites fear Sunnis; Sunnis intimidate Shi’ites; most look down on Sufis.” As we will see further in this paper, certain theorists see different sects as loving Allah more or less. Rhode’s previous classifications contrast with Abdin (2004) who believes Sufis are the most pure of all Muslims.

Nasir (2016) explains, “The mosque always emphasizes this idea of Muslim brotherhood through the sermon of the prayer” (p. 61–62). Further, Rhode (2011) equates the idea of brotherhood in Islam as similar to how the American mafia operates. The researcher elaborates, each Mafia family operates independently and displays hatred toward each other, until an outside force such as the “Feds” (as Rhode puts it) confront them. Brotherhood will continue to be explained through the *Eid* ritual.

The *Eid* prayer (ritual) is a set of annual prayers recognizing a celebration and a sacrifice. The first prayer, *Eid al-Fitr*, is a “celebration of the end of fasting month and the peak observance of the hajj” (Nasir, 2016, p. 61–62). This is “a particular salat (Islamic prayer) consisting of two rakats (units) and generally offered in an open field or large hall. It may be performed only in congregation (*Jama’at*) and has an additional extra six Takbirs” (p. 62). During this time, followers bring their hands to their ears while giving their religious call of “*Allahu Akbar*.” The *Takbir* is said four times. The second prayer is the *Eid al-Adha*. This prayer is considered holier than *Eid al-Fitr* because it honors Abraham’s willingness to submit to God. Pervez (2014) discusses the relationship between Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael,

According to the Quran ... God commanded Abraham to take his wife, Hagar, and their son, Ishmael, to the valley of Mecca and leave them there. During one of his visits, Abraham dreamed that he was offering Ishmael as a sacrifice to God; he interpreted it as a divine command. Both father and son submitted themselves to God's will and prepared for the sacrifice. God, however, was only testing their obedience, and they were instead directed to sacrifice a ram. (Islamic Circle of North America)

This prayer creates a collective meaning and feeling with the members of the congregation. It signifies the congregation as a whole and it can only be completed as a group. It is seen as a very high form of brotherhood and an attempt at an undivided Muslim community. Rhode (2011) cites the Prophet Muhammad when he says, "All Muslims belong to one people, the only difference among them is in piety."

### *Death*

In Islam, death is seen in multiple ways. It can be seen in the physical death and how a Muslim's body and soul will end up; it can be seen as someone's justification for killing in the name of Islam; it can be seen as an in-religion issue in regard to sects or certain interpretations taking precedent over others. What follows is an overview of the different classifications of death, killing, and how there is a belief that sometimes it is better to be a victim of an honor killing instead of living a life of shame.

### *Death in Islam*

The official understanding of death in Islam is brain death. This began after religious controversy of what constituted an actual passing of a human. "The Resolution of the Council of Islamic Jurisprudence on Resuscitation Apparatus incorporated 'brain death' as a definition of death in Islam" (Rady & Verheijde, 2013, cited in Rady & Verheijde, 2016, p. 1199). The *Qur'an* reinforces this understanding of death. It calls it *the disintegration*. The *Qur'an* also differentiates that the stages of death are clear, where dying is the process and death is the final outcome of dying (Rady & Verheijde, 2016).

### *Killing in Islam*

The sole reason or justification that someone in Islam has the ability to kill is due to self-defense. This can be in defense of Islam, yourself, or another person. Much further down in the literature review, this is clarified more in terms of self-defense. Scholars and citations of the *Qur'an* state that under no circumstances is it lawful to kill someone without being provoked. Although this has a lot of wiggle room (in terms of perspective of who is in the wrong), some terrorist scholars have attempted to solve this problem (and other religions' similarities) with the idea that terrorism in the lawful sense should solely be judged on the intentional killing of non-combatants.

### *Killing within Islam*

Islam has made clear the sole act that is punishable by death is apostasy. In terms of a Muslim becoming a polytheist, some jurists are strict while others give the Muslim leeway. In the Shafie school of Islam, there are only three ways in which a Muslim's life can be taken: "the reversion to unbelief after coming to faith, adulterers and murderers" (Ismail & Mat, 2016, p. 7). Traditional jurists, instead of condemning the Muslim to death, decided an apostate should be attempted to be persuaded back into Islam. The authors claim, though, a reinterpretation of this aspect of death in Islam might need to be reevaluated.

### *Apostasy*

As stated previously, apostasy is the sole offense that is punishable by death in Islam. This could explain the reason Muslim converts to Christianity are most in danger in Muslim majority countries—they are seen as the worst of all Muslims.

## *Freedom*

There is a narrative from the Western media, religious clerics (such as *imams*), and scholarly researchers that portray Islam as a religion that allows its followers to adhere to their own interpretation of Islam. Husin and Ibrahim (2016) explain that a Muslim is not forced to interpret Islam in a certain way and anyone is welcome to practice any religion they want. This viewpoint is usually reinforced by a reference to the *Qur'an*. However, Madani (2011) refutes this understanding by stating that, if someone changes their religion, death is the proper punishment. As long as no person goes against the Muslim government or authority, said person will have the freedom to do as he or she pleases.

There is a clear distinction between freedom of religion and change of religion. Ismail and Mat (2016) explain that the *Qur'an* tells its readers and followers of Islam they have freedom of religion, but “changing religion from Islam to another is strictly prohibited and is considered a major sin without temporal punishment” (p. 2). This is similar to Madani’s (2011) interpretation of freedom within Islam when the researcher states: “Freedom in Islam is like allowance of movement to a horse tied with a rope. It is like authority which implies responsibility and accountability and provides the justification for the day of judgment” (p. 117). Madani continues on to explain how Islam does not give anyone the “compulsion” (p. 117) or requirement to stay in Islam. This is contradictory and counter-intuitive. Freedom in the West means something completely different than freedom in Islam—being tied to anything and not having your own free will is not freedom.

Ignoring the above-stated contradiction, one can solely reference the Principle of Abrogation mentioned earlier and understand that anything written later in the *Qur'an* has precedence over the earlier verses. Knowing this, one can come to the conclusion that the act

of leaving Islam and not embracing Allah is prohibited. Multiple *hadiths* portray this same punishment for leaving Islam. Bukhari Sharif is one of the six major hadith collections in Sunni Islam. Two hadiths specifically reflect death as a result of leaving Islam. According to the following Sahih Bukhari hadith:

Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to “Ali and he burnt them.” The news of this event, reached Ibn’Abbas who said, “If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah’s Apostle forbade it, saying, ‘Do not punish anybody with Allah’s punishment (fire).’ I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah’s Apostle, ‘Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him’” (Vol. 9, Book 84, Number 57).

Ismail and Mat (2016) explain that the above hadith was only meant for one person and should not be applied as a blanket statement, but in reality, it is still applied. Dissimilar to the *Qur’an*, in hadith literature, the term *itq* is found, which Madani (2011) states is “the emancipation of a slave,” but freedom, neither the term nor the American interpretation of the concept of freedom, is mentioned (p. 117). Madani (2011) continues explaining the value of freedom is opposed if it does not fit with a Muslim nations’ idea of peace and harmony.

This understanding of freedom dates back the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD. After his death, according to Ismail and Mat (2016), Christians and Jews began to revolt in Medina. Al-Bukhari is believed to have said that anyone who had accepted Islam and then renounced it would be put to death. Now, one may look at these dates and say that this only happened in early times and cannot be applied today. This is incorrect. Sharia courts hold the power in many Middle Eastern nations regarding whether converts are allowed to stay converted, or even stay alive. For example, according to a legal report by the Law Library of Congress in 2014, the following countries still make apostasy a capital offense: Afghanistan, Brunei, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Ismail and Mat (2016) state that Malaysia, a moderate country that holds a hybrid system of civil and sharia law, has laws in its constitution that its citizens may worship any religion they choose, but that laws can be made to restrict this freedom of any doctrine or belief that goes against Islam or Muslims. This law was upheld, following the 1999 decision of *Soon Singh*, by *Kamariah bte Ali v. The Kelantan State Government*, which made it clear that a Muslim cannot renounce Islam without permission of the sharia courts. Another case involved Lina Joy, a Muslim-to-Christianity convert formerly known as Azlina Jailani, who requested the confirmation of sharia courts but was denied. The courts said that she must remain a Muslim until they say so. One can become a Muslim, but leaving Islam is a difficult and sometimes impossible task, with severe consequences. A result can be marriages become null and void. Accusations of apostasy are well founded for mocking Islam, while in some cases death is the response to those who mock Islam, as will be explained below.

Mockery of Islam does not sit well in the religion, as one can see from the 2015 Garland, Texas, shooting at a “Draw Muhammad” event, where two jihadists drove all the way from Arizona in an attempt to kill the event-goers. The two terrorists were shot by a policeman. This is the most “close to home” attack related to Islamic mockery for American citizens. Overseas, multiple attacks preceded the Garland shooting. An example includes the 2015 attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, a French satirical magazine, in France. The *Charlie Hebdo* editors openly mocked Islam multiple times in the past. During this attack, as Withnall and Lichfield (2015) report, the al-Qaeda jihadists forced a worker to let them into the magazine’s offices before a five-minute attack commenced on the victims inside. These events do not necessarily speak to the concept of freedom within Islam but rather to how other religions’ and cultural groups’ definitions of freedom are stifled by Islamic teachings. These attest, once more, to the fact that Islam does not



adhere to the American or Westernized idea of freedom, regarding both religious and non-religious aspects.

### *Human Rights*

The idea of human rights in Islam and the Middle East cannot be measured by Western standards. Freedom House ranks countries in the Middle East and Africa as some of the least free in accordance to political rights and civil liberties.

Ahmed (2010) purports “the lack of democracy and human rights is not because of Islam or Islamic teachings, but instead due to authoritarian and corrupt regimes that totally lack transparency in governance” (p. 96). The Arab Spring in 2011 brought new leaders throughout the Middle East but did not do much regarding Islam’s views on human rights. According to Freedom House, among the 21 countries and 420 million people who practice Islam, citizens’ overall freedom is 5%. In their most recent report of *Women’s Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, published in 2010, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest level of freedom and 5 being the highest), not one country has above a 3.6 in regards to access to justice, autonomy and freedom of the person; economic rights and equal opportunity; political rights and civic voice; and social and cultural rights for women. Although this report was published before the Arab Spring took place, such a radical improvement in human rights is highly unlikely.

Persons such as Linda Sarsour and organizations such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) preach that Islam teaches and promotes human rights. On CAIR’s Web site, they list core principles that include: “CAIR supports foreign policies that help create free and equitable trade, encourage human rights and promote representative government based on socio-economic justice.” The group publishes accounts of people and how they have been subjected to discrimination and racism in the United States. They reference the Founding Fathers saying, “Those involved with CAIR view their work as contributing to the long-running struggle

for greater equality and protection of the liberties the Founding Fathers enshrined in the Constitution” (CAIR, 2018).

Whether this organization upholds American values is up to debate, but according to Pipes (2014), CAIR does not specifically denounce terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The organization is also tied to Hamas, most specifically when in 1994 Nihad Awad, the leader of CAIR, publicly declared support for Hamas. Awad accepted donations by the Holy Land Foundation, a Hamas front group, and in 2004 CAIR settled a lawsuit with prejudice (case cannot be reopened) that included the following:

- “CAIR is a terrorist supporting front organization that is partially funded by terrorists;
- CAIR ... is supported by terrorist supporting individuals, groups, and countries;
- CAIR has proven links to, and was founded by, Islamic terrorists; and
- CAIR actively supports terrorists and terrorist supporting groups and nations.” (Pipes, 2014)

There is much more evidence of human rights abuses in Islam outside the United States than there is within. “According to the Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia* or JAKIM), apostasy or changing religion is not within the framework of human rights in Islam” (Ismail & Mat, 2016, p. 11). This directly contradicts Ahmed (2010), who argues Islam was the first religion to recognize all people despite differences and that Islam “upholds” human rights and democratic rights. There is not any evidence of Ahmed’s statement and it directly contradicts decades of life in Islamic countries, most recently in Iran, which is explained more below.

### *Justice and Equality*

It is a common Western thought that Islam does not hold men and women to the same standard. Women are not believed to be equal to men. This is because Muslim women are decades behind in regard to equality. For example, women in Saudi Arabia have just recently (as

of the time of this document's publication) been given permission by the government to be allowed to drive beginning in June 2018 (Hubbard, 2017). Another example is found in the current revolution occurring in Iran. Men and women alike are taking to the streets and protesting the current regime due to the destitute conditions they are facing. They want justice for the conditions they have been living under. But as the world can see, the numerous human rights violations that have occurred over the years are catalysts to the uprising.

The lack of equality in Islam has to do with relationships, whether it be relationships between a man and a woman or the relationship between a people and their government through social movements. It can be between Muslims or between Muslims and another culture or group who believes in another religion. Justice is part of everyday life for Muslims. Rosen (2000) explains three distinctions of justice:

[R]elationships among men and toward God are reciprocal in nature, and justice exists where this reciprocity guides all interactions; justice is both a process and a result of equating otherwise dissimilar entities; and, because relationships are highly contextual, justice is to be grasped through its multifarious enactments rather than as a single abstract principle. (p. 156)

Justice is being shown through the protests in Iran, but equality is still not a true equality. Ahmad (2010) argues that under Islam, all men are equal and the color and wealth of someone has no bearing on whether the person is judged by God. But as it is still seen in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East, this is not true. This horrendous lack of equality the Iranian and many Middle Eastern women go and are going through is something Miller (2018) picks up on when he asks where are those same women in America who marched against President Trump in the women's march and why are they are not supporting the women in Iran? This question touches at the irony of Sarsour and many Islamists. They preach about human rights in the freest country in the world but stay silent on the breaking down of barriers of one of the countries that hosts some of the most offending human rights

violations on the planet. According to a 2017 Pew Research Center survey, 69% of Muslims in the United States believe “working for justice” it is essential to a Muslim’s identity.

Martin (2015) claims the way women are treated has more to do with culture rather than religion. In Martin’s article, Nasr (2002) writes “Islam supports the notion that men and women are equal with respect to economic and social aspects of life, including access to education; does not forbid women to engage in politics and employment...” (p. 14). One can look at different Middle Eastern countries and see how liberally or how conservatively women are regarded. For example, women in Saudi Arabia are very oppressed. According to a 2013 Pew Research Report, Central Asia is reported to have strong support for women’s rights, but 7 in 10 Muslims agree that a wife should listen to her husband and carry out his wishes. Others show they have better records.

Across the Muslim world, there have been nine Muslim woman heads of state “such as, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto who served from 1988 to 1990 and then from 1993 to 1996, Bangladeshi Prime Ministers Begum Khaleda Zia who served from 1991 to 1996 and 2001 to 2006, former Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller who served from 1993 to 1995” (Almontaser, 2017). This is a statistic that gives the illusion Islam gives women the freedom they deserve. Ahmad (2010) pleads Islam respects all cultures and the Qur’an actually encourages different belief systems:

The Qur'an, in fact, directly encourages pluralism vide its verse 5:48. his verse clearly states that every people have their own law and a way, i.e. every nation is unique in its way of life, its rules etc. It also says that if Allah had pleased He would have created all human beings a single people but He did not do so in order to test them (whether they can live in harmony with each other despite their differences in laws and way of life). Thus it is clear assertion of pluralism. (p. 94–95)

Ahmad goes on to say Allah believes one must respect each other’s faith but allows his followers to deal with those who fight for religion or attempt to drive those from their homes

with justice. So are all faiths equal in Allah's eyes? Would he give other faiths the same allowance if followers of Islam drove other followers of other religions from their homes? Or would he justify a Muslim's right to do it solely based on the migration to Medina (*hijrah*), which signified the beginning of the Muslim calendar? This *hijrah* became a "tribal warfare." (Johnson, 2016). Was this an attempt to create the caliphate? All in all, it is interesting to attempt to apply Ahmad's beliefs and statements against history and the current state of Islam today.

### *Love*

Much of the time, love in Islam is discussed in relation to Muslim followers' love for Allah, his message, and one another. Chittick (2014) explains, "thought[s] about love can be considered Islamic when it goes back to the three principles of faith, which are *tawhīd* (the assertion of divine unity), prophecy, and the Return to God" (p. 232). This is similar to Abidin (2004), who claims the only path to human love is through loving Allah and if one does not take that certain path, then true love is unattainable. Can one reference a Muslim's call of "Allahu Akbar" as one that shows Muslims loving Allah and proclaiming their life for him? Known as the *takbir* (Nance, 2016), this phrase has become associated with Muslim fundamentalists and Islamic extremists. According to Weightman (1964), the *takbir* is the prayer that a Khadim must say. It is said to include words such as: "God, Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, the blessing of the Khanedan, to acknowledge the greatness of God through the spirit of the Pir" (p. 97). Translated as "Allah is the Greatest" (Baianonie, 2005), Muslims voice it aloud.

Ibn al-Arabi, seen by some as the leading theoretician of love (Abrahamov, 2009, cited in Chittick, 2014), explained Allah "loved to be known" (Chittick, 1993, p. 6). Saying aloud the *takbir* gives Allah acknowledgement. Muslims scholars explain different kinds of love: love for all human beings and a particular love for those who practice loving Allah (Chittick, 2014).

Another love is understood through the Hanabalite school, one of the traditional Sunni schools of

*Fiqh*, which translates to “intelligence” and, more specifically, “the true understanding of what is intended” (Ramadan, 2006, p. 6). This school adheres to a strict interpretation of Islamic texts. These followers argue the only legitimate love is loving all that Allah loves and hating all that Allah hates and doing this through complete obedience to the Prophet Muhammad (Abdin, 2004). Finally, Abdin believes the Sufis are the highest lovers of Islam. That is, Sufis’ love is most pure. This love is “love directed to the beloved for their perfection and their worthiness to be the object of the emotion” (Abdin, 2004, p. 94).

Pennanen (1994) traces Sufism back to Bosnia-Herzegovina before the rise of the Ottoman Empire’s takeover in the 1460s. This contrasts with Ernst (1997), who reported Sufi was a classification placed on Muslim writings by Europeans in the late 1700s and saw it as an “appropriation” of Oriental culture Europeans appreciated. This means, as Ernst saw it, European writings on love were “borrowed” from Islamic texts (cited in Chittick, 2014).

Muslim and European beliefs and understanding about love differ according to some scholars. Sufis have been compared to philosophers in their beliefs about love. Chittick (2014) explained Sufis see love as energy driving individuals to attain perfection. Abdin (2004) says Sufis do not know why they love Allah but that they must love Allah in all things, because any love for anything other than Allah is a faux love and distracts them from their true purpose. This is contrasted with some Western understandings about love. Giffen (1971) and Al Shafie (2005) explained two understandings of love. They were the profane (negative) and the mystical (sacred or positive) (cited in Chittick, 2014).

Overall, love in Islam usually refers to a Muslim’s love for Allah. Unlike the Western beliefs about marriage, “Muslims believe that love grows in a marriage, not outside it, and most expect love to grow in their own marriages. It must be stressed that these are not forced marriages. Women always have the right to say no to a suitor, although if the man’s family and

the woman's family approve of the match, there is great social pressure for a woman to say yes" (Sloan, 2011, p. 219220). In Islam, women become the property of their husband when they marry. Now, this is similar to the oppression section discussed below. What will be explained is the *hijab* is not required by some Muslim majority countries, but the social pressure to wear it makes the woman feel obligated to don the *hijab*. A question that will be discussed further is: Are approved marriages really a choice for the woman? Or is it just a smokescreen imitating women's rights?

### *Oppression*

When considering oppression in Islam, the topics that immediately come to mind are women's rights, gay rights, and minority religious sects' rights. When discussing women's rights in Islam, the veil has been the subject of considerable talk. Mentioned above is Iran and the anti-government protests that occurred at the end of 2017. There was a woman who has become somewhat of a symbol of strength and freedom after she was seen taking part in White Wednesday: a campaign against the forcing of women to wear a *hijab* (Women in the World Staff, 2017). During that week, authorities in Iran announced women would no longer be arrested if they were not wearing their *hijabs*, observing Islamic dress code.

In July 2017, women were seen on video burning their *burqas* and religious wear after news of liberation from ISIS (Wilford, 2017). Galadari (2012) writes there are multiple interpretations to the *hijab*. Although some women wear it because they want to, others view it as a sign of oppression. Galadari (2012) goes on to say "forcing women to wear the veil might be considered a form of oppression" (p. 116), but then says the woman may be obligated to wear it because she broke the law and because of possible social exclusion. Does obligation essentially force the woman to wear it because she fears the result if she does not? This is

similar to the issue of arranged marriages in the love section, where it is not required to agree to the suitor her family chooses, but it is highly encouraged (Sloan, 2011).

Ennaji (2016) discusses three different views about women's rights in Muslim countries. One includes Muslim majority states such as Tunisia and Morocco, who are not strictly religious who seem more in line with human and women's rights from a Western perspective. Another view includes a push by fundamentalist groups that have been attempting to return to pure Islam, while the third includes "moderate Islamic feminists," who believe rights are guaranteed if "there's a favorable interpretation of religious texts" (p. 2). It seems odd women's lack of rights might depend on someone's interpretation of a religious text. Galadari (2012) explains the cloak women wear in Islamic societies signifies souls who forget God and women are only able to remove their *hijab* in front of their husband.

In terms of a Muslim population being the victim of oppression, self-defense is the most important and understood ground of fighting, according to *ayats* in the *Qur'an*. An example is: *Qur'an* verse 102, "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you ...," and verse 103, "And fight them on until there is no more tumult and oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah." Hamid and Sein (2009) believe oppression is the thing Allah "hates most," indicating this is why the Quran puts "special emphasis" on this term (p. 92). Muslims are compelled to resist this oppression. So, does this oppression include oppression of Muslims by Muslims? And by whose point of view and how is oppression defined?

In a study looking at the similarities between a Christian's interpretation of submission compared to a Muslim's interpretation of submission, submission is defended in terms of a woman having to wear a hijab. Bartkowski and Read (2003) refer to a woman in the study, who is a bible study instructor. She explained submission in her opinion was having the husband take the lead in the marriage but not "exercising authority over her," that submission makes a



happy marriage, submission is necessary because a male's ego is "soft," and last, submission is necessary because it is a compromise in holding the power in the relationship (p. 79).

In comparison with the Christian interpretation, the Muslim perspective in this text discusses the *hijab*. The *hijab* was described in terms of the connotation of a woman embracing her faith or a woman who is coerced and intimidated. In terms of Western Muslim women, they discuss the *hijab* as a qualifier for other Muslim women in order to gain and maintain friendships. They speak of being greeted in Arabic, and that "these veiled respondents find comfort in the cultural and ethnic distinctiveness that the veil affords them" (Bartkowski & Read, 2003, p. 80). Some women actually said the *hijab* gives them the ability to escape the "private sphere" and enter the public one. One of the women compared veiled women to unveiled American women and discussed the privilege that veiled women have over American women because the veil does not allow for the distraction by the body.

### *Peace and Treaty*

#### *Peace*

Muslim followers portray their religion as peaceful and many *imams*, leaders, and activists claim Islam is only peaceful and every other interpretation is simply incorrect. Although peace in Islam will be the focus of this section, treaties during the history of Islam will be touched on, giving perspective to the historical beginning of Islam. First, how Islam interprets peace will be discussed, followed by the history of the important treaties throughout the history of Islam.

The phrase *Islam is a religion of peace* is a popular phrase and is promulgated by the American Left, the media, Muslim activists, and public figures. Although what has been

written throughout this analysis has been looking at the true interpretations of Islam, some may say this analysis has a negative slant toward Islam. Barnidge Jr. (2008), in reference to claiming that Islam as a religion of peace or war, states, “It homogenises meaning and hegemonises in favour of the State and against more militant Islamic interpretation. This thinking disenfranchises dissenting interpretations at the same time that it seeks to assimilate and integrate Muslims according to the State’s preferred interpretation of Islam” (p. 271). Barnidge Jr. essentially discusses how favoring an interpretation negates and deems a marketplace of ideas null and void. Now, this is understandable if one is attempting to bulldoze an argument. But statements such as the following make it difficult to not choose sides in this debate:

According to traditional Islamic theory ... A territory is considered either part of the *dar al-Islam*, the territory of Islam, or the *dar al-harb*, the territory of war ... this dichotomy was conceptualized at the time of the Prophet when Mohammad sent word to neighboring, non-Muslim territories that they must choose conversion to Islam or war. (Tepas, 2008, p. 683)

Now, most should agree a nation should take care of their borders as they see fit to keep their citizens and culture safe, even in the Middle East. Tepas (2008) states most of the Muslim world understands and accepts a world with borders. But some do not. Take, for example, Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, a Shi’ite cleric who led the Iranian Revolution in 1979 to take power (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017). Khomeini also rejected the idea of the state. Without a state, one cannot have a doctrine or constitution, and without a constitution, a nation can never be conceived. “AbuSulayman writes of a world order in which the laws of citizenship and immigration no longer exist and states that ‘Islamic international law would tear down all ‘curtains’ erected by the nation-states to ‘shield’ their citizens against counter-claims to the truth, confident that the truth will ultimately prevail” (p. 686–687). Tepas (2008), like other researchers, does not see this as today’s belief by the Muslim world. But this belief literally

reads as Muslims saying they will tear down borders to impose Islamic law because it holds “the truth.”

### *Treaty*

When a nation is created, there are documents, statutes, and treaties outlining the creation and the intent of the nation. When discussing the beginning of Islam and the lack of peace involved in the process, the same is true even though it was the beginning of a religion. “The Treaty of Hudaibiyah was an important event that took place during the formation of Islam. It was a pivotal treaty between Muhammad, representing the state of Medina, and the Quraysh tribe of Mecca in March 628 (corresponding to Dhu al-Qi’dah, 6 AH)” (Armstrong, 2006).

It is known that Islam was formulated by Muhammad in a dream, which led to the intention to create a state. This led Muhammad to lead 1,400 Muslims to Mecca to perform the *Umrah*, or pilgrimage, by bringing sacrificial animals (an Arabian custom) to be allowed into the city (Andrae & Menzel, 1960). According to Al-Islam, Muhammad only wanted to finish the pilgrimage and return home. After the citizens of Mecca refused to let them in and Muhammad’s refusal to enter by force, a peace treaty was created by Muhammad, telling Ali to write down: “This is a contract being concluded between Muhammad, Allah’s messenger and the Quraysh” (Mutahhari, 2015). The Quraysh disagreed because they did not revere Muhammad as Allah’s messenger. After another small disagreement in the writing, Mutahhari (2015) explains, from then on there are differing historical accounts. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah brokered peace between the two. This treaty supports Tepas (2008) and Khomeini’s belief that Islam has no boundaries and no respect for borders. The fact that the caliphate attempts transnational conquering of other nations and peoples might lend Islam apologists to proclaim this proves

Islam is based on respecting rights of other nations. They would also point to Abdin (2004), who states, “God also loves those who keep their promises and honour their pledges (3:76) and those who 'spend in God's way in times of plenty and times of hardship, and hold in check their anger, and pardon their fellowmen, because God loves the doers of good' (3:134)” (p. 99). Although this may be true in this treaty and Khomeini’s belief, it is not in the *Qur’an*.

### *Self-Defense*

Similar to concepts of peace and love, Islam apologists, ignorant people, and a large sect of practicing Muslims will say Islam is a religion of self-defense. Hamid and Sein (2009) propose, “Although the original idea of Islamic international law is peace, the Classical jurists used the word ‘*jihad*’ in a narrower sense and created the notion of a perpetual war between ‘*dar al-Islam*’ and ‘*dar al-harb*’. Detractors of Islam have almost exclusively focused on the warlike aspect of ‘*jihad*’” (p. 72). The aspect of *jihad* was discussed earlier in this analysis, in addition to the history of Islam. It was discussed in terms of lesser and greater *jihad*—*jihad* can be in self-defense and it can be peaceful, using words. This is greater *jihad*. Lesser *jihad* is an active war.

Describing Islam as a religion of peace as a whole is irresponsible. In terms of their self-defense argument, Cooper (2001) argues, “from the definitional perspective, it ought not to matter who does what to whom, terrorism should be defined solely by the nature and quality of what is done” (p. 19) (cited in Mahan & Griset, 2013). During their attempt to define terrorism, Cooper (2001) goes on to explain how terrorism should be defined by the act itself, instead of the parties involved. This reference is brought up to place doubt on the Muslim world’s claim that the United States started this war after the United States invaded Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, and everything they do afterward is in terms of self-defense.

Further, as it is in the United States, Islamic law proclaims self-defense is an inherent right. But, there are rules to acting in self-defense in Islam. According to Hamid and Sein (2009), there are three rules. Rule one explains self-defense is lawful if there are oppressive actions taken against a Muslim population or a Muslim state. Rule two states, “the principle of proportionality must be observed” (p. 95). In laymen’s terms, the principle of proportionality weighs the need of military action against the possibility of human suffering of enemy civilians as a result of said action (Bryen, 2014).

So, does this mean if a Muslim state believes they are losing a war, they feel justified in attacking? The author says no, only if the intent is to kill civilians. Rule three states, “humanitarian principles must be respected” (p. 95). All in all, these authors see the right to self-defense through many reasons and many excuses. Further, this does not only apply to a Muslim state feeling invaded but also if there is persecution in the sense of suppression of religion and faith or oppression in the sense of grave violations of fundamental human rights, fighting is then acceptable until there is no more persecution or oppression (Hamid & Sein, 2009, p. 99).

The argument that force against others in self-defense is the only legitimate force is seen in a verse in the Quran. This verse, 2:190, states: “[f]ight in the way of Allah against those who fought you, and do not transgress. Verily, Allah does not like the transgressors” (Shah, 2013, p. 344–345). Shah (2013) goes on to say this verse was introduced a year after Muhammad left Mecca for Medina and that there are two meanings to this verse. First, during his time in Medina, Muhammad radicalized because his followers would not embrace his violent and aggressive tactics. So is this verse really representative of Muhammad’s true beliefs? Second, Shah explains this verse only pertains to actual combat. So does this mean once combat is over

for five minutes? Five hours? Five hundred hours? At what point does Shah's (and apparently Muhammad's) definition of self-defense cease?

### *Sin*

In Islam, a "sin is anything that goes against the commands of Allah (God), a breach of the laws and norms laid down by religion" (Oxford Islamic Dictionary, 2018). This fits with most teachings where a Muslim must keep Allah in all parts of life and always strive to give thanks to Allah. In this section, a distinction between definitions of sin, different words that classify sin, effects of sin in Islam, and current examples in contemporary society are discussed.

Although Abdin (2004) claims Allah will forgive anyone who repents, there is an exception of any Muslim who believes in a god or divinity other than Him, meaning Allah. In other terms, a Muslim who repudiates or denounces Islam is an apostate and is not forgiven, although it is not stated how this person will fare. As we have seen in more radical interpretations, these people are jailed or killed. Ismail and Mat (2016) explain there is not an actual official punishment for apostasy. The researchers claim two *hadiths* declare punishment as death, but do not know how to handle single apostates who are not rebelling against or conspiring against Islam. Although there are many religions and belief systems in Western culture, Christianity is a large part. Christians do believe in repenting, even when one has denounced God. This could lend to the idea that Western culture and Islamic culture might not be able to co-exist, because of the difference in ideals and values.

In addition to the previous evidence of the possibility of the lack of intermingling, Jacobson et al. (2012) "have shown that for many Muslims, there is a growing perception that Western influence leads to a downward spiral of depravity in Muslim cultures" (Pieri, Woodward, Yahya, Hassan & Rohmaniyah, 2014, p. 38). Recently, there has been more of an

investigative look into the solution to this problem. “One proposed solution has been a return to emphasizing the classic Islamic principle of *hisba*—that is the obligation to command good and forbid evil” (Cook, 2003, cited in Pieri et al., 2014, p. 38).

There are many different words used in the Quran to be interchangeable with the term “sin:” *dhanb*, *ithm*, *khati’ah*, *jurm*, and *junah/haraj*. *Dhanb* is usually seen to describe the worst kind of sin (Izutsu, 1966). Some of these sins include calling God (Allah) a liar and “standing on a higher level than *khati’ah*” (p. 39). *Khati’ah* is an action made by someone who has made a fault (Izutsu, 1966). A synonym for *dhanb* is *jurum*. These are interchangeable. Ahmad (1902) equates *dhanb* to “human frailty” (p. 31). Interestingly enough, the author explains this term “applies to Prophets because of their human weakness” (p. 31). He explains the discrepancy saying *dhanb* is a lesser sin than *jurm*, because *jurm* is a sin that is deserving of punishment. It can never be applied to prophets.

*Ithm* is another act of sin, while not necessarily an act that was intentionally done. Some see it as the evaluation of the deed depending on the context and situation in which the deed has been committed, though it is seen as a great sin (Izutsu, 1966). This term is associated with the worst sin of all: *shirk*. *Shirk* is seen as a major sin by some, and the worst sin of all by others. According to the Oxford Islamic Studies, *shirk* is holding someone or something equal to God (Allah) (Esposito, 2018). Now, anyone with a basic understanding of Islam understands this goes against all of the religion’s teachings. Everything is credited to Allah and Allah alone. Although Izutsu (1966) explains *ithm* might not be an intentional sin, this seems like grounds for apostasy or death.

*Khati’ah*, though still a sin, is one of minor transgressions, according to Izutsu (2002). Wilkinson (2014) disagrees and relates *khati’ah* with one’s placement in the afterlife. The researcher puts it in terms of merit and demerit. The Urdu word for merit is *thawab*, while the

Urdu word for demerit is *gunnah*, from the Arabic word *khati'ah*. Izutsu (2002) somewhat contradicts himself, though, because soon after stating *khati'ah* is not a major transgression, the researcher goes to the other extreme and applies this term for the “most heinous sins” (p. 265).

Now that there has been an explanation of the different words to classify sin in Islam, the effects of sin will be discussed. First, a disclaimer: Although in earlier discussion there was a distinction between different kinds and definitions of sins, the following effects are not broken down dependent on different definitions. The following list is also not expected to be exhaustive: “sin pollutes and darken human’s heart” (Ahmad, 2004), “sin causes various types of corruption in the land” (al’-Uthaimeen, 2008); “Disobedience ceased favours and blessing from Allah (both spirituals and materials)” (Kamal Faghih Imani, 1996); “Disobedience of Allah increased heart's diseases” (Kamal Faghih Imani, 1996); Sinners [are] ‘the greatest loser’” (Qur’an, 18:103-105), “It brings about displeasure of God and his messenger ... when he addressed a group of people and inquired why they annoyed the Messenger of Allah...” (Kamal Faghih Imani, 1996); “Sins bring about hard-hearted in a man” (Emerick, 2014); and “Disobedience weakens human’s body and reduces life span” (al’-Uthaimeen, 2008).

As listed previously, there are many different kinds of sin in terms of public or private, severity of sin, and so on. Sin is most controlled today in the public sphere. In Malaysia, public sin has been forbidden and banned in recent years. In Indonesia, there are attempts to institute Sharia Law. In Northern Nigeria, Sharia Law has been reintroduced in some states while *hisbah* committees have been erected in others. Secret police and terrorist groups make it difficult for citizens to stop it, but there are a couple of social movements that are present. One in particular is called Tablighi Jamaat, which is a “grassroots movement” (Pieri, Woodward, Yahya, Hassan



& Rohmaniyah, 2014, p. 42-43). Another pro-Sharia, radical Islamist group, Muslims Against Crusades, run by Anjem Choudhary in London, attempts to create Sharia and “gay free zones” (Pieri, et al. p. 45). Sin will continue to be interpreted and policed in a radical way by those in power as long as it is interpreted by everyone in the same way.

### *Submission*

It has been consistently seen that practicing the faith of Islam means submitting to Allah. This submission comes in all aspects of life and is the goal of every Muslim. Abdin (2004) explains, “To love God in Islam is to become His slave, to submit totally to Him and to the means of His worship. There is no illusion in Islam about what being human is. If you are very lucky, you become God's slave” (p. 96). This is seen when discussing Allah, but it also applies to Muhammad. The author continues to explain that before Muhammad was able to become the messenger for Allah, he had to become a slave.

Some might argue this is not what is meant by submission or that this view is ancient and not practiced anymore. Don, Muhamat, Hamijah, Sham, Nasir, and Ashaari (2012) explain the literal word *Islam* means “submission” and that it is to further Allah’s will in a harmonizing way. The authors explain the concept of submission in Islam is misunderstood and twisted by Westerners to portray Islam negatively. Mawdudi, described by Lerman (1981), was “a disciple of Arabian and Indian Wahabiyyah” but was critical of Islamic orthodoxy.

Another word for submission in Islam is *Deen* or *Din*. The following explanation will use the spelling of *Din*. Hussain (2013) discusses the dictionary definition of the word before digging deeper into the Quran’s interpretation. He explains it can mean obedience, submission to law, culture or habit, conduct, or regulation and reckoning. He goes on to discuss the six definitions the Quran uses for *Din*: as a law of an authority, obedience to the law of an authority,

obedience as requital, as a way of life, as reckoning or calculation, or as a code of life. What follows is a more in-depth look into these six definitions.

#### *As a Law of an Authority*

Hussain (2013) discusses two verses from the Quran that discuss *Din* in these terms.

Only one will be shown below—12:76, which reads:

So he began [the search] with their bags before the bag of his brother; then he extracted it from the bag of his brother. Thus did We plan for Joseph. He could not have taken his brother within the religion of the king except that Allah willed. We raise in degrees whom We will, but over every possessor of knowledge is one [more] knowing.

If interpreted correctly, this verse is saying that certain things are not possible unless Allah wills them to be. That being said, while other humans know more than each other, Allah knows more than all of the other humans.

#### *Obedience to the Law of an Authority*

Hussain continues on to discuss the next definition of *Din*. He believes (and reinforces with *Surahs*) Allah deserves pure obedience. Hussain, as well as other scriptures and researchers of Islam, discuss obedience as the best way to honor Allah and be a good Muslim. Surah 39: Verse 3 goes as such: “Allah has enjoined upon the believers to call upon Him, being sincere to Him in obedience.”

#### *Obedience as Requital*

Hussain refers to requital as either a “reward or a punishment.” As a reward, if we obey Allah in our everyday life, then “no blame will be placed on the believer” (Muhammad & Al-Munajjid, 2018). This is a constant understanding Allah attempts to get across to his followers. *Quran* Verse 39:69 states: “And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord; and the Book will be put in place; and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought in; Judgment will be passed among them equitably, and they will not be wronged” (Itani, 2009). The researcher believes the

book refers to the Muslim's deeds. Essentially, the researcher believes the "truth" in this verse represents if the witnesses followed Allah in their life, then they will be given an honorable afterlife.

#### *As a Way of Life*

Maududi, et al. (1950) believes that *din* (as a way of life) is revealed to every new man on his "first day of existence" by one of the many Islamic prophets (p. 1). He goes on to explain Islam as a holistic way to live. Using a metaphor, with regard to the human body, he says the leg cannot function if it is not part of the human body, so alone, the leg cannot be considered a useful part. Comparing this to Islam, it cannot be split up. A Muslim's entire life must be consumed with *sharia* and intent to live for Allah.

#### *As Reckoning or Calculation*

Hussain (2013) cites Surah 9: Verse 36, which states:

"Indeed the number of months with Allah is twelve months in Allah's Book, the day when He created the heavens and the earth. Of these, four are sacred. That is the upright religion. So do not wrong yourselves during them.<sup>1</sup> Fight all the polytheists, just as they fight you all, and know that Allah is with the Godwary.

Does this mean that four months out of the year, Muslims are required to not fight anyone? It does. The *haram*/forbidden months are: *Rajab*, *Dhu al-Qa'dah*, *Dhu al-Hijjah* and *Muharram* (Khan, 2014). In the Islamic calendar, these months are month 7, month 11, month 12, and month 1, respectively. There are three regions in Saudi Arabia that distinguished between months that are allowed and months that are forbidden: *Tihamah*, *Hejaz*, and *Najd*. These months are permitted, or *halal*.

#### *As a Code of Life*

This is pertinent because Wahhabism is seen as fundamental Islam, which is the pure Islam that the caliphate hopes to revert back to. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of

Wahhabism, after performing *Hajj*, returned to his hometown of Uyayna to convince everyone to restore true monotheistic worship (Commins, 2009). Commins explains that followers of the Wahhabi practice do not prefer this label. Instead they prefer Salafi or Salafism, or, as Commins defines it, they follow “the ways of the first Muslim ancestors” (p. vi). Salafism is the pursuit of interpreting Islam as it was in Muhammad’s time period and interpreting everything today as if it was then (Turner, 2014).

*Din* is a mainstream, Islamic concept, even though Wahhabi and Salafi tendencies become involved at some times. What follows next is a look at one of the more controversial concepts in Islam that, though it has been mainstream since 2001, has been prevalent through Islamic history: terrorism.

### *Terrorism*

Earlier, *jihad* and terrorism were contrasted. “Jihad is primarily meant for the reformation of unhealthy trends and developments in society while terrorism leads to destruction and obliteration of the whole fabric of society” (Shah, 2009, p. 541). The War in Afghanistan was discussed and it was explained that Muslims (especially in the Middle East) believe the United States conducted a terrorist attack when the military invaded Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. They called Americans terrorists and occupiers. Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan does not believe the invasion constitutes terrorism because those acts taken were declared. By Khan’s definition, only undeclared attacks constitute terrorism. But there are hundreds of definitions of terrorism and it is not likely one will be settled on.

According to Rhode (2011), no Muslim leader, as of his publication, had apologized for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the United States. His question is: is that because the Muslim community, or *ummah*, do not believe it was terrorism because it was in the name of Islam? Terrorism is usually committed as a means to an end. This can entail creating fear in the general

public or attempting to make a foreign enemy un-occupy their land. Shah (2009) argues, “Jihad is never initiated for the fulfillment of any human desire or objective: it aims only at the establishment of an Islamic social order in accordance with Allah’s commandments as revealed through his Messenger” (p. 542). Earlier in this review, Linda Sarsour and her Women’s March speech from 2017 were discussed. She spoke about her own desires, but using Shah’s definition this would not be *jihad*. Would it be a precursor to terrorism?

The previous statement did not say Sarsour committed a terrorist attack or called on others to commit a terrorist attack; not by Shah’s or the United States’ definition of terrorism. Shah (2009) explains *jihad* attempts to resist anything that destroys peace. This can be seen as a diverging statement from Sarsour’s. However, Chiha (2013) purports that the Egyptian definition of terrorism has been inspiration for multiple conferences to suppress and destroy terrorism. The definition Chiha (2013) gives is the following:

Any use of force or violence or threat or intimidation to which the perpetrators resort in order to carry out an individual or collective criminal plan- or project- aimed at disturbing the peace- or the public order- or jeopardizing the safety and the security of society which is of such nature as to create harm or fear in persons or imperil their lives, freedom or security; or [of such nature] to damage the environment; damage or take possession over communications, transport, property, buildings or public or private reality; prevent or impede either the public authorities or religious institutions or educational institutions the performance of their work; or thwart the application of the Constitution or existing laws or regulations. (p. 93-94)

The reason this is revisited is because “Peace, security, justice, equity, discipline and rule of law are essential for the progress of a society” (Shah, 2009, p. 538). This definition would classify Sarsour’s words as terrorism. So the question to ask is, although it is understood she had the protection of free speech under the United States Constitution, was she trying to operate under another rule of law, such as Egypt’s, to further her radical and hatred ideology?

Earlier it was discussed that at what point does self-defense become terrorism? Is it when an action of self-defense kills a non-combatant? Shah (2009) explains, “The legitimate use of

force for the welfare of the people is a blessing but the use of force becomes a curse when it no more remains bridled by the norms of religion and morality and serves only personal interests. Such use of force results in killing, destruction, terrorism, loot, plunder and injustice” (p. 538). So, again, if the party committing the killing, bombing, or whatever method believes it is in defense of someone else or for the welfare of themselves and their people, is this justified as terrorism?

The first sentence in the previous paragraph is what most concur with. “Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan has also given his point of view by saying that terrorism is an act in which non-combatant common people are deliberately killed through armed military action. Similarly, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi’s perspective on the issue of terrorism is reflected in his saying that undeclared attack on the life, property and honour of non-combatants will also constitute terrorism” (Shah, 2009, p. 538). This is a definition that some political scientists agree with: that the act should be judged on the act alone and not dependent on from whom it came. But, as it has been seen, Islam does not operate under this structure.

#### *Truth vs. Lies*

Kelsay (2007) argues in Islam that the Prophet’s word and way of life is Truth. Before battle, Muslims must try to convert non-Muslims peacefully, according to the author. The Prophet stipulated that an invitation is required before fighting. For al-Mawardi, such an invitation includes the presentation of material intended to persuade the unbelievers of the truth of Islam, “making the Prophet’s miracles known to them, and informing them of such arguments as would make them to respond favorably” (Kelsay, 2007, p. 114). Multiple researchers further this point though some question where it has gone. Duzgun (2011) presents Islamic texts that say knowledge is of a high importance and the best accomplishment for a human.

What is the best accomplishment? What is the truth? Duzgun (2011) compares Islamic fundamentalists with most of the Muslim world today, claiming there is a “loss of the ‘Islam of truth’” (p. 41). Truth in the view of about 10 percent of the world’s Muslim population is that being a jihadist is the way to life. An additional 10 percent believe in fundamentalism, which is interpreting the Quran as Allah’s word and the belief that it should not be deviated from. Muslim conservatives, Muslim human rights activists, and reformed Muslims make up about 70 to 80 percent of the 2.7 billion Muslims in the world (J. Matusitz, personal communication, August 22, 2017). This is where *Ijtihad* is relevant. If the truth of Islam is the reformation of the religion and modernizing the verses and *surahs* discussing the killing of non-believers, this might be true Islam. “But the hermeneutics of “true” Islam only produce multiple truths and multiple communities” (Gesink, 2003, p. 733).

## CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This chapter explains the methods used to gather information so as to answer the two research questions. For Research Question 1, this question was investigated to gain a more complete understanding of *imams*' true beliefs with regard to key concepts in their religion. This researcher's analysis of coding the interpretation of themes measured *imams*' perception of key concepts in *khutbahs*, which helped the researcher analyze the difference between the interpretation U.S.-born *imams* and internationally born *imams* held in regards to these concepts. This information was a firsthand account that furthered the research, as well as created new questions and interests for a subsequent study.

**Research Question 1:** What are the differences in meanings of key Islamic concepts between international *imams* and U.S.-born *imams*?

Research Question 2 elaborated on the examination of Muslim *imams* and clerics, but this time the analysis was based on their use of speech codes while describing concepts that are prevalent in Islam. Since internationally-born *imams* come from a different culture, then their speech codes are also created from a different cultural perspective. This question's intent was to determine whether there was a difference in how international Muslim clerics and *imams* and U.S.-born Muslim clerics and *imams* interpreted and understood key concepts in their religion.

**Research Question 2:** Do international *imams* and U.S.-born *imams* use different speech codes when discussing key concepts in Islam?

### Data Collection

The *imams*' texts that analyzed in this study were available through different media. This study focused on one unit of analysis, which were transcripts of *khutbahs* by both U.S. born and foreign-born *imams*. These units of analyses were either obtained already in transcription format, or the researcher transcribed the *khutbahs* himself. Whether it was video



or audio delivery, all sermons that needed to be transcribed were transcribed before conducting the analysis. The total number of units of analysis were 58. The sample size was concluded as 20 sermons. The prescribed number of units identified were not the goal. The researcher sought out as many sermons as possible in order to obtain the most balanced sample for the analysis.

There were multiple methods of collecting such information. First, search engines like Google were used to find Islamic publications. These searches included the United Arab Emirates' General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowments, the London Central Mosque Trust & The Islamic Cultural Centre, the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, the Free Quran Education website (formerly known as NAK Collection), the al-Islam and the Islamic Center of Davis. These initial six Web sites were explored for videos and transcripts of sermons. Though not actively attempting to collect the same number from each source, other Web sites such as YouTube and Halaltube were also examined. Sometimes a particular site had more sermons than other sites. Such a site was ICGT (Islamic Center of Greater Toledo), which is where the researcher found most of *Imam Khattab's* sermons. Other sites, where multiple sermons were obtained, included *Navedz.com*, the *Universiti Teknologi Malaysia* site, the American Muslim Diversity Association Web site, Muslim Matters (an online magazine) and sermons from *imams* who I met and received in zip file format via email. If more information is collected from a certain site, it will be included in order to obtain an appropriate sample size.

The Web site Al-Islam published an example of a sermon by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (the Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community) in which his video can be listened to and transcribed. The aforementioned Web site and location is not the only method for searching sermons. In other words, sermons will not be constrained to a specific location or area where

Muslims are more heavily populated, less heavily populated, or have greater influence over the location of the sermon.

The origin of the sample of the sermons analyzed were described preceding each analysis of the twenty sampled sermons in Chapter Four. An example of this is that of *Imam Ahmad al-Hassan*. The existence of this *imam* was discovered through a Google search. He refers to himself as the “Savior of Mankind,” which is also the label for his Web site. He has authored many books, including *The Book of Monotheism*, *The Allegories* and *Enlightenment from the Calls of the Messengers*. He claims his purpose and “the purpose of the prophets and the messengers” is for “monotheism to spread in every place on this earth.” He wants to clarify other religious texts, such as the Torah, Gospel, and Quran, and the disagreements that people have and to fill the earth with justice (Savior of Mankind, 2018). Another example of an individual imam is Fethullah Gülen, who describes himself as an “authoritative, mainstream Turkish scholar” (Fethullah Gülen, 2018).

Besides texts obtained through the online sphere, another method of collecting sermons consists of attending mosques in the greater Orlando area. The greater Orlando area was chosen due to the close proximity of the University of Central Florida, where the researcher is attending graduate school. When attending these mosques, the researcher explained that the interest in attending was for a project at the University of Central Florida. The researcher requested to sit through sermons and requested transcripts of those and other past sermons. The researcher explained that he is interested in learning more about the religion of Islam, which is the goal of this study. The researcher did not deliberately deceive any person involved either directly or indirectly with a *masjid* or Islamic worship site.

To get into more detail, the 58 sermons were obtained from a multitude of the different sources explained above. Of the 58 sermons, 42 were most likely obtained from with specific

websites or emails from imams. Of the 42, 11 were found on the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo website through a Google search; 10 were obtained by Imam Jonathan Cazales emailing his khutbah in a zip file; 8 were found when the research searched Google and stumbled upon the website al-Islam.org where sermons by Nahjul Balaga were found; 4 were obtained from Navedz.com- on different concepts such as death and human rights- most likely through a Google search; 3 were found on the American Muslim Diversity Association (AMDA) website; 2 were found on the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia website, most likely through a Google search; 1 was found on the General Authority of Islamic Affairs & Endowments website; 1 was found on London's Islamic Cultural Centre web site; 1 was found on NewsRescue.com; and 1 was found on opinion.premiumtimes.com.

The remaining 16 sermons were obtained via Google searches using the following search terms: khutbahs; imam sermons; sermons about [insert concept]; sermons by [insert imam]: Muhammad al-Arifi; abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi; Omar Suleiman; Abdul Nasir Jangda; Shaykh Mujahid Abdul-Karim on justice; Yasir Qadhi; Human Rights. This brings the total to 58 sermons, which were the total number included in the tables at the end of the study.

The length of the sermons will be difficult to directly state due to the nature of collection of the sermons. The khutbahs that were obtained via videos recording or audio recordings can be described via average time of the khutbah. Then a breakdown of where most stood will be examined. Otherwise, khutbahs will be described by the number of pages the researcher transcribed them. The reader should be aware the size of the paper is the normal 8.5 in by 11.5 in white sheet of printing paper, with most of the font on each page as 12 Times New Roman or a similar font with the same 12 point font.

### Coding

Once the researcher believed a solid number of sermons were obtained and transcribed, which was intended to be around 50-100 sermons originally, and ended up being 58 total sermons, the transcriptions were placed into a physical binder. First, the researcher thoroughly read each sermon. Next, the researcher highlighted or marked the parts of the texts that relate to the concepts explained in the literature review. The concepts in this study and analysis are: brotherhood, death, freedom, human rights, justice and equality, love, oppression, peace and treaty, self-defense, sin, submission, terrorism, and truth vs. lies. A color-coding schema was originally applied to the extracted parts in reference to the concepts listed, then the researcher switched to solely labeling the theme in the *khutbah*. This helped organize the data in a way that is recognizable to the researcher as the themes of the sermons.

Once the concepts were highlighted or marked, tables were created using the information gleaned from the units of analyses. The tables will include (1) the themes from the speeches, (2) the subjects included in the transcript, (3) the locations of sermons (and if said location influences the sermon), (4) what the unit of analysis is (mode of delivering the sermon-whether video, transcript or interview), and (5) other possible categories.

### Analysis

Once those figures were created and finalized, the texts in the figures (primarily the themes and units of analysis) were analyzed using the three theories explained in the literature review: Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. This analysis (Chapter 4) represents most of the analysis section, because the actual application of the theories and the results of the study are discussed. The tables themselves can be found in the appendix of this thesis. Below, a basic understanding of thematic analysis will be explained prior to the actual analysis of the texts.

## Thematic Analysis

When one analyzes a text, whether it be a transcription of an auditory artifact or blog entries on a certain lifestyle Web site, the goal is to find patterns and then similarities and differences between the patterns. Another word for a pattern is theme. A theme is a blanket idea that is consistent throughout a text. Putting the two together gives us Thematic Analysis. Guest (2012) explains that Thematic Analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. Coding is a necessary step toward qualitative analysis. According to Hesse-Biber (2010), a code is a “symbol applied to a section of text in order to easily categorize it.” For example, looking at an ISIS propaganda magazine, the text can be coded in groupings such as: positive statements toward Islam, negative statements toward Islam, positive statements toward “the West,” and negative statements toward “the West.” This way, the researcher can quantify the frequency of each statement, place them in categories, and then find themes that come from the categories. In this case, the magazine would have more positive statements toward Islam and more negative statements about the West because one of its primary goals is to show how the West has waged a war on Islam and they (ISIS and Muslims) are justified in their crusade.

Similar to ISIS rhetoric, rhetoric of *imams* and clerics can also be coded. *Imams* and clerics speak to their *ummah* to get them to believe a certain way and act accordingly. This is an important strength of Thematic Analysis. “During the qualitative analysis the researchers sought to understand the ways in which the speakers in the study made meaning of their experiences and behaviors” (Hartman & Conklin, 2012, p. 830). These speakers put these codes together to let themes, as described in the previously, come to the surface. Some researchers believe thematic analysis needs to be in addition to another method of analysis, while others place thematic analysis in a category of its own. Either way, “it is a method for

identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, cited in Nowell, Norries, White & Moules, 2017, p. 2).

Interpreting codes can also lead to questions and pathways not considered before. According to Boyatzis (1998), most researchers believe thematic analysis is a useful way to use codes. By taking the raw data and finding a direction via themes, it becomes easier to determine how a theory applies to the data and the topic being studied. This study follows a deductive, thematic analysis looking at *imams*’ sermons as the qualitative data. Themes were discovered from the *imams*’ sermons and then analyzed through previously explained theories: Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism and Social Identity Theory.

By analyzing videos of *imams*’ sermons, themes are to become visible through the transcripts of such videos. This is what Hartman and Conklin (2012) mean when they say, “themes can be directly observable or an underlying, latent phenomenon. Thematic analysis is a way of seeing, making sense, analyzing, systematically observing, or simply converting qualitative information” (p. 828–829). According to these researchers, how speakers make meaning from what they say is examined further with the use of coding and themes in thematic analysis.

Because this is a deductive analysis, according to Chandra & Shang (2016), “categories are coded based on established concepts, variables or theories” (p. 101). When coding during this analysis, codes are referenced to the Islamic concepts that have been explained throughout this literature review. As a refresher, these concepts include: brotherhood, death, freedom, human rights, justice and equality, love, oppression, peace and treaty, self-defense, sin, submission, terrorism, and truth vs. lies. Themes were color-coded and marked in each sermon for consistency. In the beginning, brotherhood was underlined and labeled; death was underlined and labeled; freedom was highlighted in blue; human rights were not found in the beginning of

coding, justice and equality were highlighted in orange, love was highlighted in pink, oppression was underlined in red, peace and treaty were highlighted in purple, self-defense was starred, sin was underlined and labeled, submission was bracketed and labeled, and truth vs. lies were underlined. After 11 sermons, the researcher began using pencil to label each theme instead of color-coding. Units will be coded as such. In addition, the focus of the speaker's language will be used to create subcategories. Subcategories were extracted from the themes present in the sermon analysis and explained in depth in the Thematic Analysis section.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

The following sermons were analyzed using Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. The general organization of the following analysis is as follows: (1) reference to the table in the Appendix, (2) a general description of the sermons found, including a disclaimer regarding the lack of sermons by American-born imams, and (3) analysis of the examples of the themes and other aspects in the sermon using the theories in the above order. After this, the ensuing writing will start over at the preceding organization description.

Each table in the appendix describes the themes found in the specified sermon as well as examples extracted (in direct quotes) from the imam. Each table also has a description about the imam with information such as their place of birth and where they preach. During data collection, the author discovered that most of the sermons found were from imams born overseas and not in the United States. Despite thorough attempts to find sermons by American-born imams, the author was not able to find as many sermons from U.S. imams.

According to a 2017 Pew Research Poll, there were 3.45 million Muslims living in the United States, making up 1.1% of the total population (Mohamed, 2018). When considering this, it makes sense why there is a disparity of imams in the United States.

### Speech Codes Theory

Following the literature review on Speech Codes Theory, this first sermon (see appendix) analysis serves as an example of the structure of how the following sermons were analyzed using this theory. First, the origin of the sermon (who delivered it) is explained and from what medium the sermon was transcribed. Second, as with the second requirement of the theory, these sermons were analyzed to describe and explain the behaviors of Muslims (as followers of Islam). Third is



the examination of how the *imam* or speaker conducts himself while speaking. This third characteristic was based on the speaker's words and tone. These three stipulations were reinforced with the six propositions (Philipsen, 2004) explained by the researcher previously. As with all twenty sermons, the researcher understands the propositions are not a checklist, though he believes he found information satisfying all of the propositions in each sermon.

### Internationally Born imams

#### *Sermon 1*

##### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 1 (see Table 1, appendix) was delivered by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. It was found via a Google search under the *imam*'s name. These are excerpts from a 10'43" video sermon delivered on January 9, 2009, that aired on Al-Jazeera TV. The sermon was transcribed by the researcher, who copied the English translation that was provided on screen.

##### *Speech Codes Theory*

With regard to the propositions of the Speech Codes Theory, the following were gleaned. **Proposition 1** states that where there is a certain culture, there is a certain speech code. The reader can refer to the *Origin of Sermon* section to see the speaker, location, and time in which the sermon was delivered. Proposition 1 was satisfied because al-Qaradawi's speech codes are very specific. Al-Qaradawi's speech is directed to three different subjects. His speech codes are characterized by religious and cultural aspects. Because al-Qaradawi (and this sermon) were based in Egypt, where 94.9% of the population are Muslim, this makes sense (Pew Research Center, 2015).

His speech codes will be expanded now as the researcher discusses the application of **Proposition 2**. One culture involved is that the speaker is speaking directly to followers of Islam

who are in the room or who view the video, as the researcher did. He speaks to them in terms of religious, socio-cultural aspects involving religious qualification and justification for the actions he takes and he wants his listeners to take. In religious terms, he constantly qualifies his decision with references to Allah and references past retribution Allah placed on the Jewish people due to the corruption he said the Jewish people spread.

In socio-cultural terms, he discusses the Jews (and Christians) and the West, who he believes oppresses Muslims. Culturally, he describes the Jewish people as treacherous oppressors and liars. He references the United States as “supporting inequity against justice” and classifies the country as inferior. The last culture he references is the Muslim rulers he believes oppress their own people. He discusses this subject similarly to al-Qaradawi in the fourth international sermon.

**Proposition 3** states that each culture has its own set of speech codes in terms of “human nature, social relations and strategic conduct” (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 61). In this example, al-Qaradawi is Egyptian, had held leadership roles in the Muslim Brotherhood, and accepted Palestinian suicide bombings against Israelis (Abdelhadi, 2004; Guitta, 2006). This means he feels strongly about social rank. This is shown in his own words referencing the cultures such as Egyptian, Muslims in other countries, and the Jewish population. He continuously placed the Jewish people on the lowest rung, seemingly—even lower than his descriptions of the Americans. This shows al-Qaradawi’s personal sociological feelings, as explained by Philipsen, referenced in Gudykunst (2005).

**Proposition 4** explains that the significance of the speech depends on what the speaker means by said speech. This is where it will be subject to many interpretations on every sermon discussed. The previous literature review has discussed interpretations of the Islamic concepts that were discovered in the sermons. Scholarly research was found to reinforce the opinions and

claims made. Al-Qaradawi intended to denounce any enemies of Islam from his perspective, which included sweeping allegations against entire nations and cultures, shaming Muslims who do not retaliate against the injustices (or at least his interpretation of injustices) being committed, and creating an “us vs. them” dichotomy of anyone not in agreement with his interpretation (or Allah’s) to be enemies of Islam. The significance is in the previous explanations.

**Proposition 5** explains that speech codes are in a given utterance (no matter what) and that they are impossible to be removed. Thinking of this, it is understood that *imams* would reference Allah and how Muslims should act. This sermon is no different. Al-Qaradawi gives instructions on how Muslims should act *vis-à-vis* Allah, the believed enemies of Islam, and the brothers of Islam. This proposition is included in every single transcribed sermon, as well.

**Proposition 6** explains that speech codes have the ability to “influence communicative conduct” due to the speaker’s coherence, social legitimacy, and eloquence (Philipsen, Coutu, & Covarrubias, 2005, p. 63). Proposition 6 will come with a disclaimer that will apply to every sermon, but this disclaimer will only be mentioned in this first sermon to keep from being repetitive. The views purported by the researcher in all applications of Proposition 6 are purely opinions and derived from the application of the combination of the literature review, Speech Codes Theory, and the information in each sermon.

In this example, the speaker was coherent and spoke as an expert. He achieved this by referencing historical events and examples to justify his teachings, such as referring to the Jews as oppressors when they did not reciprocate the accommodations of shelter and protections. The researcher believes his message will resonate with his *ummah* because those viewing al-Jazeera already have a preference toward these kinds of negative connotations about groups such as Jews, Christians, and the United States. This will serve as explanation for the remainder of the

sermons. Although Spradley (1980) explains this cannot be observed directly, the analysis of transcribed sermons fits this observation.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Symbolic Interactionism explains how people interpret others' messages and then react to them, rather than solely reacting on the person's message. This reaction is based on symbols during the interaction. A key feature of Symbolic Interactionism is the lack of separation between the message giver (in this case: *imam*) and the context in which the *imam* is speaking. In this analysis, a message is decoded and analyzed based on how a speaker delivers a message and how the speaker interprets the audience. In the sermons the researcher analyzed, the understanding and interpretations of the thirteen concepts by the *ummah*, or the Muslim audience, are mediated by the *imam*'s interpretation of the concept and how they explain it during their sermon. Because the global *ummah* is expected to interpret the same *imam*'s sermon differently and the researcher is unable to see a consistent reaction by the *ummah* during the delivery of the sermon, this part of the Symbolic Interactionism analysis will be almost non-existent.

A part of Symbolic Interactionism that will be focused on from the *imam*'s perspective, will be how they normalize and interpret social behavior. An example of this can be the normalizing of terrorist actions against a group. Although it is terrorism (i.e., Palestinian bombing of Jewish person or group) and unprovoked, the *imam* may interpret the action as admissible due knowledge they believe justifies said act. They may explain (as many of the sermons show) that actions against the Jews and United States are justified because such actions are committed in self-defense. Another part the *imam* might focus on is how a Muslim shall never transgress another Muslim, for it would be a sin to do so. These two examples include concepts focused on in this thesis: self-defense and sin. An *imam*'s perspective will most likely

not be limited to these two concepts and instead include many if not all of the twelve concepts focused on in this thesis.

With regard to this first sermon, the analysis follows what the researcher previously explained. Sheikh Yousef al-Qaradawi normalizes violence against Israel and the West (specifically America). Specific to Israel, al-Qaradawi discusses how the Jews are oppressive and how Muslims became the victims of the Jews after the Jews gained influence following the Ottoman Empire. He expounds on how the violence used by the West and Jews is oppressive while the violence that Muslims must use in return is justice, because the West and Jews are supporting a falsehood. Further, al-Qaradawi twists reality when he says that because Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia are not attacking Israel for *jihad*, they are the protectors of the state. Invoking an “us vs. them” paradigm, al-Qaradawi categorizes an enemy of Allah as an enemy of Islam. In justifying why he thinks Israel and the West are an enemy of Allah, he justifies how the countries are an enemy of Islam.

Finally, al-Qaradawi looks at brotherhood the same way. The *imam* interprets this behavior by the West and the Jews as reason for Muslims to assist the Muslims in other countries because he makes them out to be the victim. Because all Muslims are always brothers, al-Qaradawi’s interpretation is that they then have an obligation to assist one another if one is under attack. Since al-Qaradawi’s reality is that that the United States and Israel are the aggressors, and he is imposing his reality on the *ummah*, the researcher understands that the *ummah* are receiving the message in al-Qaradawi’s terms but unable to know if they are sharing the same beliefs and interpretations as the *imam*.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The immediate application of Social Identity Theory shows how al-Qaradawi places an “us vs. them” paradigm on the examples he gives. By using words such as: “brothers” and

“nation’s enemies,” he creates an in-group and out-group representing the situation. Anyone can be a victim and oppressor, depending on the viewpoint. Because this is from al-Qaradawi’s perspective, he shows that Muslims are the victim and the West and Israel are the oppressors. The in-group, from al-Qaradawi’s perspective, is anyone who believes the West and Israel transgress Islamic land, oppress Muslims, and commit terrorist acts against them. The out-group would be anyone who supports the falsehood of the West and does not take action against Israel. He does not discuss how to become part of the in-group, other than holding those beliefs. Although al-Qaradawi does not specifically discuss countries not directly involved in the conflict on the same level as the West and Israel, it is clear they believe the West is portraying a falsehood. Because Allah will not allow a falsehood, they are enemies of Allah, which in turn make them enemies of Islam.

Explained in this section of the literature review, the out-group strives to become part of the in-group. In this case though, from the speaker’s perspective, he is focusing on those who he sees against him as the out-group and telling them they are violating the in-group’s sanctity and brotherhood, for lack of better terms. In this sense, the speaker is telling the *ummah* to affiliate with their Muslim brothers. This, in turn, would be a person’s social identity. From here, the speaker hopes to impose the same “us vs. them” worldview that he has been discussing in his sermon.

## *Sermon 2*

### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 2 (See Table 2, appendix), was located by a Google search of sermons. The researcher went to the General Authority of Islamic Affairs & Endowments Web site (AWQAF) and found the sermon. Because there was already a transcription of the sermon, it was downloaded, coded to find the themes described in the literature review, and then extracted

quotes were analyzed using the theories: Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism and Social Identity Theory.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

Similar to the first sermon, **Proposition 1** was applicable because the codes were specific and distinctive. **Proposition 2** applies to this analysis because the UAE *imam* used different speech codes. Similar to al-Qaradawi, the *imam* giving this UAE sermon is speaking directly to Muslims. He speaks to his *ummah* in social and religious codes as well. In social terms, he explains how Muslims should act as Allah requires, in terms of responding with the same or better greeting to the person who greeted you first. This is “correct.”

In religious terms, this *imam* discussed how the Prophet ended his assemblies. This UAE *imam* discussed how he would say an invocation Jibril taught him: “Glory is due to You, O Allah, and praise. I bear witness that there is no deity save You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.” Another religious aspect, but different from al-Qaradawi, is that this imam ended with verbiage to Allah thanking him, asking for blessings and pleading for Allah to keep the UAE stable.

**Proposition 3** applies to this sermon because the UAE *imam* continued with the assessment of social relations when discussing Jews and Christians or “the West” compared to the oppressed Muslims, but this *imam* also discusses the social relations in terms of women and men. He purported that the women participated in daily assembly just as the men did.

**Proposition 4** is the most applicable proposition to this sermon. The significance of the sermon was in the meaning the speaker put on the words, stories, and exclamations they did. The speaker focused on submission as a theme for most of the sermon. This was seen as important when coding, that the speaker focused on submission as a code of life. The speaker intended for the words’ uses to be an overall framework for how a Muslim or listener lives their life. He is

speaking to his followers and giving them a framework in terms of religious action, which is why he reinforces these with references to Muhammad and Allah.

**Proposition 5** is also a prominent occurrence in each sermon and this one is no exception. These rules of the speech code are not able to be taken out of the speech. In regards to this sermon, Allah is mentioned in every theme coded. He is mentioned because everything a Muslim does is supposed to be for the betterment, in striving to be closer to Allah. This *imam* discusses submission to Allah and discusses how the early followers of Islam would act with Muhammad. This adherence to the guidance of Allah is intended to be followed in all aspects of life. Asking Allah for forgiveness is how Muslims communicate with Allah in terms of religiosity. In the culture of a religious following, this *imam* discusses aspects of life by remembering Allah. Gatherings and actions of brotherhood are used to communicate and congregate with one another (other Muslims) and these are not mutually exclusive.

Mentioning Allah lends itself then for **Proposition 6** when discussing why one speaks about the subjects they do. This imam spoke about Muhammad and Allah to give social legitimacy to the message. The researcher believes this message from the UAE *imam* should resonate with his *ummah* because he is using Allah as an authority and using the social and religious codes. This lends credence to his message and the *ummah* is more likely to put stock in it. In terms of coherence, the researcher believed his *khutbah* was coherent but does not know if the *ummah* believed the same. Earlier, the researcher explained these rules do not work in a vacuum, so although it may be a roadmap, it shall not be a checklist.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Because followers of the global *ummah* want to please Allah and become the best they can be, they intend to act in ways to do so. This continues to be discovered in this second sermon. This shows that followers interpret their actions and then change or reinforce their



behavior in order to be in Allah's good graces. In terms of the sermon, there was a lack of visual aspect. This means the researcher could not see the reaction of the *ummah* or audience to the *imam's khutbah*. This was a similarity with all of the other sermons, as well. The consistent focus when analyzing using Symbolic Interactionism will be how the *imam* normalizes the behavior he preaches about.

The most consistent behavior in this *khutbah* was submission. Submission was also seen as obedience to Allah. The sub-themes were submission as a code of life, in terms of conduct, as requital, and to the law of authority. He normalized behavior as a code of life via obedience toward Allah and following his orders. In terms of conduct, he only discussed the greeting needing to be an equal or better greeting. Another sub-theme was submission as requital. This means submission as a reward or punishment. More often than not, obedience was seen as a path toward reward. As seen in the excerpts for "as requital" in this sermon, paradise was the reward and obedience to Allah was the path to obtain such reward. Finally, the sub-theme "to the law of an authority" was present when the imam spoke of obeying Allah and his messenger Muhammad. This is the most important, because it is the best way to honor Allah. That is why, in the excerpt, the *imam* says they pray for Allah to guide them. In turn, they would obey his guidance.

To put this in terms of the assumptions explained in the literature review: the followers strive toward obedience and submission to Allah because it is the best way to honor Allah. This understanding was in the context of the sermon to the global *ummah* and the *imam* preaching what was best. Last, the context in which this sermon was given was to a certain audience and the researcher was not in said audience. This means that the speaker's intention might not be the same as the meaning taken by the listener, because the individual has their own context.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The *imam* is telling the *ummah* to follow Allah's word and his demands. As Rodriguez (2016) states: A negatively self-viewed person will seek motivation to increase the view of themselves. This motivation, told by the speaker, comes from Allah and Mohammad. If they follow Allah's will, then they believe they are acting as a good Muslim should. A more focused look at this theory will see the in-groups and out-groups created by the speaker. This in-group and out-group came from actions followers should or should not do. For example, all praise is supposed to go to Allah and if in a group with others, in a gathering, remembrance and blessings to Allah are also necessary. In acting as a good Muslim, they see Allah as recognizing them in a positive way, which means they will see themselves in a positive way.

This self-regard, though, comes in two forms: personal identity and social identity. The previous example was a personal identity, while a social identity would be the group affiliations the followers place on themselves. First, Allah would want them to classify themselves as Muslims and submit to him. This is where the in-group and out-group classifications are discovered. In terms of this sermon, this classification is mostly seen in the themes of submission and brotherhood. In submission, it discusses the followers who believe in Allah must obey and fear him for he is the followers' guide. Those who follow this rule are the in-group, and those who do not are seen and classified as the out-group. The out-group is expected to always intend to become part of the in-group. This is consistent with the writing and with the theme 'submission in terms of the code of life' to "strive to maintain the assemblies of goodness," as the sermon says. Coming full circle, a person with a negative self-perception will intend to become positively motivated to become part of the in-group again and in Allah's good grace. This is not a one-time situation. It is one that occurs throughout a Muslim's entire life.

### *Sermon 3*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 3 (See Table 3, appendix) was found on London's Islamic Cultural Centre Web site. The researcher searched this *imam* and discovered he is a foreign-born *imam* from Saudi Arabia. This *imam* is from Saudi Arabia but delivered the sermon in London, which will be important in the analysis.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

**Proposition 1** explains a distinctive culture has a distinctive speech code. This applies here. This sermon is given by a Muslim in the Islamic Cultural Centre in London, England, where the Muslim population was 3.5 million as of 2016 (Kern, 2017). Even though they are in London, this is a Muslim *ummah* because they are all worshipping the same God, Allah. And because this is a certain culture, they have a certain speech code, which will be explained in later propositions. **Proposition 2** stating that multiple speech codes are deployed can be observed because, like previously mentioned, this is a Muslim *ummah*, so there is a correct way to explain values and an incorrect way. As it is seen in this *khutbah*, praise is always to go to Allah and values are described in how one should act in accordance to Allah's teaching and as a true Muslim should act. Rahman uses three different speech codes in his sermon: cultural, social, and religious.

Culturally, Rahman is talking to his local Muslim *ummah* in London. He explains how a Muslim should deal with those who accuse Islam of terrorism. He says the best method is to defend Islam by acting in "excellent character, good qualities, and good behavior, which can be demonstrated through kind words, truthfulness, trustworthiness, fairness, justice, wisdom, and truth." This is "correct" communication to those who "defame" Islam.

In terms of social codes, Rahman also discusses how Muslims should interact socially with other Muslims. Because the most prominent theme of this sermon was brotherhood, Rahman explains the social aspects Muslims should abide by to provide appropriate aspects of brotherhood. He explains how Muslims should attempt to avoid arguments and “divisive attitudes” furthering personal interests and instead follow the brotherhood of Islam, which brings all Muslims together.

Rahman also discusses how Muslims should deal with non-Muslims. He explains how Muslims should respect the laws of the country they are in, as long as the laws and rules do not “go against the religion of their Lord.” Correct communication with non-Muslims include: “peace, harmony, safety, security, coexistence, dialogue, and tolerance and they must avoid any kind of violence with non-Muslims.” The researcher labels these last codes as cultural and religious.

Continuing with **Proposition 3**, Rahman’s speech codes focused on social relations and strategic conduct, essentially laying out specific rules for the community to which he is preaching. These rules included avoiding arguments, personal opinion, and cliques within the community because the brotherhood is the most important, even over individuals. He discusses social conduct when referencing how Muslims can respect the laws of the country they are living in while not going against Islam and how Muslims should “behave with non-Muslims in a beautiful manner, which includes peace, harmony,” and other attributes. **Proposition 4** can be demonstrated by referring back to **Proposition 2** and the examples and speech codes the researcher says Rahman prioritized. The examples the researcher gave of Rahman’s acts from **Proposition 2** show that he focused on how Muslims should act against those who attempt to

delegitimize or disparage Islam as well as how Muslims should act when interacting with other Muslims.

**Proposition 5** in Rahman's sermon was prominent when he was discussing brotherhood. He discussed how Muslims should interact with each other and explained how disagreements should not affect relationships of Muslims socially because all Muslims are all "under the banner of Islam." **Proposition 6** applies because Rahman's speech codes were coherent and made him look socially legitimate because he spoke about actions his *ummah* could do in regards to non-Muslims while at the same time remaining steadfast in their religion. By giving specific actions, the researcher believes the *ummah* received the message that Rahman was attempting to get across.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

In terms of the sermon, there was a lack of visual aspect. This means the researcher could not see the reaction of the *ummah* or audience to the *imam's khutbah*. This was a similarity with all of the other sermons, as well. The consistent focus when analyzing using Symbolic Interactionism will be how the *imam* normalizes the behavior he preaches about.

The most prominent themes in this sermon were freedom, brotherhood, terrorism, and truth. He explained these themes in terms of cultural values and beliefs, as in Swidler (1986). Freedom was described two different ways: freedom from being held as slaves or lesser humans and freedom as a lack of choice the believer endures. In terms of being held as slaves, the *imam* discussed Mohammad's words to the inhabitants of Makkah (a city he conquered), where he told them they were free even though they would be punished by Allah for not believing in him. In terms of lack of choice, the *imam* quotes verse 3 from Surah Maidah, explaining Allah took away the believer's freedom, giving him no choice but to believe in his word. The *imam* created the reality for his *ummah* using the religious symbols of Mohammad and Allah. He is using

these symbols because he knows his audience worships these symbols. And because they receive their lessons and their explanations through religious leaders, he is using his role appropriately. The meaning the *ummah* receives comes from the reality the *imam* places on these concepts. And because the *imam* is interpreting these *surahs*, he is giving the *ummah* his interpretation of the reality of what freedom means. This is the same with brotherhood, terrorism, and truth.

The *imam* views brotherhood as the “solidarity of the Muslims” and rejects the idea that it can be affected by tribalism. He mentions all believers in Islam are brothers and that this is a feature of the religion. By brothers he means that beliefs and actions must be in step with one another by avoiding arguments, because these arguments are the result of personal interest and this personal interest is below the idea of Islam. This transitions into submission as a theme, because the *imam* discusses Muslims need to submit to the religion “as a code of life” and “to the law of an authority.”

This *sheikh* gives his interpretation of the events and values in the *khutbah* and focuses on these to explain what values are important. This is important to Symbolic Interactionism, because the theory says that the interpretation the speaker places on an action or event may have more of an effect on the listener’s behavior than the event itself. This means this *sheikh*’s interpretation of the meanings of these concepts matters most.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The most prominent classification the *sheikh* places on the *ummah* or the audience is they need to act as true Muslims act. This can be seen especially in the concepts of freedom, brotherhood, and terrorism. In terms of freedom, the *sheikh* explains that religion in his country should be explained as Islam, since it is the religion of all Muslims. It makes sense that he says Islam is the religion of all Muslims, but it is the way freedom is discussed. He mentions the

“unbelievers” and “disbelievers.” He mentions how when Mohammad conquered them, they were free from Mohammad’s harm even though Allah would persecute and punish them because they were disbelievers.

In terms of brotherhood, the *sheikh* explains how this concept is second only to monotheism to Allah. So because a true Muslim would believe in Allah first, then a true Muslim would believe in brotherhood and solidarity of Muslims second. This classification as a Muslim first and then brother is followed by discussion of submission and similar instructions. Submission is discussed as a code of life, needing Muslims to believe in monotheism and adhere to the *Qur’an* and *Sunnah*, and as a code of authority, where Allah and Mohammad need the brothers’ submission. Although there are other themes, terrorism and truth are the last prominent and thorough themes in this sermon.

Terrorism is discussed in terms of Muslims misunderstanding Islam. The *sheikh* does not necessarily discuss what makes a true Muslim in terms of this concept, but he alludes to it by explaining a Muslim loses his or her identity if they involve themselves in terrorism and think it is part of their religion. Social identity is stressed here in terms of situations to act with force. The *sheikh* condemns killing anyone without it being retaliation for a murder committed upon them and explains that the laws of the land wherever said Muslim is must be followed. In terms of terrorism, the in-group will mean those who respect the laws of their inhabited country, those who avoid harm to the public, those who act in self-defense, and those who use kindness, truth, fairness, and justice with those who accuse Islam of terrorism. The out-group will be those who see terrorism as a force of Islam and act on those beliefs.

## *Sermon 4*

### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 4, (See Table 4, appendix), was found via a Google search of “Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi sermons.” The researcher located videos in Arabic with English subtitles. The researcher transcribed the video based on the translation on the video screen. The location of the sermon is Al Azhar mosque in Cairo, Egypt. The breaks and spaces in the transcription were from the researcher’s personal choice based on the speaker’s pace and pauses. The researcher did not choose videos that were shorter than 10 minutes.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

Consistent with the previous analysis of the other sermons, not all of the propositions are necessarily going to be found in the analysis of this sermon. Immediately, this sermon has a distinctive speech code. Because this sermon was delivered in Cairo, Egypt, a place where Islam is the chosen religion for 90% of the country’s 97 million people, speech codes and aspects of delivery will most likely be different than if it was delivered in the United States, where Islam is not the majority religion (CIA World Fact Book, 2015). According to Sherwood (2018), hundreds of Christians in Egypt were killed and driven out of their homes in 2017, young girls have been forced to convert to Islam and be married, and Egyptian perspective is that Christians are infidels. The tone of this sermon reflects the community in which it was given. Something that will be discussed in the Social Identity Theory section will be Sherwood’s (2018) declaration that “[i]n Egypt, as in many other Middle Eastern countries, your religion is stated on your identity card. This makes discrimination and persecution easy.”

The information about the demographics of the community in which this sermon was delivered was expected to bolster claims the researcher makes and to be useful to understand the kinds of speech codes Shaykh Qaradawi was expected to use in his sermon. Surprisingly, this



was not the case. Applying **Proposition 2** to this sermon, the researcher uncovered two different kinds of speech codes (cultural and religious) that al-Qaradawi used. Al-Qaradawi focuses on the cultural aspect of Egyptians while focusing on their homeland. Although he does not explicitly discuss the culture, he mentions things such as oppression. He frames how the revolutions from the Arab Spring were necessary because the people wanted freedom. He is speaking directly to Egyptians here. He says the Syrians used their only weapon of freedom: their throats. He regards the Syrians and Egyptians in cultural terms. He contrasts them with those who he views as the “oppressors”: the Jewish people. He frames them as murderers and adversaries of Egypt and Islam as a whole. This is consistently mentioned throughout the sermon.

In religious terms, al-Qaradawi discussed how Egypt is a Muslim nation and how the people are the most powerful people in the world. But he does not frame Muslims against Christians in a combative way. He instead lumps Christianity and Islam together, as people of Egypt. He mentions Christianity as a whole, rather than speak directly to a group of Christians or certain Christians.

If it were not already obvious, al-Qaradawi seems to have created a ranking system in terms of social relations, satisfying **Proposition 3**. With regard to both speech codes explained previously, Muslims were explained to be at the top while, surprisingly, Christians are second to the top with the Egyptians and Syrians. He lumps Christians with Muslims, describing those who have fought for revolution in Egypt. The lowest class al-Qaradawi describes explicitly are the Jewish people. The researcher believes it is doubtful al-Qaradawi actually places Christians this high in the social structure—that the gap between the Muslims and Christians is greater than al-Qaradawi is describing—but from his words, al-Qaradawi places the Christians in a favorable position.

When **Proposition 4** is applied, the researcher finds the main themes in this sermon to be oppression, death, and justice. The *imam*'s statements that had these themes in them were focused on an "us vs. them" paradigm. Oppression was described when he explained that revolution does not belong to the oppressors such as Israel because they killed "our brothers in Gaza with no right" while justice was framed the same way with the following example: "Make us victorious over those killers in Israel, those who kill unjustly only because they say our Lord is Allah."

The application of **Proposition 5** to this sermon is not as specific as the other propositions, but the researcher exposed the pattern of how al-Qaradawi continuously spoke about Israel and those that support them in negative terms consistently with leaders such as al-Assad of Syria. These could not be removed from al-Qaradawi's language or it might change the meaning of his sermon.

**Proposition 6** was difficult to assess from the researcher's perspective. The researcher is stumped in regards to al-Qaradawi's speech codes and how effective they may be. It seems as though he refers to Syrians and Egyptians as one in terms of culture facing off against the Jewish people. What is confusing is he regards Christians and Muslims together as "people of Egypt," which is where his speech code might not be as effective with his overseas audience. This also might de-legitimize his overall message, but there is no way to determine this for certain. The researcher believes that the *ummah* will be partially amenable to his message (animosity toward the Jewish people) and confused at the message about the Christians.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

In terms of the sermon, there was a lack of visual aspect. This means the researcher could not see the reaction of the *ummah* or audience to the *imam*'s *khutbah*. This was a similarity with

all of the other sermons, as well. The researcher's focus when analyzing using Symbolic Interactionism will be how the *imam* normalizes the behavior he preaches about.

The main themes were oppression, death, justice, and brotherhood. Sheikh al-Qaradawi explains the interpretation that he is giving is the correct interpretation by explaining it is the obligation of every Muslim to act in a just manner. Similar to the Israeli-Palestinian feud mentioned in the literature review, al-Qaradawi discusses Syria and explains how "the regular army" and Israel are the oppressors in Syria. The researcher assumes "the regular army" references the Free Syrian Army. The *imam* goes on to say that because Israel is the oppressor, they must kill Israelis. Instead of stating this outright, he says Syrians must be "victorious over those killers in Israel." Although it might be construed as terrorism because al-Qaradawi seems indiscriminate in his words, he is justifying said act with the worldview that Israel is the oppressive regime.

Another theme al-Qaradawi normalizes is death. He not only normalizes death but describes it in terms of dying for one's country and dying for "the cause." The researcher believes the cause is expelling Israel, but more specifically the cause is pleasing Allah, since this is what they believe he wants them to do. Dying for Egypt is seen as admirable, because it is al-Qaradawi's homeland, but he also equates this to dying for "the cause" or for Allah's desires. This act elevates the status of anyone who dies for Egypt (their homeland) as a martyr. According to al-Qaradawi, martyrdom is explained as better than "the most armed person in the whole world," because the martyr owns his soul while the other does not.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Those who commit justice and those who do not commit justice is the most prominent classification al-Qaradawi makes when discussing what identifies a Muslim. If one looks at his interpretation of justice, he explains one must be just with friends and enemies alike. A

classification he makes is between “those you love” and “those you hate.” It seems he is indiscriminate in his evaluation of justice. When discussing justice, he seems to be echoing Rosen (2000) that justice is involved in everyday life. This means that for a person’s social identity to belong to the in-group of Islam and be a Muslim, one must not use this concept when he or she pleases but rather engage with justice in every interaction. This reinforces the importance of this concept to a Muslim’s identity, as seen in the previously mentioned 2017 Pew Research Center survey, where 69% of American Muslims believe “working for justice” is a very important part of a Muslim’s identity.

Those who are unfortunately in the out-group, al-Qaradawi gives stipulations in terms of brotherhood and self-defense where a Muslim’s allegiances and actions must come in. He does not describe this in terms of in-group and out-group but explains what a Muslim should do in certain situations. When explaining brotherhood, he gives an example of when a Muslim is attacked. When this occurs, every Muslim has an obligation to step up and defend said Muslim. So, in this example, a true Muslim would defend the other Muslim. This would be the in-group. The out-group would be those Muslims who do not act on these rules. In turn, al-Qaradawi would not describe these Muslims as brothers, meaning he would not describe them as believers, meaning these people would not be categorized as Muslims in his interpretation.

### *Sermon 5*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 5 (see Table 5, appendix) was found on the General Authority of Islamic Affairs & Endowments Web site. The researcher stumbled on this Web site and eventually located this sermon on it. Consistent with the analysis of the first sermon, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained, because the literature review gave the overview

for this theory. What follows is the origin of the sermon and analysis via Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This analysis of this sermon using Speech Codes Theory is necessary and appropriate on most accords because it satisfies the three characteristics this theory stipulates. First, this theory explains cultural behavior must be observed. This characteristic is satisfied because the coding and the analysis of said sermon comes from a transcription of the sermon where the imam explains and demonstrates cultural values. Second, this theory explains analysis of speech is necessary to explain behaviors. This is immediately satisfied because the transcription is of a sermon. Third, it shows how to conduct oneself in an interaction. This might be explained in more than one way. It may be explained in terms of religion, culture, and social factors. What follows is the application of the propositions of Speech Codes Theory and how they are used in this sermon.

Because the United Arab Emirates has its seal on the Web site, it can be assumed this sermon took place in this country. In referencing a 2018 Freedom House report, it can be seen that the UAE has a score of 17 out of 100. Since the 1980 Publications and Publishing Law was enacted in the UAE, it has become one of the “most restrictive press laws in the Arab world” (Freedom House, 2018). Why this is important is because the culture is very oppressed and since they have not had a revolution fighting for basic human rights such as freedom of speech and press, they do not know any better than the oppressive culture they experience on a daily basis. This *imam* is expressing their cultural, political, and religious values through this sermon.

**Proposition 1** has been satisfied.

**Proposition 2** can be applied to this sermon because the *imam* spoke mainly to the *ummah* to which he was preaching, as well as those who are watching and listening to the

sermon. He is speaking to the ummah using social factors. He is only speaking from his perspective and how he views the Prophet. But he is speaking from different social classes by utilizing different perspectives throughout his sermon. He speaks from Allah's perspective, Abu Bakr's perspective, and the Prophet's perspective. This sparks **Proposition 3** to be discussed because of the system of social relations this *imam* discusses. He places Abu Bakr as-Siddiq as third on the "list" (meaning behind Allah and the Prophet Muhammad) because he was the first man to embrace Islam, the *imam* says. The researcher believes this is meant to be from Allah's perspective. The *imam* then switches perspective and explains as-Siddiq's feelings about the Prophet Muhammad and how as-Siddiq prefers the Prophet over his own children. This *imam* was very specific about social relations, rather than assigning and describing groups and roles of groups on the totem pole, he referenced actual people and their relationships to others.

The application **Proposition 4** to this sermon shows that the UAE *imam* referenced much Abu Bakr he loved the Prophet which is understood when looking at the codes. He focused on acts of trust and worship by Abu Bakr to the Prophet. When the sermon says "he spent his wealth in the sake of Allah's obedience," this is what social significance means. He also references Abu Bakr's love toward the Prophet and gives examples, so although this was a religious reason why Abu Bakr conducted these acts, he did it in a social manner.

In terms of **Proposition 5**, the codes cannot be separated because the social way of Abu Bakr's love toward Allah was the only way he knew how to show it. So the *imam* consistently spoke about it in the same terms. The speech codes this *imam* used were constrained by his explanation of the social aspects of communication of Abu Bakr to the Prophet. In terms of **Proposition 6**, the researcher does not think the *ummah* will be accepting of this sermon because of the way he is taking the place of Allah's, Abu Bakr's, and the Prophet's perspective. The

researcher may be incorrect, but he does not believe this method will make the *ummah* grab on to his speech code and message.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

As with all of the other sermons, because this analysis is based off of a transcript of a sermon, the researcher could not see the reaction of the *ummah* or audience to the *imam*'s *khutbah*. That being said analysis will not focus on the delivery but instead on the symbols used in the sermon and how he normalizes and interprets the behavior for which he advocates. This was a similarity with all of the other sermons, as well.

Dissimilar to other sermons, only four themes were found when coding took place: truth, submission, love, and death. In terms of truth, the speaker put reference to Allah and Abu Bakr when Allah made clear to Mohammad, that he [Abu Bakr] would want to take responsibility to endure any incident. Abu Bakr confirmed this—because it came from Allah, it is indeed the truth. The *imam*, similar to other *imam* sermons, observes the concept of truth as anything that comes from Allah and through Mohammad. One could hypothesize then that this *imam* sees Allah as equivalent to truth.

In terms of submission, it is seen that Abu Bakr followed submission in terms of obedience to the law of an authority and obedience as requital. His words can be classified as obedience as requital because he spent his life for Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. Similar to truth, Allah is seen as the symbol here when referring to submission. He discusses obedience to the law of an authority. The quote equates to the law of an authority because the *imam* states Abu Bakr was known for his obedience and because Hussain explains and references the Quran, which states obedience is the best way to honor Allah. In this sense, the *imam* focuses on Abu Bakr as a symbol for what to strive for. The *imam* focuses on three of the four themes found in

this sermon when discussing this understanding that symbols normalize social behavior. These themes include truth, submission, and love.

The *imam* praises and normalizes love in this sermon, referencing Abu Bakr as-Siddiq's love toward the messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad. This love is in terms of "sincere love" (p. 6) and "excellence in following his guidance" (p. 6). He then states that this love toward the Prophet Muhammad must extend to Allah's chosen companions. This shows as-Siddiq's love is the symbol for what to strive for.

### *Social Identity Theory*

This *imam's* focus on the ummah following Allah's love and being obedient to Allah shows that he believes this perspective is a large piece of a Muslim's personal identity. In this sermon, Abu Bakr was regarded as the truest Muslim from the researcher's interpretation of how the *imam* was speaking. This was evident by the many obedient acts that Abu Bakr committed that were seen in Allah's good graces. Some acts included fasting, visiting an ill person, attending a funeral, spending his wealth for Allah's sake, and following his guidance. The *imam* said, "In virtue of his good actions, Abu Bakr was, therefore, worthy of being called to the gateways of Paradise to enter from all of them," showing that this can be the result of following Allah's path. These acts are not explicitly explained as characteristics of those who are obedient to Allah, but they are referenced as acts that show love toward Allah.

The *imam* did not explicitly say "this is what a true Muslim does," but through the acts explained and by raising Abu Bakr As-Siddiq as a "true believer," a Muslim's positive view of themselves should come from committing acts that reflect or mimic acts that As-Siddiq committed. This last interpretation is solely based on this sermon, because this is the *imam's* view of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq.



## *Sermon 6*

### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 6 (see Table 6, appendix) was found via a Google search and many sermons were discovered by *imam* A.M. Khattab. It was chosen because its title—“Status of Woman in Islam: Is woman equal to man or not? (Dress)”—led the researcher to believe it would discuss equality, which is one of the concepts focused on in this study.

Consistent with the analysis of the first sermon, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained, because the literature review gave the overview for this theory. What follows is the origin of the sermon and analysis via Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

Consistent with the previous sermons, analysis using Speech Codes Theory will not be a rundown of the propositions as a checklist but instead will be used to discover which of the propositions can be applied to this sermon. First it does have to satisfy characteristics of this theory. This theory states that one must observe cultural behavior. Even though the analysis is based off of a transcription, cultural aspects are extracted from the *imam*'s perspective. The second characteristic states the analysis of speech is necessary to explain the behaviors of the group. This is satisfied because the speech, word choice, and themes are what the researcher is analyzing. Third, the theory focuses on how a speaker conducts themselves. Because the researcher did not view the *imam* while they were speaking, this part will focus on the interpretation of the concepts outlined in the literature review. This analysis of the sermon using Speech Codes Theory is necessary and appropriate because it satisfies the three characteristics this theory stipulates.

*Imam* A.M. Khattab is from Egypt but was the first *imam* of a mosque in Edmonton, Alberta. After, he moved to Ontario. Although it is unknown where this specific sermon took place, both his place of birth and place where he spoke will be somewhat of a focus when discussing Speech Codes Theory.

**Proposition 2** was present in this sermon as well. Although the audience was broad, Khattab focused mainly on social speech codes about gender in this sermon. He focused on the equality of women in terms of dress. This is social because he discusses how a woman's status is not only in terms of her dress, which needs to be modest, but her behavior also, which needs to "conform to Islamic mores." Although Khattab explains there is no such thing as Islamic dress, things need to be interpreted as they are today. Continuing, this applies to **Proposition 3**, because Khattab discusses social relations and strategic conduct. In terms of social relations, he focuses mostly on a Muslim's dress and behavior. For example, he explains that even if a Muslim woman donned a *hijab* but her "manners do not conform to Islamic mores," then the dress does not matter. His basic premise was discussing whether men and women in Islam were equal, which he attempted to confirm using examples such as manners, dress, and personal appearance.

**Proposition 4** is most prominent, because this is the *imam's* personal interpretation of religious issues he is discussing. This can be seen in his interpretation of equality in Islam. He explains equality in terms of behavior rather than dress. He argues that there is not an "Islamic dress," rather it is the manner and behavior in which one conducts themselves. In terms of this manner, he discusses women only and explains they must not talk to foreign men in a seductive tone. Foreign men mean men other than the woman's husband. The *imam* does not discuss men in this sense but instead in terms of physical care and appearance. The *imam* calls this *zeenah*. He explains in terms of this hadith, it is interpreted dependent on the time of living. The

researcher regards this hypocritical interpretation as an obvious lack of equality between the sexes.

**Proposition 5** explains that the details of a speech code are innately in the speech and that they cannot be removed. In terms of this sermon, Khattab focused on equality in terms of dress and discussed issues surrounding this matter. The codes cannot be separated, in terms of gender, because the basis of the sermon is the equality between the sexes in terms of dress. This is seen when the *imam* references characteristics of Islam during his interpretation.

**Proposition 6** is a strong characteristic of this sermon—the researcher believes *imam* Khattab is reinforcing his interpretation of social legitimacy based on the *Qur'an* and historical figures. This shows he is using speech codes to shape the audience's interpretation and actions. He explains that his interpretation is the socially accepted standard. This is what *imams* do and this *imam* is no different.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

As with all of the other sermons, this analysis is based off of a transcript of a sermon and the researcher cannot observe the audience during the delivery. That being said, analysis will not focus on the delivery and symbols the speaker uses in his sermon but instead on how he normalizes and interprets the behavior for which he advocates.

In this sermon, *imam* Khattab focuses on the *Qur'an* and how the text interprets the equality of women in terms of dress. Because *imam* Khattab is interpreting Allah's words (Muslims believe the *Quran* is the word of Allah), he is mediating his *ummah's* interpretation and reality of the concepts discussed. This can be seen in terms of his attempting to communicate what Allah meant when he discussed hadiths: “And when we interpret the hadith, the interpretation must be in a way which suits our time and our environment and not to quote

what happened 1400 years ago.” He interprets Allah’s meaning by explaining what he thinks Allah actually meant. When he discusses dress and how to dress in extreme heat and cold, he explains religion is not the only factor when living life and that it depends on location, because what he is wearing would be considered *kuffar*, which some translate into non-believer (Fair, 2017). But what he speaks of, he speaks of in terms of absolutes as well. It can be interpreted as some sort of truth. This is seen when he says, “What Islam requires is the covering...,” for he is telling the *ummah* what is required, yet mediating what is acceptable today.

Truth and brotherhood coincide in this sermon. The *imam* states: “Islam is a sharing. Islam is a brotherhood. Islam is a co-operation.” It seems he is using these terms to represent Islam. He says this to reinforce that actions toward another Muslim (such as helping a brother in need in terms of food and money) are a must to be a Muslim.

### *Social Identity Theory*

This sermon is centered around equality between the sexes as one of its main themes, but the question of whether they are equal in terms of certain actions and attributes is never fully answered. The answered question is in terms of dress and the truth that Islam gives about the subject. Themes of this theory can be referenced as equality, truth, and brotherhood. *Imam* A.M. Khattab places classifications on Muslims as to whether the person’s dress is appropriate. Despite Khattab says the covering is what is required in Islam and not what the dress looks like, he translates that some use dress to label Muslims non-believers, or *kuffars*. This then shows the equality the *imam* is speaking about in terms of the sexes, but it is not specifically stated.

Then Khattab goes on to explain how the following actions separates true Muslims from fake ones: not sharing food with other Muslims and not subsisting on food and water. The *imam* does not state this specifically, but when he says, “On the table you find food

enough for an army and how many people will eat? Three people. And they claim to be Muslim strictly following Islam,” he creates an in-group and out-group about a part of what it means to be a Muslim. This is followed up with the theme of brotherhood and how actions need to be taken with your Muslim neighbor to “come back to our essentials and principles.” So it seems the two groups Khattab creates is that of Muslim and non-Muslim referring to someone’s dress and sharing of food.

### *Sermon 7*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 7 (see Table 7, appendix) was located on the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo Web site. Consistent with the analysis of the first sermon, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained, since the literature review gave the overview for this theory. What follows is the origin of the sermon and analysis via Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

Of the six propositions pertaining to Speech Codes Theory, the following analysis will apply and discuss certain propositions pertaining to this sermon. It does satisfy all three characteristics of this theory which are: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. Even though the analysis is based off of a transcription, cultural aspects are extracted from the imam’s perspective. Dissimilar to the previous sermon, I.M. Khattab delivered this sermon in Toledo, Ohio. This can be important because there is a small Muslim population, and there is a distinctive speech code within that population. Because this sermon was given in 1998, one must look at the Muslim population in Ohio back then. According to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Muslims made up 1% of the population then (Pew Research, 2008). One might propose, then, Khattab helped the

Toledo or Ohio Muslim population feel accepted. This satisfies Proposition 1 stating there is a distinctive speech code where there is a distinctive population.

Proposition 2 is touched on when the imam discusses how one should greet a Muslim. This equates to the “correct” and “incorrect” communication Philipsen et al. (2004) discuss in the literature review. Khattab states, “What is the significance of *Assalamu Alaykum*? This is the greeting of Muslims. If you meet or chance upon someone and you say to him *Assalamu Alaykum*, immediately he understands that you are not his enemy.” Here, Khattab is stating a correct way to greet a Muslim to pose no threat them. This can blend into Proposition 3 in terms of only the previous speech code, because it is focusing on the rhetoric and social conduct of an interaction (Gudykunst, 2005).

Reverting to Proposition 2, another speech code Khattab references is how the Muslim community communicates in terms of blame, in social terms. He says that Muslims blame everyone but themselves. This also seems like it would be a cultural speech code because it is a sociological speech code dealing with social relations. Those who speak up and speak against justice are “real” and those who do not are not. Those who “walk the walk” and refuse to eat food that came from the spread of Egyptian blood are real Muslims and use correct communication. The researcher classified this as social, cultural, and religious.

One might try to apply the code *Assalamu Alaykum* as strategic conduct, in terms of Proposition 3, but the researcher refers to the *imam* when he says this phrase signifies to another Muslim that one is not the other’s enemy. This seems to then go against the criteria for including the above code in Proposition 3, because it seems like a “simple” rule, which is what Philipsen et al. (2004) explains when he references Gudykunst (2005). Remaining with Proposition 3, one small reference of a system of social relations might be when the *imam* explains how nothing exists in and of itself, and instead it was created by Allah. This means

Allah is at the top of the social pyramid, then. Another reference of this proposition is about the rhetoric of the *Qur'an*. The *imam* does not elaborate on what he means, but he says that the *Qur'an* speaks metaphorically and does not mean exactly what is written. One might then make the leap that when *imams* say Muslims need to follow the *Qur'an* in all phases of life, then the strategic conduct will not be word-for-word and instead will be up to interpretation through, for example, Khattab's sermon.

Proposition 4 was present in the sermon when Khattab discusses real Muslims. He makes this a sticking point, even though it is only the focus of the latter half of the sermon. Khattab explains this in social and cultural terms. Socially, he looks at how Muslims eat, how Muslims do not act when other Muslims are being attacked. In terms of economically and occupationally, he discusses how Muslims should not work for a corrupt leader. Proposition 5 was present in the fact that the codes were unable to be removed. While the codes were not always explicit in the sermon, they also were not seamlessly woven into it. He would reference past events for perspective on today's current events. When he discussed Moses and Aaron going to the pharaoh, he mentioned how Muslims should greet each other socially and how Muslims will be greeted in the afterlife if they follow Allah's truth. Removing these would have changed the meaning of Khattab's *khutbah*, satisfying Proposition 5.

These two propositions set up the inclusion of Proposition 6 in this sermon. The *imam* quotes many passages from the *Qur'an* to reinforce his perspective, thus reinforcing his social legitimacy over other scholars. He states the Qur'anic verse 39:68:

And on that Day, the trumpet of judgment will be sounded, and all creatures that are in the heavens and all that are on earth will fall down senseless, unless they be

such as God wills to exempt. And then it will sound again- and lo! Standing before the Seat of Judgment, they will begin to see the truth!

Speaking like this and then later stating there are no true Muslims anymore (assuming he includes himself), the researcher assumes this inclusion in his *khutbah* might hurt, since it means he is not a true Muslim. Yet, if this is not understood and if Khattab is ranking social classes as the researcher perceives, those who place themselves in said social classes might not be amenable to Khattab's message while others might be overly in support of his message if they are in the preferred social class.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

This analysis will focus on the symbols somewhat but mainly on how the *imam* normalizes and interprets the behavior for which he advocates, because the researcher cannot see the *imam* during his *khutbah*.

In the literature review, the researcher explained how Islam is viewed as a religion of peace in the American mainstream media and the American political left. This does not mean the American political right believes all Muslims are terrorists, but the left is open to no interpretation other than peace as Islam's sole interpretation. This is brought up due to how *imam* Khattab discusses peace in his *khutbah*. Looking at the quote taken from the *khutbah* where it says if the pharaoh listened to Moses and Haroon (Aaron) giving him Allah's intentions to protect Israel and accepted God's (*Allah's*) message, he would be at peace with himself, others, and God (*Allah*). Khattab says, "The word Muslim is taken from the root *silim* which means 'peace,'" but this contrasts with an earlier passage in the above literature review where Don et al. (2012) explains the word *Islam* means submission to *Allah*. Yes, they are different words from a scholar and an *imam* (scholar in Islam) but a Muslim is a follower of the



religion of Islam, which was discovered by Muhammad when he listened to *Allah*. So, can this mean a Muslim follows Allah's word through peace and submission to him? Or is this how Khattab is interpreting this and shaping his listeners' realities?

Khattab's main theme throughout the sermon was truth. Truth always came in the form of what Islam is and is not. He interpreted truth to be what *Allah* (God) knows and how his followers will uncover the real truth after death. *Allah* is the sole one who knows the truth until a Muslim dies who then will be revealed to the truth while sitting on the Seat of Judgment. This is his message. Khattab refutes those who have written books about dying and coming back to life, because he says no one knows the truth after death. His belief and interpretation of this is shaping his *ummah* to believe his perspective. Therefore, through interpreting what Islam, peace, and truth are, he is acting, one might say, as God or *Allah*.

### *Social Identity Theory*

There were multiple in-group vs. out-group comparisons in Khattab's *khutbah*. One is when he is explaining the verse about peace and how he disputes that "Muslims are not supposed to say *Assalamu Alaykum* to a non-Muslim" (Khattab, 1998). According to Khattab, *Assalamu Alaykum* is similar to "Good Morning" or "Good Evening," signifying that person is a friend, not an enemy. It seems Khattab is showing his social identity here, because he is depicting how he acts as a Muslim or part of a group. The out-group in this situation would be those who disagree that *Assalamu Alaykum* is permitted to be said to a non-Muslim. In another broader context, it means those who listened to God (*Allah*) lived in peace and were Muslim, while it can be inferred that those who did not listen did not live in peace or become a Muslim.

Other instances of the in-group vs. out-group in this *khutbah* occurred in themes of equality and submission. In terms of equality, the in-group and out-group were discussed in how

Muslims were to be treated in the “Unseen,” as Khattab puts it. This can be understood also as the afterlife. If those who deny *Allah*’s truth are equal to those who accept Allah’s truth and work, act, and are considered deserving by Allah, then Khattab explained there is no justice. It seems Khattab’s idea of the in-group are who accept Allah’s truth and work. He does not explicitly say this, but it can be inferred.

Overall, Khattab’s message was explaining that Islam is not solely “talk.” It is action. The in-group here would be those who act and the out-group would be those who talk. He states, “And if someone would like to be a Muslim he has to ACT and abide by Islam,” followed by citing a piece of the *Qur’an* explaining there are “two highways of [good and evil]’: one will lead to punishment and one will lead to being rewarded.”

### *Sermon 8*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 8, (See Table 8, appendix) was found via a Google search of *imams*. Once Muhammad al-Arifi was identified as one, his name was subsequently searched. Given on November 18, 2013, this sermon titled “The Future of Islam” enticed the researcher. The researcher copied the English subtitles from the screen.

To be continued in the same format as the previous sermons, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained. What follows is the origin of the sermon and analysis via Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

Consistent with the other sermons, all three characteristics of this theory are seen in this sermon: observation of cultural behavior, the analysis of speech and understanding how to conduct oneself in an interaction. These characteristics are important because the analysis is

looking at how the *imam* describes the concepts in the literature review and how they normalize information.

There are a couple of propositions Philipsen et al. (2004) has outlined that apply to this sermon. Proposition 1 applies, because al-Arifi was born in Saudi Arabia. This is significant because Saudi Arabia is seen as one of the more radical Muslim countries—they have only permitted women to drive as of September 26, 2017, when King Salman removed the restriction (Hubbard, 2017). Therefore, al-Arifi was expected to have a distinct speech code because he comes from an area that is a majority Muslim, highly fundamentalist and religious population.

Proposition 2 does not really apply. Al-Arifi does not use different speech codes. He only uses religious speech codes when interacting with the *ummah*. This *imam* is speaking solely to the *ummah* to which he is preaching. He is telling a story from Islamic history about a small force outlasting and defeating a much larger Meccan army in Medina. This sermon was solely discussed from religious aspects. Even though the *imam* discussed different European countries, he only talked about the country instead of the cultural aspect of the people. In terms of Proposition 3, the researcher only found one piece of the content: the psychological aspect about human nature. Al-Arifi indirectly and vaguely references this when he discusses that the proof that Europe wants Islam is because more and more people from the continent are getting more Islamic channels. He is acting like this is subconscious and a psychological aspect. This will be explained more so in the next proposition.

Proposition 4 is significant to this sermon because al-Arifi places much meaning on the act of submitting to Allah. He lends significance to this theme by explaining how sincerity has “added to their Faith and to their submissiveness (to Allah).” Al-Arifi reinforces submission using hadiths and the spread of Islam by the number of viewers that Muslim channels receive as a measure of how much the people want the religion. Al-Arifi believes these meanings he

assigns to objects and events show submission to Allah is necessary and actually in society's preferences.

Proposition 5 was inconsistent, and possibly included a "social drama" (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 58). The *imam* is delivering social and religious values when he explains the spread of Islam is proof that people desire to be Muslim. Removing this might change his intended meaning, thus satisfying this proposition. In regards to Proposition 6, the researcher was unsure how the *ummah* felt and whether al-Arifi completed his task of providing his message. He controlled the narrative by giving his own statistics and interpretation, but the researcher is not sure if these ramblings will be accepted, solely because there was a lack of information regarding the time and place of the khutbah, and because he does not use different speech codes.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

The meaning created by social interaction and symbols is relevant in this sermon. The researcher mentions al-Arifi discussing that the increasing number of Islamic channels in Europe as proof more people want to convert to Islam. He makes many references to peoples' actions as being proof that Islam will be the future of the world. Another example al-Arifi shares is the government statistics on European countries. The statistics he mentions are not consistent across all countries or even the three he specifically mentioned though. He mentions: A new Muslim convert occurs every 2 hours in Germany, 100 licenses are taken to build a mosque each year in Italy, and by 2025 Islam will be the majority religion in Belgium. These statistics are mentioned as government statistics, but no citations are given.

To this *imam*, these are all symbols, affecting al-Arifi's interpretation of the world. Now that he is given his interpretation to others, he is now using these symbols to mediate his *ummah*'s worldview. That being said, the *ummah* may be inspired or have feelings toward an event, topic, or issue that they attribute to Islamic values now, not because it actually is

connected to Islamic values but because al-Arifi made them think it is connected. Because this was a video the researcher transcribed and the camera focused on the *imam*, no thoughts or interpretations from the audience were available.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The *imam*'s social identity was more prominent than his personal identity. Some groups the social identity consisted of were: believers/Levant/Friends and non-believers/infidels/polytheists. The believers were Muhammad and those from Medina. Another social identity was the fact that those from Medina were seen as the weaker force, compared to those from Mecca. Although the believers were in an "us vs. them" state, they needed a way to gain the upper hand and become the in-group. Currently, they were the out-group and al-Arifi said the Levant was the key to become the in-group. This understanding originated from the belief that because the Prophet said so, then it must come true. But something else the Prophet said, according to Kelsay (2007), was that the enemy must be given a chance to convert to Islam. This would then make the non-believers become believers and polytheists become monotheists. Al-Arifi never mentions such a chance given to those from Mecca.

### *Sermon 9*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 9 (See Table 9, appendix) found via a Google search of "imam sermons about brotherhood." *Imam* Gusau's transcript was already provided, so the researcher used this transcription to analyze the sermon. The table only includes some of the direct quotations from *imam* Gusau because the researcher wanted to limit the table to one page. Despite all of the themes from the sermon having one or two examples, the researcher will explain the themes that dominated the sermon in the analysis.

To be continued in the same format as the previous sermons, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained because the literature review gave the overview for this theory. What follows is the origin of the sermon and analysis via Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

Continuing with another sermon, this analysis will investigate the speech codes *imam* Gusau employs based on his interpretation of his culture. All three defining characteristics will be attributed to this sermon: observation of cultural behavior, analyzing the *imam*'s speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. These characteristics will be explained via describing the sermon using the propositions of Speech Codes Theory that apply to this sermon.

In regards to the Propositions, the first Proposition is relevant, because Gusau delivered the *khutbah* in Nigeria. The mosque where this sermon took place is in a more southern area of Nigeria. This is interesting because according to Harvard Divinity School's Religious Literacy Project, 40–45% of the country's population is reportedly Christian and the southern part of the country is much more Christian than the northern part. Although the Harvard school explains this data may not be completely accurate, it gives an interesting picture of the area, because Gusau's sermon is a rather radical interpretation of the Islamic faith. Location of the sermon is much more important when discussing Proposition 2.

In referencing the location of the sermon, Proposition 2 is applicable, because with religiosity split almost exclusively between two specific religions, one could understand how multiple speech codes might be relevant. According to the Open Doors' World Watch List 2018, a list investigating Christian persecution across the world, Nigeria is the 14<sup>th</sup> most dangerous

country in which to be a Christian or the “most dangerous to follow Jesus,” as the Web site puts it.

In terms of the number and kinds of speech codes included in his sermon, Gusau uses social, cultural, and religious speech codes. He employs a social code when he focuses on brotherhood and how brotherhood is necessary in all parts of life. This was explained in the thematic analysis. He specifies in his sermon once that he is directly speaking to those “who are reluctant to give [Du’a] and who have stopped offering Du’a.” He explains that there is nothing too little to give.

He then speaks indirectly to their “brothers in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria” and asks Allah to bless them because they are “showing persistent heroism, fortitude, and [they are] striving hard in struggle despite their meager resources.” The researcher classified this code as cultural since he is attempting to communicate with others in another part of the country in terms of the culture that he is portraying. He explains he believes this culture is displaying acts of “heroism”, despite their lifestyle. Another group Gusau is speaking to are those “who disbelieve”. This would be classified as a religious code. The researcher assumes this means those who are not Muslim. He then tells Muslims who do not come together against these disbelievers, there will be *Fitnah* (wars, battles, polytheism) and “oppression on Earth.” So, he really is not speaking to this group and instead just framing an argument around them and delivering said argument to the *ummah* listening.

In terms of Proposition 3, he speaks mostly in terms of social relations, but in an indirect way. He uses certain terms that portray believers as a higher social class than the unbelievers, and then explain that because of the unbelievers, oppression will occur. Thus it is dependant upon the Muslims to combat this.

Proposition 4 and 5, which follows, are explicit in this sermon, as well. To satisfy Proposition 4, Gusau discusses how innovation are essentially a “misguidance” and that “the best guidance is Muhammad’s guidance.” He also discusses Islam in terms of brotherhood, bringing together Muslims socially. He explains how brotherhood bridges the gaps and far distances Muslims might be apart because it is based and “founded on pure submission to Allah.” He then discusses culturally, how Muslims have faltered. He says that instead of repairing and improving social relationships, parts of the Muslim culture have indulged in worldly possessions and physical pleasures, which then in turn leads to “division...tension...weakness of faith.” He discusses how turning to Allah is a path to repair the social relationships. He talks about brotherhood in terms of economic factors. He says that each Muslim should be helping out other Muslims.

Since Gusau placed a lack of brotherhood as the sole problem concerning all of the other problems, he also made it aspect of a Muslim’s life that was most important and had it “inextricably woven into [his] speaking”, solidifying the presence of Proposition 5. It seems that for Gusau, one can only understand brotherhood and the actions of the concept by exploring the social and occupational factors explained in the theory. Proposition 6 was solidified by the researcher’s perspective because the researcher believes the message Gusau is attempting to get across will be effective because he revolved his message around brotherhood. He is building up listeners when he discusses the “heroism” of certain Muslims and then he is not forcing listeners to understand his message when he discusses how there is nothing too little to give in *Du’a*.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Similar to what the researcher stated above regarding how Gusau discusses the correct and incorrect interpretations of Islam, the *imam* focuses on certain symbols that create meaning for him, for which he then interprets and creates meaning for the audience. Gusau focuses on



brotherhood in his sermon from multiple angles. One angle is how Gusau defines brotherhood, not in terms of blood brothers, but brothers in faith. Faith becomes a symbol for the best way to show brotherhood. He also explains how the Muslim *ummah* could not have become the strongest in history without brotherhood between its followers. In terms of right and wrong, he uses brotherhood as the main measuring device. He says for example that materialism was looked at to replace social relationships. He explains these actions: “tension”, “quarrels” and “severed ties” weakened the brotherhood. While he says followers should look to *Allah* for help, he interprets hadiths whose authors interpreted *Allah* to justify his speech.

Gusau’s interpretation is just like Ukasoanya’s (2014) explanation of how someone’s interpretation of an action or behavior can predict said person’s behavior more than the actual event. So, while another *imam* might see one act as the most productive way to praise Allah, Gusau has interpreted brotherhood as a Muslim’s most exalted act interpreted by Allah.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Consistent with the above mentioning of brotherhood, this concept is a consistent theme in this sermon in terms of personal and social identity. Gusau discusses this concept, in terms of personal identity, by explaining how brotherhood can increase their sense of being a Muslim. While he does not explain it will increase their own positive view of themselves, he says a special bond and unity will be created where “this bond of faith takes the place of materialistic bonds, personal interests and selfishness.” This is not consistent with the other sermons when discussing Social Identity Theory. It is different because Gusau is describing that Muslim brothers feel the same emotion as their brothers. So, in this situation the superior group is the action of being a brother vs. being a selfish person. The in-group here is being a brother and the out-group is being selfish and materialistic. In order to become part of the in-group, Gusau

explains putting aside one's selfishness and then act on feeling empathy for a brother. Doing this makes one act on his faith through brotherhood instead of blood, which is Gusau's overall point.

Gusau discusses committing to this bond of brotherhood would then increase their social identity as Muslims. This would in turn make transgressions against them impossible and increase their faith in every way. This is why the researcher explained the link between faith, ethics and solid social relationships. This continues to be explained when Gusau mentions the Muslim *ummah* and how brotherhood led them to being an incredible force in the campaign against unjust attacks.

### *Sermon 11*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Sermon 11, (see Table 11, appendix), was used as the tenth sermon for this analysis because another Muhammad al-Arifi sermon was going to be the next subject, but the researcher wanted to bring in a different foreign-born *imam* to give the reader a little international diversity. *Imam* A.M. Khattab conducted this sermon. Al-Arifi's sermon can still be found in Table 10 in the appendix.

To be continued in the same format as the previous sermons, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained because the literature review gave the overview for this theory. What follows is the analysis of this sermon using Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three defining characteristics of this theory: observation of cultural behavior, analyzing the *imam's* speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. Khattab's sermon was given at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, Ohio, in 1996. According to the center's Web site, the

first Muslims came to Toledo from Syria and Lebanon to set up the center in 1954. The inaugural Muslims also built the first “classic Islamic architecture” structure North America had seen. Proposition 1 can be applied to this sermon using an immigrant’s account of getting to America, Chaudhary (2017) reported. According to Chaudhary, Nashwaan Saddoon, an Iraqi Christian refugee suffered in his original home in Mosul. Once in the United States he met Shane Lakatos, a man who operated Social Services for the Arab Community (SSFAC), an organization helping refugees and immigrants. From here, it can be assumed Saddoon became acclimated to Toledo better because he met people of a similar culture in his new home. Although the organization is still active, according to their website, it is unclear if Shane Lakatos is still running the organization to this day (SSFAC, 2018).

There are three separate speech codes the researcher will discuss. Khattab references a religious speech code when he discusses equality between men and women. He talks about how the equality “is in the affairs of daily life, the area of work, in the rights of salary, in the daily dealings of life between a man and a woman in the house,” and then discusses how marriage is a civil contract but that religion must be the basis of any civil contract to “make equality prevail.” Just in this excerpt, there are communications in terms of social, religious, and gender factors. The imam discusses a hypothetical act of taking a man to the Medical College of Ohio to be examined, expecting to find a rib missing since this is the Christian interpretation. He says this is nonsense. In this example, although not explicit, he explains his version, which is from the *Qur’an*. He is contrasting the *Qur’anic* version and the Christian version of this story. What stems from this also is a cultural speech code in the contrasting versions.

Relating back to the terms of equality Khattab discusses, Proposition 3 can be applied to this sermon segment as sociological content because he is talking about the equality between the

sexes, which is in turn a system of social relations Khattab is referencing. Khattab reinforces much of what he preaches by using stories from the *Qur'an* and the Arabic language. The *imam* explains that solely taking a translation from the *Qur'an* and interpreting it (for example, in a Judao-Christian, English society such as the United States) is not possible if one just attempts to translate due to the metaphors in the *Qur'an*. Proposition 4 can be applied here because the literal meaning cannot be taken directly from the page, and it seems like Khattab is acknowledging that the interpretation and significance of Islamic writing can at least somewhat depend on the speaker's meaning.

Proposition 5 was very applicable to the sermon. Khattab made certain to institute equality within the speech codes he used when referring to how communication is done through gender. He discusses equality in terms of religious factors when he says Islam was the champion of equality from the beginning. Thus, if the cultural and social speech codes were removed from his sermon, it would have changed the meaning of his message.

The meaning of the imam's or speaker's words directly relate to Proposition 6 and how a speech code can predict and control the "intelligibility" of communication. Khattab's message should resonate with the *ummah* because he attempts his message with multiple speech codes. This seems like a good idea especially when discussing equality. By using cultural, social, and religious speech codes, he can reach many more followers, especially being in Toledo, Ohio. The *imam* understands how the social roles women and family play in the United States can be compared to some Islamic states. When discussing life for females before the invention of Islam, Khattab frames that the idea of an equal (woman owning her own property) and ethical (marital authority in the Golden Age of the Roman Empire) life can possibly have come from the Islamic way of life.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Khatab is attempting to define reality for his listeners and readers of the global *ummah* by delivering his personal interpretation of the concepts and issues he discusses in his sermon. He explains Islam requires religion to be the base for any civil contract in order for equality to be a main part of one's life. In terms of the equality between men and women, Khatab is contrasting Islam with Muslims. Khatab is explaining instead of the problem being with Islam, the problem is with Muslims who are not following Islam in a way that it was intended to be followed. This can be seen when he says, "Muslims are not abiding by Islam in their ruling but, truly, Islam, since the creation of the human being, talked about the equality of the two," with "the two" meaning men and women. This can be related to when Ukasoanya (2014) discusses that someone's personal interpretation of an action can potentially predict their behavior, more so than the actual action or behavior to which said person is referring.

Khatab is mediating his audience's reaction to get them to see things from his worldview. At the beginning of his sermon, he discusses how equality comes from "daily affairs," as he calls it. These affairs are the affairs between a man and woman or husband and wife. Instead of looking at marriage and the equality between the man and woman through a religious perspective, Islam interprets marriage from a civil contract perspective. He explains that if equality is to prevail, then marriage and equality between the spouses must be interpreted this way. In essence though, because he explained that "they" (meaning Muslims) interpret equality by their daily affairs, Islam might not be the driving force behind this interpretation. Instead, Muslims might be. Further in his sermon though, he insists that Islam transformed the Roman Empire way of marriage (permitting the husband to beat the wife and treat her as property) into one of equality (the wife could own land regardless of whether her husband accepts this fact).

### *Social Identity Theory*

Khattab creates a couple of noticeable in-groups and out-groups in his sermon. One example of the in-group is Islam with the out-group as Christianity. This can be seen in a couple of different subjects. In one subject, when discussing how Eve was created, Khattab pushes back on the Christian interpretation of the rib bone being the source of Eve. In another subject, he references *Qabeel* and *Habeel* (Cane and Abel of the Bible) and the Bible. He explains some “Christian books” discuss the two arguing over a girl and how Cain believed it was unfair that the girl, born the same year he was, should marry his older brother. He said the Bible explained this is the source of the first murder committed on Earth, but Khattab states that this is not how the *Qur’an* interprets it. Even though he acknowledges this perspective is present in some *tafseers*, he disregards it and refers to the *Qur’an* and how instead of a romantic quarrel, it was each brother submitting to *Allah*. While Khattab discusses both of these accounts, he explains that Muslims should just let the *Qur’an* explain it for them rather than make up stories for followers to interpret.

### *Summary*

These 10 sermons were collected from *imams* and clerics who were born overseas, outside of the United States. They are the basis of the investigation into internationally born *imams*. What follows is the analysis of 10 sermons from *imams* and clerics who were born within the United States. The format will be the same for the domestic *imams* as was for the international ones: The origin of the sermon will be discussed, followed by analysis of the sermon using: Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory. After these sermons are analyzed, the comparative analysis section will discuss the differences in the messages conveyed.

## Domestically Born Imams

### *Sermon 1*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

Shaykh Yasir Qadhi's sermon was given at the Islamic Foundation *Masjid* in Villa Park in Chicago, Illinois. This sermon is the first domestic *imam* sermon to be analyzed—Qadhi was born in Houston, Texas. To be continued in the same format as the previous sermons, the propositions that were found in this sermon will be explained. Just as before, the literature review gave the overview for this theory. What follows is the analysis of this sermon using Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three defining characteristics of this theory: observation of cultural behavior, analyzing the imam's speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. In terms of Proposition 1, according to Cutler (1973), Chicago has been a main settlement area for Palestinians. As of 2013, Chicago had 25% of the country's entire Palestinian population (Amer, 2013). One can assume then that specific, distinctive speech codes can be found in the Chicago area that can be more relatable to Palestinians because it is the main part of the Muslim population in the city. This satisfies Proposition 1, and Proposition 2 is achieved because multiple speech codes are given in this highly diverse area. In terms of this proposition, Qadhi used social, religious, and cultural speech codes. With regard to social codes, Qadhi discusses correct and incorrect communication, referring to social classes in terms of parents and children. Qadhi describes how children should treat their parents. He explained that children should have unselfish love toward their parents because that is a status (a parent) that "transcends religion." He explains that children do not have "the right to be

rude to them,” indicating the parents. These are examples of both social and religious speech codes.

He also discusses the parent-child relationship in cultural terms. He says that no matter what the child thinks about their “knowledge of this world, in terms of their knowledge of American culture,” they (the parents) know more than the child. This was interesting because Qadhi specifically mentioned American culture. This makes sense, though, because Qadhi is an American *imam*. Qadhi focuses on social and cultural interpretation of love toward one’s parents.

When discussing Proposition 3, the researcher refers to the first speech code discussed and explains how the conduct children portray to their parents shows the sociological and rhetorical aspects illustrated by this proposition. Sociologically, the parent is in a higher social class than the child, even though they are family. This system comes with rules, which are more social ones, as the researcher explains, even though culture is also mentioned. Rhetorically, the *imam* gives explicit rules for conduct from the child to the parent. Respect is always required even if the parent is wrong.

Proposition 4 is prominent once again, because Qadhi is using many of the Islamic concepts to reinforce his position on honoring and respecting parents. His most employed concept is love. He discusses being a parent transcends what children believe love is. A true, honest love means you do actions without wanting anything in return. Qadhi’s interpretations of the concepts and love are significant because he reinforces his interpretation with references to the *Qur’an* and stories about the Prophet Muhammad. This directly relates to Proposition 5, because Qadhi (although he mentioned religious aspects) focused on the acts and intent of the parent, making it more of a social and cultural speech code. Although the religious aspects cannot be removed from the speech code because Qadhi explains being good to one’s parents is one of a Muslim’s most necessary actions, the social and cultural codes



cannot be removed since his focus is on social relations and he explicitly refers to the parents as above the children.

The researcher believes Proposition 6 is found in this sermon because the *imam* uses examples from *surahs* to reinforce his point. The researcher believes Qadhi's message will have an impact and affect the *ummah's* understanding of his sermon because he focuses his speech code in terms of parents and children. He states that a parent "transcends religion," so discussing correct and incorrect communication with one's parents should lend to his followers accepting his social legitimacy. This will be true if they accept the shared speech code. But because the researcher cannot know what the *ummah* or those listening or watching are thinking, inferences and discussion of Proposition 6 are purely speculative. Opinion is derived from the literature review, along with reference to other propositions found in the sermon.

#### *Social Identity Theory*

Qadhi describes an interaction Abdullah ibn Umar and a man who is unnamed have regarding love. The unnamed man explained that he has traveled far distances to carry his mother to *hajj* and asked if he had done his duty as her son. Umar explained that he has not because he was looking to pay his mother back and even their score, therefore his act was not done out of the goodness of his heart. A good Muslim would have done this act for the latter reason instead of as payment of a debt. This is not the love that she had for him all of his life. Qadhi explains a parent's life should be taken care of by the child because the parent had given them everything.

There are multiple comparisons here. First, there is in-group and out-group mentality, where the in-group is a good son and the out-group is a bad son. Qadhi gives examples about what a good son would do. He explains a good son does everything possible for his parents, but it must be done with "good speech," "optimism," and "filling their hearts with joy"

because this is what parents have done for their children. Further though, a good son would do this without expecting anything in return—Qadhi calls expecting something in return “selfish love.” Thus the out-group are sons who do acts for their parents to receive a favorable return from Allah, compared to the in-group, where the sons commit acts because they are their parents. This also shows the social identity Umar has yet to attain: the identity of a good Muslim.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

As we have seen in the other sermons, the *imams*’ and *sheikhs*’ interpretations are mediated by the literature and religious work they cite and discuss, while the *ummah*’s understanding and interpretation of the concepts discussed in the sermon are mediated by the *imams*’ and *sheikhs*’ interpretation and delivery of said concepts.

The most prominent symbol *Sheikh* Qadhi uses in his sermon (similar to Proposition 2) is the relationship between the child and parent. The parent is the symbol for love, which is the most prominent theme discovered in this sermon. When Qadhi says, “You will NEVER understand that it means to love somebody until you become a parent,” the researcher believes he meant to say “what it means to love somebody” and that the transcription was solely a typographical error. He explains love in terms of parental actions because he explains that this is the only love that is an unselfish love. The parent wants nothing in return. This is interesting that Qadhi discusses a parent’s love as the only unselfish love. This seems like it goes against an Islamic rule of elevating a human (in this instance, a parent) above that of *Allah*. Because Qadhi used the parent as a symbol to normalize how Muslims to treat love and give love, the listener’s interpretation of Qadhi’s interpretation might be more conclusive in predicting behavior, compared to the event Ukasoanya (2014) explains.

## *Sermon 2*

### *Origin of Sermon*

This second sermon from a domestic *imam*, Suraj Wahhaj, was found via a Google search when the search led the researcher to Halaltube, a site that compiles sermons. This sermon was chosen because the concept of death was being discussed.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three defining characteristics of this theory: observation of cultural behavior, analyzing the *imam*'s speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. Even though Siraj Wahhaj was born in New York City, this sermon was delivered at an unknown convention that Wahhaj attended in 1996. If this sermon was delivered in New York, this can tell some about the way he delivered it, because according to the Arab American Institute Foundation (2000), New York had approximately 230,000 Arabs living there, which was the fourth largest Arab population in the United States at the time. Depending on where this sermon actually took place, it could have been in a population of 35,000 in Kings, New York; 16,000 in Queens, New York; or almost 11,000 in New York, New York or it could have been somewhere entirely different. Depending on where this sermon took place, a distinct speech code would have been found at this location.

The researcher found two explicit speech codes in this sermon, satisfying Proposition 2. The first speech code Wahhaj uses is when he is speaking directly to Muslims discussing how they should not gamble. He explains this in terms of cultural and religious terms. Religiously, he explains, they should not gamble because it is not living one's life on purpose. He explains that as a Muslim, one should live every day like it is their last and one should not expect to have another day. Culturally, he explains, one should immediately repent when one commits a sin.

Then commit a proper act to counter the improper one. He is communicating with them in terms of religious factors. This is also a religious factor, because he speaks about repentance, which is a religious concept. He is discussing how followers communicate with Allah in this example.

The last speech code present in this sermon is one the researcher uncovered in another sermon. It is an occupational speech code. He describes a Muslim's identity this way. First, when talking about his late daughter, he says she was studying to be a doctor and those years were not wasted, "not as a Muslim." He then talks about two tennis players who were in the *ummah* listening and he says that he wants a uniform that says, "I'm a Muslim and I play [insert sport]." These last two examples were blatant communication in terms of occupation.

The content of the speech codes in this sermon deal with human nature (psychology) and strategic conduct (rhetoric). The first speech code he mentions, he discusses it in terms of those who gamble feeling like they have forever. This is an evaluation of human nature. This is the same when he discusses explicitly that it is human nature to sin. This is a psychological classification he employs. These previous two examples satisfy Proposition 3.

Proposition 4 was prominent in this sermon because the *imam* focused on death and justice as themes. Overall, Wahhaj was discussing that young people should not be gambling. Gambling was significant in this sermon, because he tied this to how young people feel invincible. And that gambling and doing things such as this is not the way to prepare for death; the correct way to prepare for the end of life is to "live life the best way you can." These were rules that Wahhaj included in the delivery of his sermon, thus satisfying Proposition 5. The social, cultural, and religious identity he builds in this sermon is unable to be removed, because removing them would destroy his overall attempt to explain death. By using all three kinds of codes, he explains in three ways the drawbacks of gambling in all parts of life. Wahhaj attempted

to be socially legitimate by explaining death is inevitable for everyone and so you should not feel invincible, partially fulfilling Proposition 6, the researcher believes.

The researcher is not sure Wahhaj's message will get through to his audience, most likely because his audience is a group of college students. This is why this particular message was attempted, probably, but most college students gamble in terms of everything (time, relationships, school, health). His religious speech code of repenting might be the only one that gets through because the students might see it as a "I can do wrong, and then repent" option, even though Wahhaj explains that kind of thinking is not an aspect of repenting. The *ummah* might be influence the audience if they accept the attempted shared speech code.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Similar with the remainder of the sermons analyzed, the *imam* mediates the audience's interpretation of concepts and religious ideology via their own interpretation. This analysis will look at the three assumptions Handberg et al. (2015) created, which were referenced in the literature review. The *imam* focused on death in this sermon even by using the title to grab attention, "Are you ready to die?" The *imam* focused on the purpose of life consistently throughout the entire speech because this set up his interpretation of death. He consistently asked if the audience was ready for death. To him, someone's life will affect how their death is carried out. Although this is typical of every religion, he explains how society needs to use their chance right now to do something in their life. When he says, "the best way to be prepared for death is to live life the best way you can," he is using death as a random event. At another point in the sermon, he hints at some aspect of equality between Muslims. He explains the Muslims who believe every day is their last day act "different from a person who believes they'll be here for a long time."

The main symbol he uses in this sermon is death. He explains that death should normalize certain behaviors. If they act every day as if it were their last day, then they will be the most prepared for death. This is similar to the example in the literature review about the nurses not telling patients they are dying to preserve the patient's intent to keep living. Wahhaj does the opposite here, but is still mediating the audience's interpretation of life and death as concepts in Islam.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Wahhaj makes it very clear how Muslims should act in regards to death in this sermon. He creates an in-group and an out-group from his interpretation of death. The in-group would be those Muslims who live their life to the fullest, who are satisfied with their life, and who act everyday as if it were their last. The out-group are those Muslims who "feel invincible" and expect to have an entire lifetime to live. Wahhaj is attempting to tell the *ummah* that they need to strive to prepare for death. Previously, the researcher explained Wahhaj hinted at some equality discrepancy between those who act as if they will die at any time versus those who live as if they have 80 years on this Earth. Although he does not explicitly state one group is better than the other, he advocates for Muslims to be a part of the in-group, living life to the fullest.

### *Sermon 3*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

This third sermon is from Jonathan Cazales: an Orlando, Florida-based *imam*. This sermon was obtained by verbally asking the *sheikh* if he would email the researcher any *khutbahs* he had delivered. I did not ask about any specific subject or concept for this analysis, so themes were extracted just like all of the other sermons. These are his sermons from a series he

was in the middle of called: Live Your Life on Purpose. This first sermon is “Live Your Life on Purpose, Part 2.”

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three defining characteristics of this theory: observation of cultural behavior, analyzing the *imam*'s speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. According to Santich (2017) Florida has less than 1% of the Muslims living in the United States, but their numbers have doubled in the past ten years. These leads into Proposition 1 applying to this sermon, because the first Friday prayer service recorded in Florida has now become one of the “oldest and perhaps largest local Muslim organizations.” This first sermon occurred in a trailer and was given to now is called the Islamic Society of Central Florida. This will continue to grow and eventually a distinctive speech code should be able to be observed.

In terms of Proposition 2, the speech codes Cazales employs in this sermon fall under three categories: social, occupational, and religious. In the sermon, Cazales uses a speech code when he tells his followers not to expect to live past the day and to not put one's heart into the earthly world. He is talking to them in terms of social factors. He explains how it is correct to put one's mentality into the next world. Cazales states that living in a state of remembrance of death and completing deeds when able is having purpose. One could say this is communicating in terms of occupation. He explains one action is to visit graves, because it reminds the visitor of the hereafter. It is communication with Allah. Another occupational code might be when he says to take advantage of every opportunity immediately rather than wait because you do not know if you will be alive the next day. Instead, you should constantly think about moving on to “your real and final resting place.” Finally, the religious code involves praying. Cazales explains that a

Muslim must pray as if every prayer were his or her final prayer. This is considered “correct” communication with Allah.

When discussing Proposition 3, the first speech code the researcher explains can be classified as a system of social relations. Cazales explains that one who is living for the next life or next world is acting as a true Muslim because he is acting on a Muslim’s true purpose: the *janaazah*, which can be interpreted as a funeral. This is not explicit, but he alludes to this kind of Muslim being at the top of the social pyramid. The religious speech code Cazales is discussing is a rhetorical act of religious conduct.

In terms of Proposition 4, interestingly enough, Cazales discusses communication in terms of the Muslim who is living and communicating with the earthly world that has been spoken of throughout this analysis. Like previously examined, indulging in the worldly, bestial desires and not living one’s life for after death makes that person deceived by the earthly world. These bestial desires are social acts. The fact that he places importance on this shows that Cazales intends to provide certain meanings involving this world and the hereafter using his speech codes. This is woven throughout his sermon, as Proposition 5 delineates. Cazales’ repeated mentioning of remembering death and living one’s life for the hereafter could not have been removed from this sermon because was the precursor to his overall point of having purpose. The act of the taking care of obligations immediately was the most prominent rule behind his speech code. This act of remembering death was in each of the three speech codes the researcher found in this sermon.

The same disclaimer regarding Proposition 6 that the researcher explained in the analysis of the first sermon applies here as well, therefore the researcher will not repeat it. Continuing, the researcher believes Cazales’ message and speech codes have a chance to reach the audience,



because he is using different speech codes: social and occupational. But knowing and understanding the ages and life status of his listeners could lend the researcher more information that would give a more definitive answer on whether the speech codes he used will increase his ability to “influence communicative conduct” as Philipsen and Coutu (2005) explain (p. 63).

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Similar to the other sermons, the *imam* is mediating the audience’s objective reality using symbols and certain concepts that will be discussed. Similar to previous sermons, death was one of the main themes in this sermon. Cazales discussed his interpretation of certain aspects of death, such as having purpose, that he believed represented the correct interpretation of death. Therefore, he modified an interpretation of death for the audience. Death was explained, once more, as something that always needs to be remembered because it is an event that could occur at any time. Death was a symbol for the true believer. Remembering death was an act that normalized the behavior Cazales was intending for his audience to understand: that the true believer in Islam puts his heart into the next life and that remembering death made one’s life have purpose.

Interestingly enough, something the researcher believed was mentioned earlier was Glaser and Strauss’s (1964) example of doctors not telling patients they were dying because they feared they would not live a full life can be applied here. The doctors believed it would negatively affect the patients. Instead of not mentioning death, Cazales instead continuously reminds the reader to always have death on their mind. In his mind, this will positively affect them because this will give their life purpose. The *sheikh* also mediates the audience’s understanding when he discusses the idea that believers have been deceived by this life because they believe they have unlimited time on Earth. Thinking we have time was a symbol for the lie that is perpetuated for those who do not remember *Allah* and those who do not remember death.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Cazales implicitly created an in-group and an out-group in his sermon through two interconnected examples. One example was understanding this physical world is not a Muslim's real home. A Muslim should act in this world as if he "were a stranger" with the purpose of "moving toward your real destination, your real home, and your real and final resting place." Those who are believers understand this to mean this physical world is not one's real home, while those do not, act like the Earth is their final resting place. A second example of another in-group/out-group scenario is when Cazales discusses completing deeds. Cazales explains one must have a purpose when completing deeds. One should expect death, because no one can stop it. That means one should not expect to live. If one expects to live, then he may put off deeds for tomorrow that he can do today.

A final in-group/out-group scenario are those who pray with purpose vs. those who do not. Cazales states believers are hasty in prayer. Those who are hasty in prayer are not praying with purpose. This is Cazales' understanding of the out-group. To remedy this, he wants believers to act as if every prayer is their last prayer. If they do this, then they might be "glorifying your lord" and become part of the in-group, which is what this theory explains one would do if they see themselves in a negative way. This is how *Allah* wants Muslims to feel about themselves. If they do this, then the Muslims are praying with a purpose and all focus is on the hereafter.

### *Sermon 4*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

This fourth sermon is from Jonathan Cazales, as well. This sermon was obtained via the same method. Although this sermon is still in the same series as the previous one, this sermon discusses good character.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three defining characteristics of this theory: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of the *imam*'s speech to explain behaviors for which he advocates and how they conduct themselves in the interaction they are performing. The first proposition is the same as that explained in domestic Sermon 3 by Cazales. That being said, the researcher will move on to Proposition 2. Immediately, Cazales explains, "Fear Allah and say correct speech. Allah will amend for you your deeds and will forgive you your sins." Interestingly, the "correct" communication here is "correct speech." It is unknown what this correct speech is referring to at this point, but further in the *khutbah* he explains, "...now that we are determined to begin living our lives on purpose, without doubt, you will want to rectify your speech and your actions." This had to do with good deeds. Cazales asks his *ummah* which act they believe *Allah* holds most dear. This code is classified as religious.

A second speech code he uses is a social one. He does this in conjunction, though, with another religious speech code. Something that Cazales specifically references is asking which act of worship his listeners believe *Allah* holds as the highest or most dear. He endorses four communicative actions that one can qualify as "correct": salah (prayer), fasting, charity, and *hajj*. But he goes on to explain that the best thing to do is to have good conduct. This can be seen as communication in terms of social and religious factors. As the reader can see, he explains social acts in terms of praying. The social aspect comes between the believer and other believers, as well as the believer and *Allah*.

When discussing Proposition 3, the researcher believes the first speech code is based in human nature and strategic conduct. The code can be referred to as human nature because he is discussing sin—it is understood that it is human nature to sin. It is also strategic conduct, because

the repenting aspect of this, including rectifying one's speech, is a rhetorical act. The second speech code is focused mainly on strategic conduct as Philipsen expresses (Gudykunst, 2005).

Continuing, Proposition 4 explains the significance of a concept depends on the meaning the speaker gives said sentence or concept. He discusses religious satisfaction using social, cultural, and occupational speech codes. This is how significance is displayed. In this sermon, Cazales reinforces that death should constantly be on the believer's mind, meaning it should encompass one's whole life. In terms of the occupational code, Cazales equates thinking about death and paradise to a "boy, a young man, whose dream is to become a NBA superstar." He explains that if this was his dream and he was not practicing or even touching a basketball, people would call him crazy. He says this is the same thing Muslims are doing: Muslims claim they want Paradise, but are not living the life that shows that is their goal. This can also be described as their culture in terms of their intentions of the afterlife. Embodying a culture of remembering death means one's actions are of a Muslim "who is on 'mission paradise,'" and one who is focused.

Cazales explains that nothing weighs higher "on the scale of a believing servant" than good conduct, which comes from the heart. Good conduct can be seen as a social factor because one is interacting with the world around themselves. Cazales says that if someone's heart is bad, then it will be seen in their actions. The previous explanations also satisfy Proposition 5. Cazales has interwoven his speech codes into the religious and social aspects of this sermon and it would be impossible to interpret what he means correctly without said speech codes. This is why these speech codes cannot be removed and the satisfaction of Proposition 5 is evident.

Finally, Proposition 6 is prominent because Cazales is attempting to convince his listeners that death should always be on the forefront of their minds, justifying it through labeling

it as socially acceptable. He does this by exclaiming Paradise “is what we all want” and “the goal for each and every one of us.” He also gives his *ummah* options, which the researcher believes gives him credibility because he is telling them he is not the one with the correct answer.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

The three assumptions for Symbolic Interactionism apply to this sermon. First, “people strive and act toward what represents meaning for them” (Handberg et al., 2015). This applies to both the *imam* and the *ummah* (or audience) but in a different way. This applies to the *imam* because the *imam* interprets a concept a certain way and then reinterprets it for the audience. For example, in this sermon, the *imam* states clearly in terms of the *Qur'an*: “[Allah] reminds us so many times in the *Quraan* as to the reality of this life: ‘Know that the life of this world is only amusement, diversion, and adornment.’” He believes this is an important piece of the *Qur'an* to reference for his *khutbah*. He interprets what amusement, *zeenah* (referencing diversion), and diversion (representing adornment) mean in his own way and then explains this to the audience.

Second, in this instance, the social interaction is the relationship of the *imam* and Allah, as well as between the *imam* and the *ummah*. This is when the *imam* gets whatever meaning he believes sums up his understanding of this subject before interpreting it through hadiths and passages within the *Qur'an*. He mediates the *khutbah* and then delivers it to the audience who then interpret his interpretation. This is why there cannot be separation between the context and the individual. The *imam* takes the context from the hadith or passage and then the audience uses the *imam's* context to form their own interpretation.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Cazales references the goal that Muslims say they have, which is Paradise and the hereafter. Cazales explains that words are not enough to get them there, so he then creates the behavioral standards by which those Muslims whose goal is the hereafter should abide:

Your actions should be the actions of the one who is on ‘mission paradise’; your actions should be the actions of one who is focused on the prize; when someone sees you and sees your actions, they’ll respond, ‘that man, that sister, they clearly are focused on Paradise!

This is where he creates the requirements to claim social identity as a Muslim and creates the in-group standards for what Muslims do if their intent is Paradise. He regards these Muslims highly, therefore this is the superior group. The researcher infers the out-group then, from Cazales’ perspective, would be those Muslims who focus on words alone. To become part of the superior group or in-group, Cazales gives multiple acts of worship that are looked upon highly by Allah. These include: *salah* (prayer), fasting, charity, and *hajj*.

### *Sermon 5*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

This fifth sermon is from United States–born *imam* Omar Suleiman. The researcher conducted a Google search for his name specifically after discovering he was born within the United States. This sermon was chosen because it was 22 minutes and 10 seconds long, which the researcher considered a lengthy sermon. It was not chosen due to any title or indication of what the sermon would be about. After uncovering that this sermon was given at the ICNA-MAS (Islamic Circle of North America) Convention of 2013, it was found that the conference was held in Hartford, Connecticut. This convention seems controversial, because in the past it has hosted speakers such as Linda Sarsour, an advocate for Sharia Law, and Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born cleric and believed-mastermind behind many terrorist attacks.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon satisfies the three characteristics of this theory which are: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. Proposition 1 wholeheartedly applies to this sermon in particular, because it is

delivered at an Islamic Convention, where according to Hallowell (2012), 15,000 Muslims were expected to travel to Hartford for the conference. This, in the researcher's opinion, would qualify as a distinct culture for the weekend, during when these presentations and sermons are taking place. In terms of Proposition 2, social, cultural, and religious speech codes were uncovered and discussed. Suleiman discusses how a place involving remembrance of *Allah* is a place that is alive. A place such as this can be one where Muslims come together and participate in praying. This is both a religious and social speech code.

Continuing discussing the present speech codes, Suleiman brings up reverts to Islam. He says those are the ones who inspire other Muslims because they were "not only ... willing to give up [their] 'cultural' obligations, [they] were willing to give up [their] entire lives." Cultural is put in quotations in the last sentence, because Suleiman put air quotes around the word when he was speaking. Although it is impossible to know what he was thinking, it seems Suleiman does not place cultural obligations on the same level as religious ones. In this one instance, he is discussing cultural and religious factors.

A specific mentioning of a culture is when Suleiman discusses how it is a fake happiness that is displayed when people are at a party and indulging in alcohol. Real happiness and the greatest "sweetness," as Suleiman refers to it as, is a connection to Allah. This is deemed cultural, because as a culture, college students are understood to drink underage and experiment with alcohol. This fulfills Proposition 2 explaining how multiple speech codes were employed.

Proposition 3 will be explained via all three speech codes. In reference to the first speech code, this code can be classified as rhetorical, because it focuses on the praying aspect, not a sociological code (because it does not discuss Muslims coming together and then acting in terms of a structure of social relationships). In reference to the second speech code about the mixed

cultural and religious speech code, the researcher is unsure where to succinctly classify this. The researcher will explain it as a system of social relations, only because those who convert to Islam give up a certain social status in their other religion while gaining one in Islam. The third speech code is one of a rhetorical nature because the conduct that is preferred is communication with Allah.

Continuing, Proposition 4 can be applied to this sermon in terms of how Suleiman discusses death, brotherhood, and love using social, religious, and cultural codes. Socially and culturally, Suleiman specifically mentions Sweden and how they are considered the least religious country in the world. And then he says that they are also one of the wealthiest while also having the highest suicide rate. He only gives this small amount of information and makes assumptions that Sweden's lack of religiosity is causation for their being the highest-rated country in terms of suicide. So he is saying not committing religious acts, turning "away from their creator," leaves them without tranquility, which Suleiman believes supports his overall point of lacking happiness, signified by the social factors he describes.

When Suleiman discusses the codes in religious terms, he combines both concepts of death and brotherhood. He explains that in a situation where a person smiles because of memorizing the *Qur'an* or remembering *Allah*, the believer feels alive. Another action Suleiman mentions is the act of *hajj*. This act of feeling alive comes when the believer goes to Allah for the sake of loving Allah, not for love of other items. The significance is in how Suleiman discusses all three codes to explain the communicative meaning of the religious acts. By employing three different codes, the importance of them is only known when using his same codes, even though they are woven throughout Suleiman's speech.



Speaking of woven into speech, in terms of Proposition 5, Suleiman's inclusion of multiple codes creates the meaning he explains to the *ummah*. Therefore, if the cultural code is removed from the *khutbah*, the religious codes he speaks of will not have a fulfilled meaning. When Suleiman brings up reverts to Islam, he places air quotes over the term "cultural" when discussing cultural obligations, showing that a rule or premise he follows in his speech codes is placing religious codes above other codes, including social and cultural ones. This means, if the other codes are not mentioned, there would not be an ability for him to come to his conclusion.

Finally, Proposition 6 can be discussed in how Suleiman justifies his recommendations (Putra, Nasution, Syafitri, & Nasution, 2017). The researcher believes this message Suleiman gives will most likely resonate with his *ummah* because the researcher can tell from the transcript that his audience is young and in college. The researcher believes the *ummah* will pick up on the attempted shared speech codes. Telling them to take advantage of a place of "remembrance" of *Allah* and that this is sufficient in *Allah's* eyes gives him credibility among this young audience due to the fact that he is not forcing them to go to a *masjid* to connect with *Allah*.

Another reason the researcher believes his message will get across is because Suleiman discusses many things in social terms, which is something one can assume college students are being: social with each other. What the researcher does not know is whether Suleiman denigrating the cultural aspect in favor of religious one will damage his message. The college students might believe they can accomplish a balance of both, instead of negating the cultural aspect.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Suleiman, like the other *imams*, mediates the *ummah's* understanding and physical reality by doing multiple things. Mainly, he uses love as a symbol for true life. This is seen when he discusses that if one only goes to *Allah* when there is a tragedy or when one needs help, then it is

not sincere love. Suleiman uses love as a symbol, and in turn he also uses it as an evaluation tool. Because people are active interpreters of their world, the *ummah*'s personal interpretation they attach to the event, rather than the actual event itself, will be a better indicator of their understanding what Suleiman is saying and carrying out his advice. So, in this sense, if some in the *ummah* go home and their parents tell them that they need to help their grandparents move, the child should do it with an open heart and without expecting *Allah*'s praises in return. If this occurs, then the message has been received; this is what makes love a symbol of true life, according to Suleiman.

### *Social Identity Theory*

A prominent classification Suleiman makes is between the living and the dead. Suleiman describes any place where *Allah* is remembered as a “beloved” place. It is also classified as an “alive” place because that life is coming from *Allah* and the person remembering *Allah*. A dead place is anywhere *Allah* is not being mentioned. This is why he praised the students in the audience. At the beginning of the sermon, he compared them with other students who were at bars and parties instead of working on their religion. He explained those who were partying were trying to feel alive, while the ones who were there with him were more alive because they were in a place that remembered and mentioned *Allah*. In this case, the in-group is remembering and mentioning *Allah* while the out-group is one not committing acts of remembering *Allah*. Suleiman explains *Allah* wants the Muslim must come to the realization that they want to be a Muslim and not succumb to activities where they would lose their way.

Another in-group/out-group classification has to do with love. Suleiman discusses that if the only time “you approach him [Allah] is for the love for something else” then it is not real love because the love for the things other than *Allah* is not real love. Real love is when a Muslim approaches *Allah* for the sake of approaching *Allah* and “with no strings attached.” The in-group

here is love toward Allah without wanting anything in return and the out-group is approaching Allah solely so he can do something for you. To get into the in-group, one must free themselves of expectations about Allah's actions and work from the heart.

### *Sermon 6*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

The sixth domestic sermon comes from Absul Nasir Jangda. The sermon was already transcribed and then the researcher discovered he was born in the Louisiana, thus he was eligible to be used as an American-born *imam*. Despite this, there is no way to uncover where Jangda delivered the sermon.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon does satisfy the three characteristics of this theory, including: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. Because there was no way for the researcher to know where the sermon took place, a distinctive speech code pertaining to the location of the speech was unable to be acquired, so Proposition 1 is unable to be elaborated upon. In terms of Proposition 2, the speech codes uncovered by the researcher in this sermon were of a social, religious, and cultural nature. The first code was of mostly a religious nature. Jangda begins by describing who Abu Bakr was and how he was the first man to immediately embrace Islam. Jangda explains Abu Bakr called what Muhammad was saying "the truth." The next two codes were mostly of a social nature.

Jangda then described the Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr's intention to make a public appearance. Jangda spoke about this in social terms because they would be in the public eye and interacting with others. Later, Jangda described a story exemplifying the Prophet's behavior. He tells of the Prophet owing money to someone. This someone grabbed the Prophet, demanded his money. Umar drew his sword to strike him but the Prophet instead logically

explained to Umar that he should have told him (the Prophet) that he owed this man money and should have asked politely to have his money because he had to pay bills instead of grabbing the him (the Prophet). The researcher would classify this as social.

Near the end of the sermon, Jangda references how society can tell people about who Muhammad was. He says first, though, humanity must look in the mirror and see what they really know about the Prophet. This looks solely like religious speech codes, but the researcher believes this could classify as cultural speech codes as well because Jangda explains taking steps such as educating oneself and learning of the Prophet's ideals is a step toward a "better humanity, society and the world we live in by means of the Prophet." One might say this could be a cultural speech code he is offering, because Jangda is discussing how a society can better itself culturally via religious means.

Proposition 3 was present in all three speech codes explained in Proposition 2. In the first speech code, the researcher is classifying this as sociological content, because Jangda describes Abu Bakr as immediately embracing the Prophet's message and it seems that Abu Bakr is elevating the Prophet to a higher social status than himself. Thus, this code is regarding social relations. In the second speech code, he is discussing strategic conduct explaining how the men should have interacted with each other in this social situation. Although it involves a social aspect, it is not based in a system of social relations because the Prophet was discussing the manner of one's conduct. The last speech code, the cultural one, discusses once again a sociological content because the code is focused on bettering a community, including social relations.

This leads into Proposition 4. Leading off from the descriptions in Proposition 2, Jangda describes the story of Abu Bakr and the Prophet Muhammad that the researcher explained in the

thematic analysis. Jangda communicates this in terms of social and cultural factors, which was explained previously. The social speech code seems like the most prominent speech code that the *imam* uses and it is the speech code from which the researcher believes the significance of his speech derives. Although the social speech code seems like the most important, the researcher believed Jangda could not preach his sermon and use the examples he did without using all three speech codes. This makes sense because of the examples given above and because this is what Proposition 5 requires: The speech codes are woven into the speaking and are not mutually exclusive.

Jangda's sermon might resonate strongly with listeners because *ummahs* can understand a sermon with real-world application, equating the story to their own life. Most people have been in situations where they have borrowed money or lent money to someone else, so the story is relatable and framing it in religious terms might have been a productive way to get the *ummah* to understand the message.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Jangda cites multiple narrations for the purpose of showing what the Messenger of *Allah's* outlook on life is. Jangda mediates the audience's outlook by interpreting *Allah's*. In one example, Jangda references *Allah's* words where he says that he (*Allah*) is like a man standing in front of a burning fire. All of the Muslims in the world are insects that are drawn to the flame/fire while the man (*Allah*) attempts to save/swat the insects away. Jangda interprets these symbols and this example as desperation, pain, and anguish coming from *Allah*. This interpretation goes further. Later in the sermon, he discusses how a Jewish businessman came after the Prophet because the Prophet owed him money, giving him a due date to pay him. He came back to the Prophet before the due date and physically attacked the prophet for not having his money. 'Umar (one of *Allah's* acquaintances) draws his sword to defend him. Instead of allowing him to do so,

*Allah* told him to stand down and chided him for not telling him *Allah* should have paid the man. Jangda then interprets the scenario that unfolded to mean that conflict should not need to be settled via emotional, physical actions, rather it can be handled calmly, showing the truth and doing what is right. The rightful action in this situation is following Allah's teachings, which is the paying of the man.

### *Social Identity Theory*

When the house of *Arqam* (the 40 believers in Allah) was full, Abu Bakr wanted to make a public appearance. Apparently it was a public appearance against the town or some group of people because at a certain time, members of tribes and families gathered together to defend their own blood instead of defending the message. In this story and *khutbah*, the in-group was a person's tribe; this is how they classified themselves in terms of social identity because it was a group affiliation. After Abu Bakr was attacked and beaten by those who were in the majority (compared to the minority forty believers), the Prophet arrived to see him. After the Prophet cried on Abu Bakr's shoulder, Abu Bakr exclaimed he would give his entire family for the Prophet. His main goal was to ensure that the Prophet was safe. This is showing Abu Bakr putting the Prophet in the highest honor and always thinking about him, even when he is the one hurt. Abu Bakr is exemplifying the character of the Prophet.

At the end, another in-group and out-group classification emerges. Jangda explains that worshippers can educate themselves and their communities. Because at that point of education, you seek the Prophet being mentioned and people's actions are guided by the Prophet. Thus, the superior group is the group educating themselves, while the out-group are ones who are not. Those in the out-group have the chance to become part of the in-group by educating themselves. This is the superior group Jangda wants to exemplify.

## *Sermon 7*

### *Origin of Sermon*

The seventh domestic sermon is from *Shaykh* Mujahid Abdul-Karim. This sermon transcript was uncovered after the researcher searched for Abdul Karim Yahya, a domestic *imam*. That search yielded no specific sermons but it was discovered Abdul-Karim was a domestic *imam* born in Oakland, California, and so this transcript was used for the study.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon does satisfy the three characteristics of this theory, including: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. In terms of Proposition 1, the location of this sermon is unknown, for the researcher only knows the birthplace of the *Shaykh* as Oakland, California. Because it cannot be confirmed the sermon was delivered at that location, then Proposition 1 is unable to be further elaborated on. Continuing to Proposition 2, this theory explains there could be multiple speech codes present in a “speech community” (Putra et al., 2017, p. 246). The researcher believes Abdul-Karim is employing two different speech codes: social and cultural. First, Abdul-Karim discusses social relations via a social speech code and explains how to communicate in terms of being a Muslim. It can be seen when he discusses how terrorism or “evil actions” are sometimes attributed to Muslims. He explains that the best response is that:

“[we] demonstrate the bright and beautiful face of the Messenger when his own face was wounded; he prayed for the guidance of those who did so, he tried to avert punishments from them, he tried to preserve as much life as he could.”

In the researcher’s opinion, this goes beyond a “simple rule” (Putra et al., 2017) because Abdul-Karim is explaining, in a social manner, how to keep a Muslim society functioning properly even in the face of lies by outside forces. The second speech code is a cultural one when Abdul-Karim discusses how Muslims should represent Allah and Muhammad. He says Muslims

should create a culture of forgiveness and politeness. To this end, he says people who are “of *taqwa*” (meaning who are cognizant of Allah and the truth) are creating the best culture possible. He says these are the people to emulate.

Proposition 3 is present in this sermon when discussing the two speech codes. The first speech code can be described as rhetorical, because he is discussing how to respond to someone who attributes terroristic acts toward Muslims. The second speech code can be described as rhetorical as well, because this time a Muslim is communicating with *Allah*. The conduct toward those who are ignorant was the focus in the second speech code.

This leads into Proposition 4 to discuss the significance the *imam* places on the codes. The significance seen is based on the cultural code Abdul-Karim creates when he references people “of *taqwa*” who are “mirrors of this beauty [Allah and Muhammad’s beauty] in the face of the ugliness of the world in which we find ourselves in.” Those people of *taqwa* live their daily life by Allah’s and Muhammad’s standards. This is why Abdul-Karim focuses on this. His entire premise is responding to evil actions attributed to Islam with the response *Allah* and Muhammed would wish.

When discussing Proposition 5, the speech code is woven throughout the language Abdul-Karim uses and is therefore unable to be removed without changing the meaning of the sermon. This means that the speech code can only be understood in accordance with the rest of the sentence or thought. When he is discussing the cultural speech code mentioning the people of *taqwa*, the rules that created the cultural speech code have to be there before the speech code is applied because it is a pre-requisite.

Assuming Abdul-Karim’s *ummah* uses the same or a similar cultural speech code when discussing forgiveness, his message should resonate, but the researcher does not know because



he cannot know what the *ummah* or audience is thinking. The researcher believes the fact that he focused on *taqwa* and ensuring his *ummah* understands it is about Allah and truth, the social and culture speech codes should be adopted (or maybe just accepted) by his *ummah*, thus satisfying Proposition 6.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Because the researcher does not know the *ummah*'s understanding or interpretation of what Abdul-Karim has discussed, this will focus on the sheikh's interpretation of religious references and symbols—this will be what “represents meaning for them,” as said by Handburg et al. (2015, p. 1023). A symbol he references is the people who were with *Allah* and Mohammad, who he claims represented them. So, if those people represented *Allah* and Mohammad, the *sheikh* is saying that Muslims should look to those people and the Messenger during times of trial because *Allah* exclaims these people handled the problems “in faith and obedience.”

Abdul-Karim believes these people should be symbols. This is the kind of behavior Abdul-Karim is intending his listeners to follow. Abdul-Karim wants his followers to listen to his word and the word of *Allah*, and then interpret that the actions taken by the followers: one, suited them well, and two, were done because the symbols they are following are given meaning as Muslims who heeded *Allah*'s word and received his approval.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The small amount of classification in this sermon was demonstrated when Abdul-Karim discusses *Sura Al Imran* verses 172 to 174 and how the believers got themselves out of a dreadful situation by remaining “in faith and in obedience.” This relates to the *taqwa* Abdul-Karim discusses, who are those who are cognizant of Allah. They acted as Muslims. Another group is the “believers of Musa,” who were alone against a tyrannical *Fir'aun*, who apparently

was their enemy. The people of Musa plotted against Musa and so Musa ended up putting his life into Allah's hands, surrendering to Allah, and Allah protected him. The *sheik* does not explicitly state this, but this is where the "believers of Musa" were the in-group and the *Fir'aun* were the out-group. To remain part of the in-group, they had to believe placing their trust in Allah would serve them well.

### *Sermon 8*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

This eighth sermon is from Jonathan Cazales. This sermon, "Tawbah (2) part 1" and "Tawbah (2) part 2," was obtained by asking the *sheikh* for copy of his sermons. This sermon delivered in Orlando, Florida. It is unknown when the sermon took place.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon does satisfy the three characteristics of this theory, including: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. The researcher explained in the third domestic sermon the statistics with regard to the Muslim population. Past this, Proposition 1 is unable to be elaborated on. Proposition 2 explains that there are multiple different speech codes that are employed by a community. The researcher believes there are religious, social, and cultural speech codes present in this sermon. One example of a religious and cultural code is when Cazales is telling the *ummah* that the Muslim who is truly living their life with purpose needs to be sincerely repenting. Although this is a religious act, Cazales discusses the idea that no one knows what will happen after death. He mentions communicating with Allah socially when he discusses repenting by changing and completing good deeds.

A second speech code is when he is explaining there is no limit to the amount of sin that can be relieved by repenting. Cazales references an excerpt from a hadith and explains that the

hadith does not mean that Muslims are free to sin, instead it means that Muslims have a nature and expectation that they will sin but also the expectation that they will sincerely repent to *Allah*. Cazales is discussing the culture of sin and a Muslim's role in this scenario.

Now that Proposition 2 has been explained by giving examples of the different kinds of speech codes in this sermon, Proposition 3 will be explained. With regard to the first speech code, a rhetorical act, the *imam* discusses conduct in terms of repenting. The second speech code might be able to be understood as both psychological and sociological codes. Psychologically it applies because Cazales says a Muslim can expect to sin. It is human nature, which is what this part of Proposition 2 explicitly says. But it can also be sociological, because a Muslim does not become reduced in *Allah's* eyes no matter how many sins they commit, as long as they repent sincerely for them afterward. If they repent, their social standing is unaffected.

This leads the researcher into explaining the Proposition 4 in terms of significance. As this proposition states, the significance of an *imam's* speech is dependent on the speech codes used to derive the meanings of communicative acts (Gudykunst, 2005). So, the significance of the meaning of the *imam's* code depends on the speech code he uses to reinforce his communicative actions. Because he is using both social and religious speech codes, he wants the *ummah* to think about the examples of his message in both of these forms.

Proposition 5 then combines the speech codes and makes them inseparable, because the meaning he is explaining could not have been explained if all three codes had not been employed. This means that the cultural speech code the *imam* is attempting to get across to the *ummah* would not have been fully understood if the social speech code was not present, because that gave context for the cultural speech code of repenting.

Proposition 6 should be adopted in this sermon because the *ummah* most likely uses a similar speech code. Although the researcher cannot know what the audience is thinking (and thus is purely speculating based on the information on hand), he believes the message should be effective. The *sheikh* gives the *ummah* an understanding of the opportunity of second chances and he gives them the power to take control of their own lives.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

At a base understanding of Islam, no man is equal to Allah. This means that all men and women have sinned and whether they repent or not, they will always sin again. But, Cazales explains, the best among us are those who repent. Sin becomes a symbol of the opportunity man has to repent and turn his life back toward Allah. This means that Cazales is attempting to mediate the listener's relationship with the real world by reinterpreting the concepts and lessons he is speaking about. Cazales tells a story of the Prophet to mediate the audience's understanding of sin.

Cazales mentions that the Prophet explains that an accumulation of sin can be forgiven. The Prophet tells of a man who had killed 99 men. This man asked a scholar if he could be forgiven, and the scholar replied, "no." He killed the scholar. He asked another scholar if he could be forgiven for killing 100 people and the scholar replied, "yes, what could possibly come between you and repentance?" Cazales then explains the tale represents that any sin can be forgiven if one repents. Cazales used this story to expand upon and interpret the *hadiths* he mentions in his sermon. Cazales mediated the meaning of sin to the *ummah* by using a story of the Prophet. By using a historical figure's lessons, he shaped how the *ummah* should think about sin.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The group affiliation that was found in this sermon was the Muslim who was “truly living their life for their Hereafter, [and] living their life on purpose.” This group can also be labeled as “those who repent.” This preferred group affiliation has obstacles though. Obstacles include: “taking sins lightly”, “feeling, ‘what’s the point?’ I will only end up doing it again,” “people who say, ‘Allah is forgiving, so let me sin and enjoy,’” and those who have given up repentance and will be a sinner forever. This is the out-group that Cazales intended to discuss: despair. He means despair as in sinning so much that one does not think they are deserving of forgiveness.

A first step to repent and make one’s way to the in-group is to understand that making mistakes is part of a human’s life. Then it is understood that the best sinner is the one who repents. The next step is to understand what to do after one commits a sin. This is a step that leads to the in-group and out-group scenario. There is a hadith that is discussed that says something similar to the idea that if you do not sin, you will be taken away from this world and replaced by those who do sin. Some, Cazales explains, interpret this to mean sin is endorsed. This is not correct. Instead, Cazales creates another in-group/out-group scenario that holds: You are part of the in-group if you sin on accident but then intend to turn back to *Allah’s* grace. This is contrasted with the out-group: those who continuously sin and have no intention of attempting to turn back to *Allah*.

### *Sermon 9*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

The ninth sermon is from Yasir Qadhi. Titled “True Happiness,” and was obtained by searching for *khutbahs* by Qadhi. Even though Qadhi is an American-born Muslim, it is unknown when and where the sermon took place.

### *Speech Codes Theory*

This sermon does satisfy the three characteristics of this theory, including: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. Because the location of Qadhi's sermon is unknown, Proposition 1 is unable to be explained or elaborated on. Qadhi uses two kinds of speech codes: cultural and religious. This acknowledges and accomplishes Proposition 2 in that there are multiple speech codes in a sermon. Although he focuses mainly on the religious codes, he intertwines the cultural ones when discussing daily life. He gives the rules the *ummah* should follow, such as committing sin (not willingly, but knowing you will), repenting, establishing a relationship with Allah through the five prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and giving *zakat*. So, although these are cultural aspects, they are based in religion.

When discussing the religious aspects, Qadhi discusses how different groups of people perceive happiness. He lists accolades, animal desires, and money and fame as some examples of how people measure happiness. Qadhi, though, equates these to sins because one is “distancing” themselves from *Allah* when focusing on these worldly desires. Instead, he believes the way to gain ultimate happiness is through connection to *Allah*. This connection is called the *rooh*. This connection is established by feeding the *rooh*, which is establishing a connection with *Allah*. He explains how one can be physically dead but still feed the *rooh* and worship *Allah*. If one does not feed the *rooh*, then “you don't feel any purpose of living, you don't have enjoyment of life,” meaning then that acts of worship, or standard communicative conduct in Islam, are required to attain an “alive” soul and the purpose to keep your Earth body alive.

The two codes—(1) Sin equates to distancing yourself from Allah and (2) feeding the *rooh* can keep a connection with Allah—are interdependent, as Proposition 2 requires. These cannot be explained without the other having the context, the relationship between sin and the

*rooh*. They can be occurring simultaneously and cannot be removed from communication. One might also call these “customs” or “rules.” The significance is that he views the *rooh* as an integral part of his focus on pleasing Allah and the path to happiness.

Following Proposition 2, Proposition 3 is present in this sermon when looking at both codes. In terms of the first code, the cultural one, one might classify this as a “culturally distinctive rhetoric” (Gudykunst, 2005) because he is discussing the conduct that the *ummah* should follow. The second code, which is focused on feeding the *rooh*, is through a religious lens and discusses the conduct that a Muslim should follow. It is strategic because the *rooh* is the complex connection one has with *Allah*, thus interpreting this is necessary to understand the significance of Qadhi’s speech. Understanding this as a cultural code helps this process, satisfying Proposition 4.

If one interprets sin and *rooh* in this way, Proposition 5 can apply to this sermon. As stated by Putra et al. (2017), there are “special forms of communicative conduct such rituals, myths and social dramas” (p. 247). Feeding the *rooh* can be seen a ritual. The speech codes are used to “shape communicative actions” (p. 247), to explain how one should live in terms of dealing with the concept of sin. Qadhi, by combining Abdul Karim’s interpretation and Cazales’ interpretation regarding rules such as repenting, second chances, and giving the audience power in their own lives, should be effective in his message. The researcher believes combining these aspects should resonate with the *ummah*, but the researcher cannot know whether it is or will be effective because there are no indications about what the *ummah* or audience is thinking. This satisfies Proposition 6.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Because Qadhi’s overall intention is to explain how to obtain true happiness, he is mediating the audience’s physical and objective reality (Soloman, 1983) by attaching meaning to

certain actions that he finds important. Qadhi is focusing on the *rooh* because he believes satisfying this will enable the believer to achieve pure happiness. He is organizing one's entire reason for existence (happiness) around satisfying the symbol of the *rooh*. Qadhi is referring to society interpreting happiness in terms of connection to *Allah* instead of the worldly possessions, but in the end the overall objective is true happiness, Qadhi consistently focuses on telling the audience to feed their *rooh*. The *rooh* leads to happiness, because feeding it is the "purpose of living" and the "enjoyment of life." At that moment, Qadhi is attempting to make feeding the *rooh* a norm. This is a cultural value Qadhi is proposing and he is interpreting it for the audience by using the *rooh*.

### *Social Identity Theory*

The social groups Qadhi refers to in the beginning of his sermon qualify for in-groups and out-groups when discussing Social Identity Theory. Qadhi's overall point of his sermon is defining and explaining what true happiness is. He explains what certain people think will make them happy and then contrasts those people with what will actually make them happy, from his perspective. The people who Qadhi believe are not achieving real happiness are the out-group, which Qadhi explains are those people who look toward money, fame, and "satisfying one's animal desires" to achieve happiness. This is compared to the in-group, which are those Muslims who are feeding of the *rooh*, which is the establishment of a connection with *Allah*, to find happiness. It seems as though from the follower's perspective, this is a personal identity because it has to deal with their own happiness, but using Qadhi's perspective, it becomes a social identity because it is a group affiliation.

To transfer from the out-group to the in-group, Qadhi explains that "the body must be fed from substances that originate from its [own] origins." This origin is *Allah*. He describes them in terms of communication acts, which are those that constitute worship to *Allah*. Doing this allows



a Muslim to attain true happiness. To get from the out-group to the in-group, which is true happiness, one must feed the *rooh* and commit communication acts such as fasting, praying, charity, and *thikr (dhikr)*, which amounts to the mentioning of *Allah* and *du'a* (Al-Modarresi, 2016). This is a social identity extracted from Qadhi's interpretation.

### *Sermon 10*

#### *Origin of Sermon*

The tenth and final sermon from domestic *imams* is delivered by Jonathan Cazales titled "Tawbah (1) part 1" and "Tawbah (1) part 2." This sermon was obtained by asking the *sheikh* for copies of his sermons. He emailed the researcher many examples. This sermon was given in Orlando, Florida. It is unknown when the sermon took place.

#### *Speech Codes Theory*

Analysis using Speech Codes Theory yields a discovery of a distinctive speech codes as explained by Proposition 1. Similar to sermon 3 and sermon 8, the location is somewhere in Orlando, Florida, and is unable to be elaborated on. This sermon does satisfy the three characteristics of this theory, including: observation of cultural behavior, analysis of speech and the understanding of how to conduct oneself in an interaction. Cazales explains the distinctive communicative acts, which the researcher will elaborate on in Proposition 2.

The researcher only extracted one speech code used by Cazales, but it involved religious, cultural, and social attributes. First, he explains in religious terms that one must repent and vow not to sin again, even though the sinner knows he/she will sin again. He explains how this is one of the most important characteristics of a believer. Next, he discusses it in terms of culture, because it is one of the most important rules Cazales believes Muslims should follow. Last, it is socially explained by mentioning the Muslim is communicating with *Allah*. They are baring their soul to him because they love him and are asking for forgiveness.

One could go a little further and apply Proposition 3 to this when Cazales adds in that when you repent, you must be sincere even though you know that you will sin again. Proposition 3 applies because the sermon discusses sinning as human nature (a psychological code) and can be applied to Cazales' interpretation of how one must act in their relationship with *Allah* in terms of sin. This is why Cazales quotes *Ahmad*, who explains the best sinners are those who repent. This leads into Proposition 5 because when Cazales explains that all one must do to be forgiven is to sincerely ask, the act of asking can be considered symbolic.

The speech codes make what Cazales is saying significant. Because he is speaking in religious, social, and cultural speech codes, it shows that Cazales believes sinning permeates the religion of Islam and is not solely one part of it. When he says repentance might lead to success, he is meaning in all aspects of life, illustrated by the overall theme of repenting in all three kinds of speech codes. This explanation satisfies Proposition 4. This interpretation of repentance continues into Proposition 5 also. Because repenting cannot be removed from any of Qadhi's interpretation of religion, it cannot leave his speech codes. Removing the act of repenting from the speech codes, it would change the meaning of them.

The act of asking for forgiveness is a speech code in itself and can be understood by applying Proposition 6. By explaining how it is expected that people sin and all one needs to repent is ask, the act of asking for forgiveness is a moral statement and request. Cazales' interpretation of the act of asking for forgiveness is seen when he explains one must be sincerely asking, meaning they must embody the morals for wanting and needing forgiveness, including the intention not to sin again. The researcher believes these speech codes shape the Muslim's future communicative acts toward Allah, but this is interpretation on the part of the researcher, who knows nothing about the *ummah* or those listening.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Cazales' interpretation of sin and sincerity are the most important aspects of this sermon. Like stated earlier, the act of asking for forgiveness must be sincere. The intention behind asking for forgiveness is the symbol for true repentance to *Allah*. It symbolizes actual forgiveness. This is how Cazales explains one should evaluate one's relationship to sin. Because Cazales believes everyone has and will continue to sin, he normalizes the continuous result of not meeting *Allah's* expectations. He also normalizes *Allah* forgiving the sinner after a sincere request for forgiveness.

This sincere request must include heartfelt emotion. Cazales lists a couple of actions specifically:

[W]e need to fix our hearts now, soften our hearts, increase in our belief, and immediately strive to embody what is arguably one of the most important characteristics of the believers: the characteristic of being remorseful.

The aspect of believing *Allah* will wipe your sins if you just ask for forgiveness as well as the characteristics in his own words display how Cazales interprets sin and how he believes *Allah* plays a part in it.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Consistent with the other sermons, the *imam* speaking is creating the social categories that create two kinds of groups: in-groups and out-groups. In this sermon, the *imam* is framing sinners and those living life into different categories. In terms of sinners, Cazales creates two groups. He references repentance and explains Allah wants to forgive sinners. He gives two options for the sinner: he or she either is either remorseful, therefore has sincere desire for repentance (meaning the intention of never sinning again, though knowing that he or she will), or

he or she is not remorseful. This sincerity is what makes the difference in Allah forgiving the sinner. He gives a guide on how to get into the in-group of remorseful repentance.

In regards to those living life, Cazales contrasts those people who are “truly living their life for their hereafter” (which means living their life on purpose) to other people who are distracted by this life. A characteristic of one who is living their life for the hereafter is acting on one’s good intentions whenever possible. Ones who do this are part of the in-group. If one does not act on their intentions and commit good deeds, then they are putting the deeds off and becoming “deceived into thinking [they] have time,” and remain part of the out-group. The other characteristic is repenting. Those who repent (truthfully and sincerely) continuously are living their life for the hereafter, while those who do not repent correctly are deceived and not living life up to this standard.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

### Thematic Comparative Analysis

Research Question 1 asks, What are the differences in meanings of key Islamic concepts between internationally born *imams* and U.S.-born *imams*? To preface this analysis, the following has occurred up to this moment: After finding, transcribing (some), and coding 58 sermons for themes outlined in the literature review, a sample was selected: 10 sermons from U.S.-born *imams* and 10 from *imams* born overseas. These were analyzed for the interpretation of the 10 themes the researcher outlined in the literature review. These 20 sermons are elaborated on in the following thematic analysis. What follows is the discussion of each theme coded in the sermons, the sub-themes the researcher extracted from each sermon regarding each theme, and the comparison of the interpretation of each theme between *imams* born inside of the United States compared to *imams* born outside of the United States. The following analysis does not include the entire number of sermons (58) collected (shown in the tables of the appendix) but instead a summation and evaluation of the domestic *imams*' and international *imams*' interpretation of the concepts investigated in this thesis.

#### Brotherhood

##### *Foreign*

It is immediately apparent that the foreign *imams* spoke more about the concept of brotherhood compared to the domestic *imams* in the sample. The concept of brotherhood was discussed in 6 of the 10 analyzed international sermons, compared to 2 of the 10 analyzed domestic sermons. As is understood by the common understanding of brotherhood, the Islamic understanding (at least from these 10 international sermons) is more based in religion. Brotherhood was explained as one of the most important features of the Islamic religion. Themes

were discovered and extracted when *imams* were discussing brotherhood, such as defense/protection, togetherness, and collectivism. These themes will be explained below.

### *Defense/Protection*

In terms of defense/protection, the defense of other Muslims and the global Muslim *ummah* was stressed. This can be seen in almost every sermon. In Table 1 and in terms of inaction, al-Qaradawi discusses that nothing is being done when “brothers” are being “slaughtered and tormented.” The word “brothers” is used because as those in Egypt are Muslims, as are those in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. In Table 4, al-Qaradawi also mentions defending other Muslims. It is not a large part of his understanding of brotherhood, but he says that an attack on one Muslim is an attack on all Muslims. He says, “This is my brother, I’m his brother and he’s my brother. I should protect him, defend him and spend my money and soul for his sake.”

Khattab in Table 6 discusses assisting other Muslims, but he is not specific. So there is a difference between the expectation of assisting Muslims who are under attack by al-Qaradawi in Table 4, while Khattab explains it in terms of “brothers in their time of need.” Although one could classify “a time of need” as a Muslim under attack, a time of need could mean assistance in terms of prayer, money, or everyday help. Gusau in Table 9 also mentions the defense of other Muslims. He explains a time where brotherhood was the driving force behind the Muslim *ummah* and explained how the *ummah* withstood so much in terms of “overwhelming attack, enemy campaigns and unjust transgressions.”

### *Togetherness*

In terms of togetherness and gatherings, brotherhood was explained as a time to reflect on one’s religious life with other Muslims. It was described during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the gatherings he created. This is seen in Table 2 when the UAE *imam* says,

“exchanging their experiences and expertise as well as nurturing religious values” was involved in the gatherings and the most important act and value of these gatherings was the remembrance of Allah. In Table 6, Khattab somewhat discusses brotherhood in terms of this when he says, “Islam is a sharing. Islam is a brotherhood. Islam is a cooperation.” Mainly, when he says sharing is an aspect of Islam, this can be seen in the aspects of gatherings and interaction in terms of faith. But when he says cooperation, it makes the researcher place this piece of his interpretation into the collectivism category.

### *Collectivism*

Collectivism means an overall unity and feeling of understanding between Muslims. This does not mean physically together. It can also mean faith or religiosity. This is seen in Rahman’s sermon explained in Table 3. Rahman explains how the bonds of brotherhood and the outcome of the group are more important than the individual. He stresses good behavior between Muslims and from all Muslims, including eliminating arguments, strife, and individual beliefs. This is also shown in Table 4 by al-Qaradawi. He stresses brotherhood as a collective effort instead of personal “whims.” Al-Qaradawi is actually more stringent, claiming that the entire world are brothers of Muslims until they “follow their own whims” and “fell victims to their desires.” He stresses brotherhood in terms of “every believer is a brother to other believers” and calls to “Unite the word of our children of Egypt and our Arab brothers and our Muslim brothers in every place!” So his basis of overall unity is in terms of believing and being a Muslim. This is similar but much more stringent than Rahman’s interpretation of brotherhood in Sermon 3. The concept of not arguing over desires being a staple of brotherhood seems a litmus test for al-Qaradawi. In Table 6, Khattab discusses how Islam is a “sharing,” “brotherhood,” and “cooperation.” Focusing on the term cooperation, one can see this as unity and understanding. It fits in the collectivism category because it isn’t discussing physically being together.

Collectivism is mostly referenced in Murtada Gusau's sermon, Table 9. When Gusau discusses brotherhood, he discusses it some in terms of dying and meeting *Allah*. He says that forgiveness of sins is what Muslims desire and hope to have accomplished by the time they die. Forgiveness will be given to those who do not associate with *Allah* before forgiveness is given to those who begrudge other Muslim brothers. So Gusau mostly explains brotherhood as a unity, even though he mentions defense and protection instead of togetherness and gatherings.

#### *Domestic*

As explained in the introduction, brotherhood was not a prominent theme in the domestic sermons when compared to the international ones. But although it was not as prominent, when brotherhood was discussed and discovered, the interpretation from domestic *imams* and clerics had similar understandings compared to the international *imams* and clerics. The two themes the researcher extracted from the sermons where brotherhood was mentioned include: togetherness (gatherings/remembrance) and collectivism in terms of faith.

#### *Togetherness*

First, brotherhood in terms of togetherness will be discussed. Brotherhood in terms of togetherness was explained and shown through the act of prayer, especially by Suleiman. In this sermon, the remembrance of *Allah* was one of the most consistent characteristics Suleiman raised. When he said that the most "beloved places" are where *Allah* is mentioned, it is not necessarily consistent with what the literature review explains. When Nasir (2016) is referenced, he says "the mosque" emphasizes brotherhood is achieved through prayer. Suleiman's interpretation is not to this extent, but that is because he has a different interpretation of "remembrance." This is similar to Jangda's interpretation. In Jangda's sermon, brotherhood was first coded when Jangda was discussing *Abi al-Arqam* and how *al-Arqam* hosted the Prophet and his companions "so that they would have a place to pray ... learn ... [and] congregate." It has



been posited that a location where *Allah* is being remembered can be seen as a place of brotherhood.

### *Collectivism*

Collectivism really was not a priority for these domestic *imams* and clerics, but it was still mentioned. Suleiman did not touch on collectivism, though Jangda referenced it but only in terms of a specific event and action. Previously, the researcher explained how *al-Arqam* hosted the Prophet and his companions. When the Abu Bakr wanted to finally make a public appearance, he was immediately attacked and badly beaten. But after Abu Bakr was beaten and taken home, he continuously asked for the Prophet and his whereabouts. When the Prophet arrived, Abu Bakr cried and hugged him, exclaiming he would give up his parents for the Prophet and made sure he was okay no matter what anyone had done to him. Although this story can be explained as an act of brotherhood, Jangda exclaimed it was a story of “true love and of compassion and of respect and of honor and of iman.” Despite Jangda’s statement that it is a story of love, the argument can be made for collectivism and faith because Abu Bakr was mainly worried about the Prophet because he meant so much to the religion. The cooperation, the group, and the “togetherness” was more important to Abu Bakr than his own health issues.

### Death

#### *Foreign*

Discussion about death was where international *imams* were not as consistent. From the sample collected, only 4 of the 10 sermons from foreign *imams* discussed death as a concept, compared to 8 of the 10 sermons from domestic *imams*. When reviewing foreign *imams*’ sermons and what they believed and portrayed about the concept of death, themes were uncovered. Themes included: life after death being the *real* life and the physical and religious

process of death. Under the latter theme (physical and religious process), the explanation of one's body dying vs. one's soul dying is explained.

*Life after Death=Real Life*

In terms of life after death, death was similar to other sermons where the real “life” to live is one after this earthly life. When al-Qaradawi says, “Lifetime is nothing by a few breaths and few seconds and then everything comes to an end and then we meet Allah,” it echoes other sermons such as Omar Suleiman’s, where death is understood as the “goal.” Death is the real life as al-Qaradawi puts it. This might be why al-Qaradawi places the martyr as an elevated person, in terms of status, because the martyr owns their soul, contrasted to the non-martyrs, who do not.

Khatab references life after death when he tells the story of Moses and the Egyptian pharaoh, Ramses II. He talks about the Qur’anic quote 10:92: “Today We are going to save you but your body only—not body and soul—so you will be a lesson for everyone after you.” The pharaoh’s body was discovered in 1881 in Deir el-Bahri, which is on the west bank of the Nile River (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015) and there is evidence it was embalmed in Egypt. Although there is scientific evidence of the embalming, the *imam* explains that if one goes to the museum in Cairo, the body of the pharaoh of Moses is still intact and viewable, but that the reason unbeknownst to scientists. This is significant because, as has been said, the life Muslims are striving for is the life after death. This is when your soul moves on. So when Moses convinced the pharaoh to surrender to Allah and Islam, the writing in the *Qur’an* (Allah’s words) explained that only the pharaoh’s body would be saved (and not his soul) so he would be made the example. This means that the pharaoh did not live his life intended for death and in the fashion that Islam intended.

This same thing happened when the pharaoh attempted to convince the sorcerers he was more powerful than Moses. But the sorcerers (believing in *Allah* and Islam) explained that no

matter what he did, his deeds and punishment was contained to this world and rather “[they] believe[d] in God [Allah] who will forgive our sins and the sorcery which you urged us to practice.” Following with the logic of the concept of death, the sorcerers’ souls will be saved, unlike the pharaoh’s, because they put their belief in *Allah* rather than worldly people or things.

Gusau only mentioned death once or twice in his sermon. Using a quote by *Al-Imran* in the verse, 3:102, “O you who believe! Revere Allah the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims,” his focus was on dying as a true Muslim, which he believed was shown through acts of brotherhood.

### *Physical and Religious Process of Death*

#### *Body vs. Soul*

This process was described by Khattab in Table 7. The *imam* explains *Allah* is the maker of the universe, which is how *Allah* created man: from the earth. Then water is explained as the conduit with the verse: “From water We made every living being” [21:30]. Further, the *imam* explains when a man becomes sick, a doctor looks toward elements of the earth for a cure for his body. The *imam* states it is “undiscovered and unknown” how someone is sick in their soul (this is disputed in other sermons). Continuing to reference the earth, the *imam* explains that when a person’s body dies, “the body will go back to where it came from originally—the earth.” While the body goes to the Earth, Khattab explains that the soul goes where it originally came from. Khattab explains he does not know anything about the originality of the soul. When one hears the “trumpet of judgment,” they will be before the Seat of Judgment, which is when they see the “truth.” He explains that only *Allah* knows what occurs; it is called the “Unseen.”

In terms of the soul, al-Arifi in Table 8 describes this process using the Prophet Muhammad as example. Al-Arifi explains how *Allah* sent his messengers for the “dissemination of monotheism and [to] repel... Idolatry and polytheism.” The Prophet was always encouraging

Muslims “even in the darkest of situations and difficult circumstances.” Al-Arifi explained that the Prophet displayed the ability to have faith in *Allah*, and the belief of monotheism and Islam spread to others before he died. He then “handed his soul to the Lord.” This sureness of *Allah* and the sureness of the spreading of Islam across the world revealed *Allah* to him (the Prophet), which showed Islam will be “victorious.”

### *Domestic*

As mentioned, the concept of death was discussed more in sermons by domestically born *imams* compared to foreign-born *imams*. Death was discussed in all 10 domestic sermons. The themes that were uncovered about death include: the loss of one’s parents, thinking about and remembering death, physical process of dealing with a dead body, paths and actions for one to feel alive, the end of the world, death in terms of killing.

### *Thinking and Remembering Death*

The researcher will not expand on the theme of killing one’s parents, because it was mentioned only in passing one time and not expanded on. Of the eight sermons where death was discussed in depth, thinking about and remembering death was a prominent theme that was uncovered in six of these sermons. In Wahhaj’s (Sermon 2) sermon titled, “Are you Ready to Die?,” he immediately begins the sermon by discussing how he thinks about death every single day. By thinking about death, he says, “we try our best to live the best life we can live.” He explains it in terms of living every day as if it were our last, but that by doing this, it does not mean we should not make future plans. Wahhaj translates the act of living every day as if it were our last means that you did not waste your life and death will be a significant event, that you will have accomplished the deeds you needed to. This idea is the same one that Cazales’ put forth in Sermons 3 and 4.

In Sermon 3, Cazales says that “actively th[inking] about it at all times” is necessary because he believes it holds him accountable. Cazales’ interpretation is different though, because he proactively explains using actions to remember death instead of solely the act of remembering. The actions include: visiting graves, understanding that *janaazah* is for the living, “tak[ing] heed of your actions” and “living in this world with a purpose,” with that purpose being the afterlife. In Sermon 4, Cazales strays somewhat from the interpretation of remembering death he had in Sermon 3. He still says paradise (so death) should always be on the “forefront of our hearts and minds,” but that one’s good conduct is most important to *Allah*. This act of thinking about death continues in Sermon 5, but Suleiman talks about how people try to go out to clubs and parties to “feel alive.” He compares them to the students in the lecture hall listening to his *khutbah*, explaining the students in the lecture hall are the ones who are actually alive. He says, “the most beloved places of Allah are the masjids of Allah, are the houses of Allah ... because the remembrance of Allah and the mention of Allah that takes place in the houses of Allah and the most hated places to Allah on the face of the Earth are the market places.” This is because he is saying the dead places are those places where *Allah* is not remembered. So in Suleiman’s perspective remembering *Allah* makes one’s heart and setting “alive.”

#### *Process of Dealing with Dead Bodies/Impending Death*

The physical process of death and managing dead bodies was in Wahhaj’s Sermon 2. Wahhaj refers to the physical act of “washing” another Muslim when discussing how society takes tasks such as this for granted. Although Wahhaj does not explain a step-by-step process of how to deal with a dead body, he explains that one day, everyone’s body will need to be washed. He then claims Muhammad states that if more than 100 people attend a Muslim’s *janaazah*, “praying for the intercession, asking for Allah’s forgiveness, [then] Allah will accept their intercession.”

The immediate moments that precede death were described in Sermon 7, Abdul Karim Yahya's sermon, but instead of an individual's death, Yahya references the end of the world. Yahya cites Bukhari (who is narrating from Abu Hurayra), who said that the Prophet claimed the Final Hour will bring the removal of knowledge, natural disasters, and trials for people. The Prophet says that death and killing are a staple of the end of times, according to Bukhari.

#### *Plans and Actions to Feel Alive/Have Purpose*

These *imams* had different interpretations of what this meant. Wahhaj, in Sermon 2, understood it as living life to the fullest. He says to the audience of students, "every day you live, you're that closer to the grave. And the thing that's incumbent upon us to understand is that we have no guarantees." Wahhaj continues later to say that the purpose and both life and death is to be tested by *Allah*, and because no one has control over when they die, every day "we try our best to live the best life we can live," which includes eating good food, staying away from the haram, and living each day as if it were the last day on this earth. Although he says to live each day like the last, he explains this does not mean to not make plans for the future. This is similar to (Sermon 8) Cazales' "Tawbah(2): part 1," when Cazales explains that all Muslims' goal is paradise and that this goal should keep them living a purposeful life to achieve this goal—by "becom[ing] distracted by the beauty and adornment of this *dunya*, we forget ourselves, we forget our purpose, and we lose sight of this most tremendous goal."

Both Wahhaj's Sermon 2 and Cazales' "Tawbah(2): part 1," differ from Qadhi's sermon 9, "True Happiness," when he focuses on the *rooh*. When the researcher discusses how the soul needs a connection to *Allah* for the *rooh* to stay alive, it pertains to the soul and not the body, because the *rooh* can be alive even if the body is not. So death in the beating heart sense is not the focus, instead it is the retaining of the feeding of the *rooh* because "neglecting the *rooh*... suffocate[s] the *rooh*." So, as it is stated previously, the feeding of the *rooh* comes from keeping

a connection with *Allah*. This connection can be fed via every act of worship. This leads back to Qadhi's overall point of true happiness. It is also fed by fulfilling your purpose. Qadhi says, "When you do what Allah wants you to do, of course you will feel fulfilled." So neglecting *Allah*, he says, can be felt in the heart and instead of ultimate happiness, "ultimate sadness" is attained. This fulfillment of purpose is essentially an act of feeling alive.

### *Distraction/Deception*

This theme might be very similar to the previous theme of having purpose, but the reason the researcher extracted and separated this theme apart from having purpose is because distraction encompassed a couple of different acts or sections. These acts or sections can be referred to as: fun, including gambling and partying (Wahhaj, Suleiman, Sermon 5), this *dunya* (life—Cazales, Sermon 8) and earthly desires (Sermon 4—Cazales, Sermon 10—Cazales). Some acts might fit into multiple categories, but the researcher will attempt to explain why an act he places into a category belongs there instead of another category.

The first distraction is partying and gambling. Both Wahhaj and Suleiman discourage and explain how this distraction is toxic. From Wahhaj's perspective, acts such as staying away from the *haram* (partying) and gambling are necessary, because these are distractions from intently living one's life with purpose. These acts are under a created "distraction" category because although these acts are offshoots of not having purpose, they are acts that drew Muslims away from having purpose. They were a distraction.

The second distraction is this *dunya*. *Dunya* can be compared with earthly desires because *dunya* means "life," in terms of this world. This world references the Earth. Said "beauty and adornment" of this world, as Cazales states it, is living for our human desires. In Sermon 4, Cazales explains how *Allah* uses three words to describe the earthly life: amusement, *zeenah*, and diversion. Amusement means something that will keep us entertained for a short time. *Zeenah*

can be described as “alluring” and “attractive,” according to Cazales. Diversion is letting this earthly life “divert” us, instead of “investing ourselves in the Hereafter.” This distraction is seen in Sermon 8. Cazales’ “Tawbah(2) part 1” explains how a Muslim’s overall purpose should be paradise but that Muslims become distracted by earthly desires and possessions. Because humans have been deceived into thinking the human life is the real life, they will not want to repent now—they will have time. But the more time they waste, the more distracted they become.

## Freedom

### *Foreign*

#### *Freedom for the Oppressed*

Freedom was discussed in only two sermons from foreign *imams*. Rahman combines peace and freedom when he explains how Islam is the “promoter of peace.” He references Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, and explained how once he conquered Jerusalem al-Khattab “approved the freedom and rights of all people of all religions.” This seems like a stretch that the conquered would immediately receive freedom and rights just after losing a war.

This was contrasted with current-day situations in the Middle East. Al-Qaradawi references the Arab Spring, which is when many Muslim majority countries reformed their government by toppling theocratic and long-lineage regimes. He waffles between whom the revolution belongs to. First, he discusses how the Arab Spring revolutions are for the oppressed peoples at the hands of the leaders mentioned in the discussion on oppression. But then he states that the revolution only belongs to the Syrians. Further, he says “their throats were their only weapons with which they called for freedom and dignity for this nation.” “They” in the previous sentence are the Syrians. This makes sense because al-Qaradawi was criticizing Mubarak and specifically al-Assad throughout the sermon. But then he changes the subjects of freedom again from specific peoples who are oppressed back to the entire world.



### *Lack of Freedom*

Al-Qaradawi's interpretation of freedom becomes skewed even more so when he states, "free yourselves of worshiping whims, free yourselves from worshiping anything by Allah, free yourselves of worshiping people" and then calls on Christians ("People of the Book") to "come to common terms" that Muslims worship only *Allah*. His interpretation of freedom is one of not actual freedom. This is compared to Khattab's interpretation of freedom. His mentioning of the concept was framed toward the concept of equality. One mentioning was explained in terms of religion when Khattab explains the marriage contract as a civil contract, he then says any civil contract must be based in religion "to make equality prevail."

Another mention of equality that was referenced as freedom was explained in terms of biology. He says that there are certain roles that one sex is "not as adept" as another sex. When Khattab explained how America might believe fathers can care "for their children at home, he can never have the softness that a mother has in that role." He explains how this is a "failure of the husband and the success of the wife." Khattab questions whether or not this is equality, after discussing this biological comparison. Khattab is not saying the father does not have the freedom or will to be a child caretaker but that he does not have the freedom to be as proficient as the mother because they are unequal in biological terms. This was also mentioned when discussing the concept of equality.

The last mention of freedom dealt with how both men and women were able to own land since the inception of Islam. Although this is understood as equality mainly, it can be seen as freedom because this implies the sexes cannot do one another's perceived intended jobs under the religion of Islam.

## *Domestic*

### *Lack of Freedom*

Compared to the foreign *imams*, domestic *imams*' sermons that were analyzed did not focus on the concept of freedom, with the exception of one sermon. Suleiman (Sermon 5) references freedom in terms of freeing oneself from personal desires and becoming closer to *Allah*. Suleiman discusses this push toward *Allah* by the signs and "wake-up calls" *Allah* sends the believer. Wake-up calls could include realizing "the person you want is not going to give you happiness" but instead that *Allah* will. Wake-up calls could include a death in the family, a health crisis, or a near death experience. In his understanding, there is a lack of freedom in believing in our own desires and instead that we need to understand what the prophets taught us. According to Suleiman, one can reference the phrase, "Oh Allah, there is no life, there is no true life, except for the life in the hereafter," to realize what the prophets wanted taught. So instead of feeling our own human desires, freedom is believing and dedicating oneself to the hereafter.

## Human Rights

### *Foreign*

Although the theme of human rights was not a prominent theme in either foreign or domestic sermons, the sole example in one foreign-born *imam*'s sermon will be discussed. The third international sermon by Rahman was the only sermon that was coded for human rights. Human rights as a concept were connected with peace in this sermon, because this is how Rahman referenced it. Although peace is mentioned a couple of times in this sermon, it is never explained in depth enough to get an understanding on what Rahman means when he references peace. The only time even a partial picture of what he means by "peace" is when he says Muslims "always were the promoters of peace" and references Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, by exclaiming, "may Allah be pleased with him, who recognized and approved the

freedom and rights of all people of all religions on the day he conquered Jerusalem.” This might be a reference to human rights.

### *Domestic*

There are a couple more examples of the Islamic interpretation of human rights from the *imams* and clerics born in the United States. In the first sermon, Qadhi references parental rights. The only reason the researcher brings this up is because parental rights and how parents are treated is seen as one of the most important relationships in Islam. So in terms of human rights, parents are innately created to be given extra respect and love due to the fact that *Allah* has placed them so highly. Jangda might have referenced human rights indirectly, but he did not explicitly refer to any actions or story as one of explaining human rights. In Jangda’s story, he explained a deal the Prophet made with a businessman. When the businessman came to collect his payment from the Prophet, the Prophet did not have it ready and so the businessman yells and assaults the Prophet. When Umar b. al-Khattab defended and threatened the businessman, the Prophet said to not treat people like that (like al-Khattab). This act of “defen[se] ... by means of ... guidance and ... teachings” did not include physical actions. This might seem that Jangda’s interpretation of the Prophet’s definition of a ‘human right’ is learning through the teachings instead of teachings being forced on someone via physical force. But this is a stretch.

### Justice/Equality

#### *Foreign*

##### *Justice*

From the sample taken, justice and equality were more present in the sermons by foreign-born *imams* compared to those born in the United States. Justice is the more prominent sermon compared to equality. Equality is not overshadowed by justice, but it is not discussed as much.

The internationally born *imams* do not reserve justice for a certain few. Instead, they focus on all

people: enemies and allies alike, including family, friends, and love ones. This will be explained below.

#### *Justice to enemies*

In the first sermon, al-Qaradawi gives a problem, a solution, and a method to enact said solution in the name of justice. First, the problems al-Qaradawi “expose” are the Americans and “the West” as bolstering “falsehood.” The falsehood al-Qaradawi claims Americans are propagating is that Israel is the rightful owner of their current land. He calls for *Allah* to take Israel down. But he wants Muslims’ hands distributing “justice” as the method by which Israel is taken down. He is equating justice as taking over Israel when he says, “Oh Allah, take this oppressive, Jewish, Zionist band of people. Oh Allah, do not spare a single one of them.” He references when *Allah* destroyed Thamoud. Thamoud was a tribe in the seventh century who was told by the Prophet to worship *Allah*. When they refused, the group was destroyed by earthquakes and lava (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). It is understood these natural disasters were *Allah*’s doing. This is his proof for *Allah*’s justice, when referring to how Israel should be handled. From this reading, it seems al-Qaradawi equates justice with ransacking and conquering countries. This is contrasted with his other sermon.

In Table 3, Rahman gives a somewhat similar interpretation of justice compared to al-Qaradawi, though in a much more relaxed manner. Even though justice and equality are simply mentioned and not elaborated on, they are mentioned in reference to another’s text or interpretation when he explains that *Allah*’s option for Muslims to deal “justly” with those who fought Muslims on terms of their religion and “drove [them] out of [their] homes.”

#### *Justice to allies*

In Table 4, al-Qaradawi gives different interpretations and multiple targets of justice. At first al-Qaradawi mentions the East were the first to “establish[ed] the state of justice and charity

and spread the light all over the world.” It seems al-Qaradawi is equating justice with outreach and helping others when he uses words such as charity and light. Instead, al-Qaradawi is framing the fight as Muslims against those who oppress others, which he specifically mentions are Israel and Bashar al-Assad. In another part of his sermon, justice is intertwined with brotherhood and oppression when he calls for unity “for what is right, not what is void ... for goodness, not for evil; for justice, not for oppression,” though he does not define what these words (including justice) mean.

Later, al-Qaradawi pushes for the listener to establish justice with everyone. Further, he says it is “obligatory” to “establish justice” for wrongs done against yourself, those you love and those you hate. Here, it seems, this can be equated as one of the three distinctions of justice Rosen (2000) mentions: “relationships among men and toward God are reciprocal in nature, and justice exists where this reciprocity guides all interactions” (p. 156).

### *Equality*

In both Table 6 and Table 11, Khattab spoke of equality instead of justice. Khattab explained equality in two different ways, always between the sexes. In Table 6, he explained it in terms of dress. In Table 11, it was discussed “in the affairs of daily life” and how life was created. These will be explained below.

#### *“In the affairs of daily life”*

First, he defined equality and explained how equality between men and women are “in the affairs of daily life” instead of physically, emotionally, and psychologically. For those latter descriptions, he explains they are not equal. Khattab then discusses how Islam led the world toward equality, in terms of the “affairs of daily life.” He says since the inception of Islam, women and men could own property and that the wife did not need the signature of her husband

to own said property, whereas “as recently as 100 years ago” a French woman could not. This is an example of the “affairs of daily life.”

*How life was created*

Second, Khattab explained equality in terms of how life was created. Khattab describes the Quran’s interpretation of the creation of Adam and Eve. He says Adam and Eve “were created from the same *Nafs*.” *Nafs* means “Life,” according to Khattab. Khattab makes clear how *Allah* created the world (plants, etc.) in pairs. And because Adam was created, *Allah* created Eve to make a “pair.” Because they were created from the same *Nafs*, this means they were deemed innately equal.

*In terms of dress*

Khattab’s Table 11 contrasts with Khattab’s Table 6. In Table 6, Khattab’s focus in the sermon was the discussion of whether women’s dress is equal to a man’s dress in Islam. It seems that he used a working definition of equality and used examples instead of definition, this time. One of the first things he explains is there is no specific “Islamic” dress in the religion. Instead, “what Islam requires is for one to be covered modestly.” This pertains to both sexes. But then Khattab only elaborates on women: how they should not talk in a “soft or sing-song or seductive voice.” Khattab explains that even if a woman is physically covered (modestly), her behavior must also “conform to Islamic mores.” If they do not, her dress is useless. He then discusses this in terms of women’s perfume. Khattab then asks the question of whether this only pertains to women and never actually answers the question. Although Khattab said they were equal, he did not elaborate or give evidence as to the equality of the sexes in terms of dress.

### *Domestic*

As stated previously, the concepts of justice and equality were much more equally spoken of and described in the sermons by internationally born *imams* while the *imams* born in the United States only spoke of justice.

#### *Justice Meant for Everyone*

Both Qadhi's first sermon in Chicago and Wahhaj's "Are you Ready to Die?" sermon explain that justice is not meant for certain people; it is instead meant for everyone. It seems, though, that there are different kinds of justices for different people. For example, Qadhi says everyone has the ability to be the receiver (target) of justice, just as they are to be the giver (perpetrator) of justice. As explained throughout analysis of this sermon, parents are the highest form of life to a Muslim. Qadhi explicitly says, "[T]he status of parents is something that transcends even religion." He says, "Even parents who are idol worshippers, who are mushriks, trying to force you to leave Islam, you still don't have the right to be rude to them," meaning one can assume Qadhi is placing parents' stature (humans) above *Allah*. *Mushriks* are those who believe in other Gods, deities, or figures and place them on the same level as *Allah* (Gimaret, 2012).

Justice is referred to later when Qadhi says, "Because it is possible a parent will die ... and you haven't done your job—you haven't done justice. And when that happens, you can never return the clock," meaning justice toward one's parent is respecting them, being kind to them, and acting "good" to them. This is very different from Wahhaj's interpretation and explanation of justice. Wahhaj never explains what justice is and instead says, "If justice is to come to this country, and in the world, it will have to come from you. You, the future of Islam. Hey, if Allah spares your life, and you're around for another twenty years, that's twenty more years of good that you can be doing." So Wahhaj is equating justice with a Muslim who lives

each day like his last, and this Muslim's acts are acts of justice. This seems so, because Wahhaj follows it up with these 20 years of service also means 20 more years to serve *Allah*.

### Love

#### *Foreign*

Extracted themes from those sermons that discussed and were coded for the concept of love were the following: love can be demonstrated through acts of trust and justice; love can be demonstrated in terms of conduct toward those you love; and love can be shown through aspects of brotherhood.

#### *Acts of Trust and Justice*

The only time al-Qaradawi spoke of love was when he spoke of trust and justice. With regard to trust, he says to deal with *Allah* in terms of how intentions and actions engender trust with those who love "us" (meaning from each Muslim's perspective). Al-Qaradawi does not explain what constitutes trust or love, but he does allude to what love means to him when he says, "trust with those who love and those who hate us as well and to establish justice with whom we love and with whom we hate as well." Without al-Qaradawi's definition of love, it is difficult to classify his words.

#### *Conduct*

In Table 5, the sermon from the UAE *imam*, love was explained in terms of conduct and elevating love for *Allah* above those of other humans. In terms of conduct, when the *imam* explains *Allah* was pleased with Abu Bakr's love toward *Allah*, the *imam* described it in terms of loving *Allah* over his own children. The *imam* discussed Abu Bakr's treatment when he died and how Abu Bakr was buried next to the Prophet Muhammad because of the "virtues and good traits" Abu Bakr possessed. The *imam* preached the same treatment, after declaring love for Muhammad and all others to whom Muhammad claimed were worthy.



### *Brotherhood*

Love was mentioned by Gusau when he said, “Fear Allah, O slaves of Allah, and know that one of the prerequisites of true Taqwa (piety) is to fulfill the duties dictated by brotherhood in Islam, and to train yourselves to love for your fellow Muslims what you love for yourselves.” As explained in the seventh domestic sermon by *Shaykh* Mujahid Abdul Karim in the prior analysis, *taqwa* is an attribute of being “cognizant” of *Allah*. Being cognizant of *Allah*, according to Gusau, means to fulfill the aspects of brotherhood. This brotherhood is shown through love, Gusau shows. He claims that whatever Muslims appreciate in themselves, they should do the same for fellow Muslims. And he explains how “the bond of faith takes the place of materialistic bonds,” so what one Muslim does and loves in terms of his faith for himself, he does the same for a fellow Muslim. Gusau explains this in terms of empathy, saying a Muslim “feels sad when they [fellow Muslim] are sad and feels happy when they are happy.” Interestingly, it worked out that each internationally born *imam* that discussed love discussed the concept in their own way, creating their own overarching themes, as illustrated previously. Al-Qaradawi discussed love using trust and justice, the UAE sermon described love in terms of conduct, and Gusau spoke of love from the path of brotherhood.

### *Domestic*

Love was coded in 3 of the 10 selected domestic sermons and was described in different ways. It was described as love for one’s parents and sincere love for *Allah*. These two themes were extracted from the analysis. Under each theme, there are actions Muslims should take to fulfill the Islamic interpretation of Love.

### *Real Love*

The three *imams* had different interpretations on what “real love” or “true love” was supposed to mean. Qadhi used the term *Ihsaan*, meaning the “highest level of good” when

describing the act of “being good to your parents.” *Ihsaan*, he explains, is not action. Rather, *Ihsaan* it is a “state of mind, it is a frame of relationship, in which you give the most that you can, and you expect the least in return.” He compares this love to when one’s parents loved them and provided for them as a child. The parents’ love toward the child was not selfish, it was “unselfish [and] ... unrestricted.”

After this, he explains what Muslims should do to show their love for their parents, even though they cannot understand a parent’s love fully until they are parents themselves. This is done through action. They should take care of them financially and spiritually. This kind of care toward one’s parents continues even after they are gone. Qadhi explains two actions that children should do for their parents: one is “*Du’aa* for them.” *Du’a* is essentially communication with *Allah*. It is one of the three forms and, according to Khalil (2011), *Du’a* is a less common form of prayer to *Allah*. He explains it can be translated as a kind of “supplicatory” prayer or a “free prayer” instead of the “fixed set of motions, postures, and formulas” of Islam (p. 94). The other act to show one’s parents love, according to Qadhi, is to “give charity on their behalf.” Qadhi gives examples of such charity via actions (such as committing *hajj*) and monetary donations. Qadhi explains that doing actions such as these are submitting to one’s mother (or parent), which is part of acting as a “dutiful son.” Qadhi closes with “if you can’t be a good son, you cannot be a good Muslim. It’s that simple.” Qadhi is essentially explaining unselfish love is a requirement as a Muslim.

This is different from Suleiman, who explained to his followers, “it is not sincere love to Allah, if the only time you approach him is for the love for something else.” He gives the story of the prophets of *Allah* who used to hear revelations from *Allah* in the cave. He says that the

reason the trip the prophets of *Allah* made to the cave was considered “beautiful” was because there were not any “strings attached.” They were simply “seeking meaning and purpose.”

Cazales’ interpretation of love fell more in line with Suleiman’s point of view. After the concept of love is introduced, he explained that Muhammad did not ask for forgiveness because he wanted to get rid of his sins but because he loved *Allah*. Cazales says, “This is the practice of our Prophet ... the best of mankind. So what about us?” Cazales counters this by explaining this is an act that regular faithful Muslims cannot do. Instead, Cazales explains that “constant *istighfaar*” is a characteristic of the faithful Muslim. According to Abdul-Razacq (2010), “one of the foremost tools of purifying from these sins is the practice of *Istighfar*, seeking Allah’s forgiveness,” which can be done by saying “*astaghfirullah*” or “I seek Allah’s forgiveness” (p. 21). So Cazales is contrasting Muhammad and regular Muslims by saying Muhammad is the “best of mankind.”

### Oppression

#### *Foreign*

Oppression was not a thoroughly explored topic by the selected *imams* and clerics. The only *imam* who explored this concept was al-Qaradawi and because he was the only one, the reach and applicability of the theme is limited. In Table 1 and Table 4, three themes came to light. First, al-Qaradawi continuously berated Israel, calling them the oppressors. He also discusses the other Islamic countries that do not attack Israel. These two items combined into the first theme. The second theme were those leaders of other countries who oppress their citizens.

#### *Framed Against Israel and Islamic Countries Who do not Attack Israel*

With regard to the first theme, al-Qaradawi argued and declared that because Israel (the Jewish state) “turned their backs on them” (them referring to Islamic countries, Ottoman Empire, etc.) Muslims have “become their victims.” This included other countries that “protected” Israel.

He consistently calls the Jewish people oppressors and references this constantly, which the researcher believes might be because he thinks *Allah* hates “oppression.” This is also seen in the references to Hamid and Sein’s (2009), who have the same opinion. Hamid and Sein explained oppression as being the thing *Allah* “hates most,” which is why the Quran has “special emphasis” on oppression (p. 92). He also explains how the Jews will one day have to meet *Allah* to answer for their actions.

#### *Muslim Leaders Oppressing Its Own Citizens*

With regard to the second theme, al-Qaradawi discussed Muslim leaders. The sources of his ire are Bashar al-Assad and “those people who refuse to admit and accept the Arab spring revolutions.” The other people he mentions on the same level of Assad are Ghaddafi of Libya, Mubarak of Egypt, Saleh of Yemen, and “the regular army that kills innocent people with no right,” which one might be able to assume as the Free Syrian Army. Al-Qaradawi may also be referring to those leaders in Bahrain, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the Western Sahara (Koser, 2012).

#### *Domestic*

The most blatant difference between the *imams*’ interpretation of a theme was oppression, because there were not any domestic *imams* who discussed this theme in the sampled sermons. Comparison between the two interpretations of this theme is an impossibility. There were other domestic sermons that referenced oppression, but they were not part of the sample and can be found in the tables in the appendix.

#### Peace/Treaty

#### *Foreign*

Peace was mentioned in three total sermons by foreign *imams* and elaborated on in only one. It is not a prominent concept. In Sermon 2 from the UAE *imam*, it was only mentioned one

time. In Sermon 3, Rahman mentioned it a couple of times but never in depth enough to get an understanding about what he means when he references peace. The only time there is a decent inkling of what he means by “peace” is when he says Muslims “always were the promoters of peace” and references Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, by exclaiming, “may Allah be pleased with him, who recognized and approved the freedom and rights of all people of all religions on the day he conquered Jerusalem.” Although this might be a reference to human rights, another concept in this analysis, it appears to be the *imam*’s interpretation of “peace.”

#### *Domestic*

Peace was only mentioned in one domestic sermon. Similar to the foreign sermons, it was not a prominent concept. In Qadhi’s True Happiness sermon, Sermon 9, he opens his sermon discussing peace but it was a concept that was glossed over. He explains that every living “organism,” including “animal or man, *inse* or *jinn*, Muslim or Non-Muslim, male or female,” has the ultimate goal of finding inner happiness. He says the “goal is to be fulfilled”... “[t]hrough this thing” that will bring the person pleasure, comfort, joy, and peace. So it seems like Qadhi is saying that obtaining “inner happiness” will also bring the person “peace within themselves.”

#### Self-Defense

##### *Foreign*

Self-defense was only mentioned in one of the foreign *imam* sermons. Al-Qaradawi (in Table 4) mentioned self-defense a couple times but framed it in terms of other themes explored and analyzed in this analysis. He frames it in terms of oppression, death, and brotherhood.

##### *In Terms of Oppression*

When spoken about in connection with oppression, al-Qaradawi explained Muslim countries do not commit *jihad* against Israel and other oppressors because they “have become the protectors of the state.” Although this actually is not true, al-Qaradawi is framing oppression by

the Jewish people in terms of the unretaliatory nature of self-defense the Muslim states are exhibiting.

#### *In Terms of Death*

In terms of death, he mentioned and explained it revolved around Egypt and the interpretation of death from the country's history. In terms of Egypt, Qaradawi mentions death as sacrifice, living for "their homelands" and "d[ying] for it as martyrs." Death is more revered, though, because as a martyr, the martyr owns their soul whereas the non-martyrs do not. Interestingly, he frames death in terms of killing, as well. But he precepts this by framing it in terms of self-defense, arguing Israel tries to "humiliate" Egypt by bombing it. He says Egypt has always been the nation "who ha[ve] fought and who ha[ve] always been ready to kill and get killed in the cause of Allah."

#### *In Terms of Brotherhood*

When discussing self-defense in accordance with brotherhood, al-Qaradawi mentioned this theme in connection with self-defense when discussing defending Muslim brothers. Self-defense is understood as a compelling action because al-Qaradawi explains it as such when he says, "Islam does not allow such attitude by any means. Islam orders the Muslims to be jealous for his Muslim brother." This, along with the call to unite against their attacker, tied brotherhood with self-defense.

#### *Domestic*

Dissimilar to the foreign *imams*, self-defense was not mentioned once in the 10 sermons selected for this analysis. This does not mean the theme was not mentioned in other domestic *imam* sermons, just not the ones selected for the analysis.

## Sin

### *Foreign*

This concept was very prominent in sermons by foreign-born *imams*. The researcher coded five foreign sermons in which sin was mentioned. From the coding, the researcher extracted two themes by which these *imams* created and evaluated sin when discussing the concept. These themes were discussing sinners in two groups and discussing the definitions and actions of sin.

### *Sinners in Two Groups*

Rahman and al-Qaradawi were the two *imams* who discussed sin in this manner. Rahman only discussed the theme when he stated that “Islam has been defamed by two groups of people.” Those who commit sin (i.e.: giving up on their religion) and terrorism are those two groups of people. Rahman lists actions that fit his definition of “sin.” These actions are “people of extremism, exaggerations, violence and terrorism and ... the people who have abandoned their religion, gave up on their principles, lost their identity, lost their confidence and become completely hopeless.” This is similar to al-Qaradawi because it seems (to the researcher) he discusses sinners in two groups as well, but instead he groups them as those who do not fulfill their duty to *Allah* and Islam and those who resist Islam. He asks *Allah* for forgiveness for these sinners because he explains *Allah* “writes down their acts of tyranny and corruption and then He ... seizes them.”

So although these two *imams* discussed sin in terms of two groups of people, they were different groups of people. Rahman discussed these groups in terms of those who commit terrorism and those who have abandoned Islam and *Allah* while al-Qaradawi discusses sinners in terms of those who do not fulfill their duty to *Allah* and those who resist Islam. This is compared to Gusau who mentions sin by name in terms of the act of submitting to *Allah* or obeying *Allah*.

He contrasts this act of turning away with acts such as love, peace, cooperation, brotherhood, and harmony. The three *imams* are similar in that the sinners fall short in *Allah's* eyes and their obligation to *Allah*, but they are different in that Rahman references one group as those involved in terrorism, al-Qaradawi references one group that actively resists Islam, and Gusau references the forsaking of those who turn away from one another.

#### *Discussing the Way out of Sin and the Repenting of Sin*

This sub-theme was one of finagling. In Table 4, Al-Qaradawi only mentions repentance in terms of *Allah's* forgiveness. He says he asks *Allah* to forgive the transgressors. This is different than Khattab, in Table 7, who explained his perspective using Moses and the pharaoh. Khattab explains that if one goes to the museum in Cairo, the body of the pharaoh of Moses is still intact and viewable, the reason unbeknownst to scientists. This is significant because, as has been said, the life Muslims are striving for is the life after death. This is when your soul moves on. Khattab references the *Qur'an* when he explains there are “two highways of good and evil. In the story, Moses explained to the pharaoh that he is a messenger of Allah, and if the pharaoh listened to the message from his God (Allah), he would be at peace. The words “his God” are used, the *imam* says, to stress the pharaoh, who claims he is God, is not. After explaining the signs, Moses said the pharaoh denied them. The pharaoh suggested a battle to see if *Allah* or he, himself, was more powerful.

After the battle, Moses and the Israelites left Egypt. Soon enough, they approached a sea. Moses parted the sea and the pharaoh followed after them. When the sea began falling and the pharaoh began drowning, the pharaoh pleaded that he believed in *Allah*. Since the pharaoh never listened to the Messenger, the writing in the *Qur'an* (*Allah's* words) explained that only the pharaoh's body would be saved (but not his soul) so he would be made the example, meaning



that the pharaoh did not immediately accept live his life properly in the fashion that Islam intended.

This is similar to Table 11, or the tenth sermon from an internationally born *imam*, when Khattab discusses how man learned how to repent. He explains that when the two children of Adam offered sacrifice to *Allah*, it was not accepted from one brother. The brother whose sacrifice was not accepted murdered his brother. As he tried to figure out what to do with the body, he saw a raven who killed another raven and then dug it in the ground. This is how one of the children learned of sin and repentance. The *imam* did not specify which child.

This story is used to contrast with Gusau's interpretation of repentance/forgiveness. In Table 9, Gusau mentioned forgiveness to sinners only if they commit acts of submission or obedience to *Allah*. All in all, the three *imams* and clerics had different interpretations of repentance. Al-Qaradawi mentions it in terms of asking *Allah* for forgiveness. Gusau explains acts of submission are required. And in Khattab's first sermon (Table 7) he alludes to repentance for sins includes intent to live one's life for death. These three are different from Khattab's second sermon (Table 11), where he discusses sinning in terms of murder and repentance in terms of burying the dead properly.

### *Domestic*

#### *How to Cleanse/Repent for Sins*

Qadhi (Chicago Sermon 1) explains that the act that can "cleanse" an entire life of evil, disease, and horribleness is one of "being good to your parents." This includes giving your parents your "entire body and soul," enabling it to bring "happiness and joy." Though not explicitly expressed or explained, the same acts of love mentioned previously seem to be the acts that cleanse and remove sin(s) from a Muslim's life.

Cazlaes (“Best Thing You Can Do Pt 1: Good Character Pt. 1”—Sermon 4) explains in his first mentioning of sin is when he says, “Fear Allaah and say correct speech. Allaah will amend for you your deeds and will forgive you your sins.” Although sin was only mentioned specifically this one time in this sermon, other statements Suleiman said reference the overall Islamic concept of sin. He tells the audience to increase “any and all types of good deeds” and for the audience to inspect their own hearts. Certain speech, actions (good deeds), and a cleansed heart seem to be Cazales’ checklist for a Muslim to feel prepared to “examine” their own hearts and lives before meeting Allah.

Cazales (“Tawbah(2) part 1”—Sermon 8) explains this when he says, “We need to constantly remember our purpose and then embody the characteristics and actions of one who is truly living their life for their Hereafter, living their life on purpose.” This characteristic is of turning back to *Allah* with “sincere repentance.” He then explains a story the Prophet tells of a man who had killed 99 people wanted to know if he could be forgiven. He asked “the most knowledgeable person(s) on Earth”—the first one did not give an answer he liked but the second one said “yes.” He was directed to a town where an angel of mercy and an angel of wrath argued over the man. It was settled that whichever town the man was closest to was the one where he belonged. He was closer to the town to which he was heading, which was the one who worshipped *Allah*. So the angel of mercy took him, Cazales says. This seems like a comparison between sin repentance in Islam versus another religion, and it appears to state that if someone repents more than they sin, then they receive mercy.

Qahdi (“True Happiness”—Sermon 9) says committing sin equals distancing oneself from *Allah* and worldly, human desires cannot bring one closer to *Allah*. Qadhi explains that because one knows this, the goal should be to “turn to the worship of Allah and diminish your

sins.” It is understood a Muslim will always have to repent, because it is in a Muslim’s nature to sin. Qadhi gives methods for Muslims to “attempt to become a better person.” These methods include establishing the five prayers, fasting throughout the month of Ramadan, and giving *zakat*. Interestingly, he says for Muslims to “do the bare minimum,” but he challenges his *ummah* to be “practicing Muslims” for one week and he says “you’re never going to go back to your old ways.”

In Cazales’ sermon titled “Tawbah(1) part 1” and “part II” (Sermon 10), sin was only discussed near the end of the sermon. It was first mentioned when Cazales explained how Muhammad repented and asked for forgiveness out of love for *Allah*, not for forgiveness of sin, which is what made him the very best Muslim. Cazales stresses “sincere repentance, one in which you have regret and determination to never return to sin again.” But he also says that all one must do is ask to be forgiven.

### *Obstacles to Repentance*

In Cazales’ sermon titled “Tawbah(2) part 1” (Sermon 8), he explains certain obstacles to such a sincere repentance are taking sins lightly, believing there is not a point to repent because you will sin again, sinning and not worrying about it because *Allah* is forgiving, and finally the belief that one is destined to be a perpetual sinner. Further, Cazales explains, “Allah created us with the nature to sin.” This means it is expected that we sin, so in accordance, it is expected that we repent.

This is compared to Qadhi’s sermon titled “True Happiness” (Sermon 9), where in the beginning, Qadhi first mentions the word sin and relates it to the worldly pleasures such as fame, money, recognition, and other “bestial desires,” as he puts it. This includes sensuality as well. Qadhi asks the audience if these things actually bring happiness or if it is short-lived. He says

that we commit the sins because they feel good but “while committing that sin ... we feel disgusted ... evil ... dirty.”

If one “neglect[s] Allah,” you feed yourself and commit “every sin in the book,” but have only attained inner sadness, Qadhi says. The inner sadness is rejecting and neglecting *Allah*. This can transition into the sin that Qadhi discusses throughout his sermon.

### *Kinds of Sin*

The kinds of sin the researcher extracted were one of two groups: those referring to inside the body vs. those referring to outside the body. Inside the body is internal, including the heart and internal organs, while outside the body will be anything not including the human anatomy inside the body.

#### *Inside the body*

In Cazales’ sermon titled “Best Thing You Can Do Pt. 1: Good Character Pt. 1” (Sermon 4), “internal” can be explained as the heart. It might mean more internal organs, but Cazales focuses on the heart. After explaining that if the internal is “corrupt,” then the entire body will be corrupt, including external. He says that if one’s heart is not “bad” and not purified, it does not matter the actions, because the entire body is corrupt, especially the heart. He then asks *Allah* to “help us cleanse our hearts and increase our good deeds.”

In Sermon 9, titled “True Happiness,” Qadhi discusses that when *Allah* is neglected, you commit sin, become sad, and waste your life. He describes this as “inner sadness.” Cazales’ tenth sermon somewhat contradicts this, with him mentioning briefly sins committed inside of the body. He says that “we need to fix our hearts now, soften our hearts, increase in our belief, and most immediately strive to embody” what he sees as the most important characteristic of a Muslim: sincere repentance. He does not mention sins committed by the body on the outside.

### *Outside the body*

In Sermon 4, after Cazales discusses and negates “acts of worship” Allah wants most, from *salah* to fasting, he quotes a *hadith*, stating good conduct outweighs any other “deed.” This is considered “external” instead of “internal.” So at the end, it seems Cazales ranks what matters most: a good heart, good deeds, and finally good speech. If these are the focus of one’s life on Earth, one might say Cazales will say that Muslim will die as a Muslim.

Although Cazales did not go in depth in the previous sermon about external sin, he does in Sermon 8. Cazales spoke of a man who murdered 100 people. In this sermon, Cazales does not discuss “internal” vs. “external,” but from his discussion in Sermon 4, this can be classified as an “external” issue. All in all, when discussing the domestic *imams*’ interpretation of sin, the researcher believed the interpretation and explanation they provided fell into three categories: how to cleanse/repent for sins, obstacles to repentance, and different kinds of sin, which included those committed inside the body vs. outside of the body.

### Submission

Submission was mentioned a number of times in the domestic-born sermons. It was mentioned much more compared to the foreign-born sermons, but the concept was discovered in only four of the 10 coded U.S.-born *imam* sermons. Submission is coded in terms of how the researcher described the concept in the literature review. Codes include: As the Law of an Authority, Obedience to the Law of an Authority, Obedience as Requit, Submission or Obedience As a Way of Life, Submission or Obedience As a Reckoning or Calculation, and Submission or Obedience As a Code of Life.

### *Foreign*

Because the researcher only coded one sermon to include submission, the analysis from the foreign born *imam* perspective will be limited. The researcher found the only reference to

submission in Table 2, the United Arab Emirates sermon. In this sermon, Submission as a Way of Life, Obedience as Requit, and Obedience to the Law of an Authority were present.

#### *As a Way of Life*

In this sermon, the *imam* discusses submission in these terms when he explained that “we pray to you to guide us all to obey You and obey Your Messenger Muhammad.” This can be seen *As a Way of Life* in the literature review but also from Maududi (1950), who explains Islam cannot be separated. It must be encompassed by the person’s entire body, mind, and life.

#### *Obedience as Requit*

Here the *imam* explains submission by interpreting that fearing *Allah* is necessary for the obedience to *Allah*. And because obedience to *Allah* is necessary to obtain the achievement of paradise, once can say fearing *Allah* leads to obtaining entrance to paradise. The reason it is requital is because paradise is referenced as a reward for the believer, which is what Muhammad and al-Munajid (2018) explained in the literature review. The *imam* references this once more when he says the act of obedience by the believer will make the believer obtain paradise. Although he is discussing paradise, he says after this that he wants *Allah* to “grant [them] enjoyment of [their] hearing, [their] seeing and [their] strength as long as You keep [them] alive.”

#### *Obedience to the Law of an Authority*

In this sermon, when discussing *Allah* guiding everyone, the *imam* also explains that fear of *Allah* will come between disobeying *Allah* and being obedient toward him. The *imam* references this code again when he quotes an-Nissaa: 59, “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.”

### *Domestic*

Reading from the literature review, the researcher coded the *imams'* explanations and definitions of submission in terms of Obedience to the Law of an Authority, Obedience as Requit, and As a Way of Life. Although the same three sub-themes of submission were coded, there was much more information in sermons by U.S.-born *imams* because these sub-themes were present in four sermons instead of one.

#### *Obedience to the Law of an Authority*

In Qadhi's first sermon (Chicago sermon), this sub-theme was present when Qadhi discussed *Allah* telling a man to visit his (the man's) mother. *Allah* said, "go to her, stick to her feet (an Arabic expression meaning 'submit yourself to her'), because at her feet is Jannah." *Jannah* refers to paradise, according to three verses in the Qur'an—2:35, 3:133, and 5:72—and according to Antosz (2016). Essentially, Qadhi is referencing *Allah's* interpretation of paradise. The path to paradise is submission. This is referencing an authority figure because in his same sermon, Qadhi explains that a Muslim's parents are humans who "transcend even religion." So from this standpoint, parents are more of an authority than *Allah* unless they are forcing you to idolatry, according to Qadhi.

Although Qadhi referenced "authority" as a Muslim's parents instead of *Allah*, Yahya's sermon references authority as *Allah*. In the first sentence, Yahya says to "obey His Commands and refrain from His prohibitions inwardly and outwardly out of awe, fear and love of Allah." In the sermons "Tawbah(1) part I" and "part II," Cazales concurs with Yahya, explaining that faithful Muslims "are the pious people. Those who observe their obligations, perform acts of obedience and seek Allaah's forgiveness." It can be seen as obedience to the law of an authority because Hussain (2013) explained *Allah* deserves pure obedience and that it is the best way to honor *Allah*, as explained in the literature review.

### *Obedience as Requit*

Previously in this section, the researcher references an excerpt from Qadhi's sermon where a child submits to their parents because they are an authority. Although this is true, one can also say they did it to gain entrance into paradise, because the quote finishes "her feet are *Jannah*." Although this excerpt from the sermon is not as strongly coded "Obedience as Requit" as "Obedience to the Law of an Authority," it can still qualify.

When referring to Yahya's sermon (Sermon 7) the researcher coded a section when Yahya referenced *Surah al-Imran*, which is a part of the Quran. He quoted verses 172–174, where *Allah* describes a situation and how the believers dealt with it. Yahya says they dealt with it "in faith and in obedience and in seeking Allah's pleasure and in a strong connection ultimately to Allah and His Messenger, and in *du'a* and in *dhikr*." This can be seen as Obedience as Requit, because from the quoted excerpt Yahya explains followers submit to Allah to be rewarded, receive "Allah's pleasure." Although Yahya refers to "Allah's pleasure" as the reward, in Cazales's "Tawbah (1) part I" and "part II" sermons, Cazales explains Muslims conducting "constant *istighfaar*" are pious people and because these pious people are believers, then no blame will be placed on them. So Yahya's interpretation of the reward is *Allah's* pleasure and connection to *Allah* while Cazales' interpretation of the reward is the lack of blame believers will receive.

### *As a Way of Life*

The only time an *imam* referred to submission in terms of "as a way of life" was when Qadhi was explaining true happiness. He says "ultimate happiness comes from Allah" and to get it, society needs a connection to *Allah*. Once this connection to *Allah* gets established (*rooh*, or one's "inner state"), then one's "outer state" (which includes the human material wants and desires) is no longer necessary. Essentially, this comes from submission to *Allah*.



Qadhi explains how the *rooh* needs feeding. He says the *rooh* must be fed by that from which it originates and because the *rooh* comes from *Allah*, then the *rooh* needs a connection to *Allah* for it to survive. Without this connection, the *rooh* will die. If the body dies and the connection is still strong, the body will still “enjoy blessings from Allah in the hereafter.” By doing this, one feels fulfilled because “your goal, your ultimate destiny is to please Allah.” Qadhi references the Qur’an, 51:56: “I have only created men and jinn to worship Me.” This shows that a Muslim’s way of life in Qadhi’s interpretation is to please *Allah*, which means establishing a strong *rooh*.

### Terrorism

In coding the sermons, the researcher did not find prominent reference to terrorism in the sermons by foreign-born *imams* or U.S.-born *imams*. There were references and explanations of terrorism in one sermon on both sides. These similarities and differences will be explained below.

### *Foreign*

Rahman explains how those who commit terrorism are one of two groups who have “defamed” Islam and says that those involved are involved in “extremism, exaggerations, violence and terrorism.” He says that a path toward terrorism comes from Muslims who “misunderstand their religion and started to lose their identity.” Rahman goes on to explain how Islam is free from blame of terrorism because it is prohibited. He defines terrorism by quoting a *surah* as evidence: “[I]f anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land—it would be as if he killed all mankind.”

Finally, Rahman explains the best way to defend against those who blame terrorism on Islam: “excellent character, good qualities and good behavior which can be demonstrated through kind words, truthfulness, trustworthiness, fairness, justice, wisdom and truth.” There are

two qualities in this quote that are concepts in this analysis: justice and truth. Even though his interpretation of justice has been included in the analysis of justice previously given, his quotes referring to justice show that *Allah* does not forbid retaliatory actions, actions deemed as “justly and kindly” against those who fought “you” in terms of religion and physical conquests.

### *Domestic*

Yahya’s interpretation of terrorism will be mentioned here as it was in the section on death and also later when the researcher discusses truth in Islam. In terms of the first reference of terrorism in this sermon, Yahya says, “One might see a lot of indiscriminate killings and earthquakes in the same week, and that tells him, ‘the Prophet has spoken the truth.’” So can indiscriminate killings be equated as terrorism? It depends on which of the hundreds of definitions of terrorism one might use.

The second mention of terrorism is one the researcher believes Yahya alludes to—when those in “this community” (assuming the Islamic/Muslim community) have “evil actions that are attributed” to them. The researcher believes the “evil actions” are ones of terrorism accusations and that the best way to deal with accusations of these kinds are to act like the Messenger did and pray “for the guidance of those who did so,” try to “avert punishments for them,” and try to “preserve as much life as he could.”

In the third mention of terrorism, Yahya says that someone who “engages in indiscriminate killings” is a “sign of the end of times” and that if this person is attributed to “the Umma” (meaning the global Muslim population) then this is evidence that education on Islam has not been conducted well, that the accused person’s character is weak, and that all other Muslims will have to work much harder to make up for this person’s portrayal of Islam to the world.

## Truth/Lies

### *Foreign*

There were multiple themes extracted from the foreign *imams*' perception of truth and lies. The first and most prominent theme extracted was that the *imams* believed "true" Islam came directly from *Allah* through his words. The second extracted theme was what the *imams* and clerics believed the standards of a "true" Muslim were. The third extracted theme is one of occurrences in the world that could mean the world wants Islam in their lives.

### *True Islam Comes from Allah*

The first theme means anything other than *Allah*'s words is not the truth and is not needed. This was seen in six of the seven foreign sermons where truth was mentioned. It was by far the most prominent theme. Rahman framed truth in terms of *Allah*'s words and how because these words of his are true, "the worst matters are the innovations and all the innovations are misguidance." Without explanation of what the innovations are, but because he makes a comparison to the true words of *Allah*, the innovations are to be seen as false and "created" whereas *Allah*'s words seem to be referred to as divine. Although he never defines what "true Islam" is, he references it multiple times.

This same interpretation came from the UAE sermon when the *imam* referenced Abu Bakr's statement that any words the Prophet says must be true. The UAE *imam* reinforces this belief. Khattab, in Table 7, explains that *Allah* is the only one who "knows" the truth. Khattab explains this by giving a story of Moses and the pharaoh, where Moses bring the pharaoh a message and says whoever does not obey by the message will be punished. The pharaoh says that the message is not from *God* (*Allah*) as Moses has said, because that is Moses' God (the Jewish God), not *Allah*. The pharaoh then questions the fate of generations of others who had no

messenger. This can be read as the pharaoh assuming these generations of people still attained paradise.

Continuing this interpretation was also present in Gusau's sermon. Gusau explains that *Allah* is the only true God and how *Allah* and Muhammad's speech is considered "best speech" while "innovative" acts, thoughts, speech, or other creations are an act of "misguidance." Gusau finishes this thought by saying the "misguidance" of these outside aspects will lead the follower to Fire. The interpretation of *Allah*'s speech being true continues in Table 11 when Khattab explains that because the *Qur'an* does not mention the arguing over a woman but *tasfeers* do, "it is better to say we don't know, we leave it up to God, but not to invent stories from our own." Here, Khattab is negating this story and referring to the only "truth" being from the *Qur'an*.

#### *Standards of a True Muslim*

The second theme means the *imams* had interpretations on what made a Muslim a true Muslim. Rahman discusses how innovations are false and "created" whereas *Allah*'s words seem to be referred to by him as divine. But his interpretation is vague because he never defines what "true Islam" is, though he references it multiple times. This is contrasted by the UAE sermon, because the *imam* in this sermon explained that the Prophet referenced Abu Bakr as a "true believer." He explained that he would rather "face any incident" instead of having Muhammad face it. This was the same when the Prophet Muhammad asked the companions multiple questions about whether they have completed acts such as visiting an ill person or attending a funeral. These were acts, when combined, that would allow someone to enter paradise, *Allah* said. Muhammad was the standard for a True Muslim.

Khattab, in Table 6, somewhat combined Rahman's interpretation and the UAE *imam*'s interpretation. In this sermon, truth was not when Khattab would "declare" something using the word "true," "truth," or "lies." Instead, the researcher used the word "required" to explain truth

in terms of this specific sermon. An example of this is when Khattab says, “What Islam requires is the covering.” In addition, the last line of the sermon is when Khattab uses the word “real,” comparing (in the researcher’s opinion) “truth” or “lies.” Khattab then referenced how Muslims are solely claiming to be Muslims but they need to “come back to our essentials and to our principles,” which he explains is praying to [*Allah*] to guide them. This contrasts with Gusau’s interpretation of truth (Table 9), which will be explained next.

Gusau talks about truth (in concoction with brotherhood and love) in terms of “correct[ness],” such as when he said, “Fear Allah, O slaves of Allah, and know that one of the prerequisites of true *Taqwa* (piety) is to fulfill the duties dictated by brotherhood in Islam.” So Gusau is saying fulfilling “brotherhood” duties in Islam involves submitting, remembering, and being cognizant of *Allah*.

A third theme is only created because al-Arifi focuses so much on it. He discusses how new converts, new mosques, and new telecommunications in Arabic or another Islamic language is proof that the world wants Islam.

### *Domestic*

There were a couple of themes extracted from domestic sermons about truth. There were four sermons, by three different *imams*, where the concept of truth was coded. These themes include earthly life being false and true acceptance. The first theme means that the *imams* believe this life humans live on Earth is not one’s *real* life—one’s *real* life is in death. The second theme deals with Abu Bakr and why he was Muhammad’s true successor and why a Muslim will not accept the truth, even though he knows it is the truth.

### *Earth is a Faulty Life*

Cazales explains how this earthly life is “deception” in “Live Your Life on Purpose, Part II.” This false hope is a human life’s luxuries, possessions, and/or distractions. The other time

Cazales mentions the concept of truth is when he quotes a hadith and points to the hadith he read as evidence that a “true believer” puts his focus into the next world rather than this physical one. This can be an explanation of death as well. Similar to Wahhaj, the acts of having your mind on the next life is an act of thinking of death. So Cazales then is saying is the same as Suleiman, Cazales just frames this person as a “true believer,” indicating a concept of truth rather than death in this scenario. Cazales mentions these same things in “Tawbah (1) part 1” and “part 2.”

### *True Acceptance*

This was discussed when Jangda described that Abu Bakr was the first male to accept Islam, the fourth person overall to accept Islam, and the first person to publicly pray next to the Prophet. When the Prophet brought the religion to these people, Muhammad was the only one to not hesitate to accept Islam. “He immediately embraced the faith,” Jangda claims. All of the others said “You lie” to Abu Bakr. Jangda says this is why Muhammad gave Abu Bakr the title of *al-Siddiq*, which means “the righteous one” (Saritoprak, 2014). According to Saritoprak (2014), the Prophet gave him the title for two reasons. First, it is because Abu Bakr was the first to join the Prophet Muhammad in Islam without hesitation. The second reason was because Abu Bakr affirmed the *Mir’aj*, which is the Prophet Muhammad’s ascension into heaven (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015).

In the story, Muhammad goes from Mecca to Jerusalem and then into heaven. After passing through the seven levels of heaven, he meets the prophets and then Allah, where the other prophets ask Muhammad to plead to Allah to reduce the salat from 50 times a day to 5 times a day. Saritoprak’s (2014) definition of *al-Siddiq* differs from the Association of Islamic Charitable Project’s one. The AICP believes Mohammad named him this because he was trustworthy due to “how strongly he believed in all what the Prophet said.”

Jangda continues and explains a second perspective of truth. He references those people who exclaim what the Prophet says as truth but then do not want to follow it. Jangda says, “There is no reasoning with that man.” Jangda goes on to say that to deal with this person, one should say to him, “I am not going to stoop to your level, sir!” This is because “it is not showing respect to that person but is respecting yourself,” Jangda believes. So in this sense, Jangda is describing someone who he labels as a Muslim who knows the truth but will not accept it. This is somewhat similar to Yahya’s interpretation of truth in Sermon 7. He says the truth is referring to the Messenger in “difficult situations” to see how he dealt with it because they were “true” in representing Allah and Muhammad.

## CHAPTER SIX: OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

### Conclusions of Thematic Analysis

#### *Conclusion of Brotherhood*

Overall when looking at brotherhood, internationally born *imams* spoke much more about the concept compared to U.S.-born *imams*. It was discussed in almost every single international *imams*' sermon. Although both internationally born *imams* and *imams* born in the United States focused on similar themes such as collectivism and togetherness, those particular themes were discussed more prominently in the internationally born *imams*' sermons. The striking difference in the interpretation of brotherhood was that the internationally born *imams* discussed the defense/protection of Muslim brothers in almost every single sampled sermon. This was their most prominent act they claimed showed brotherhood to your faith and to your brothers.

#### *Conclusion of Death*

Death was a much more prominent concept than brotherhood (in all sermons, though mainly in domestic sermons), and the overall conclusion that can be drawn about this concept is not as cut and dried. This can be seen in the categories that were extracted. The foreign *imams*' interpretation of death focused on how a Muslim's *real life* was life after one's death and the actual processes the body and soul would go through during and after death. This included the procedures regarding what to do with and to a Muslim's body after he/she dies. By contrast, although the U.S.-born *imams* also discussed the process of dealing with dead Muslim bodies, the focus was on actions and intent. These *imams* focused primarily on the act of thinking and remembering death, the process of dealing with dead bodies and the impending death of a loved one, and how there were certain actions a Muslim can do to remember that death, which shows a Muslim's true piety in terms of having purpose and not letting earthly distractions affect living one's life for rewards of the afterlife. The discussion of an alive or dead Muslim was explained



not in the processes of death but in how alive or how dead a Muslim's soul is. Further, besides the purpose category, the researcher extracted a sub-category under this as the distraction or deception of this life.

### *Conclusion of Freedom*

Overall, freedom was not a prominent theme in the 20 sampled sermons. In the foreign *imam* sermons, freedom was only investigated in two sermons. Freedom was understood in terms of two interpretations: freedom for the oppressed and lack of freedom. The lack of freedom was seen from the perspective of freeing oneself from worshipping anything and anyone but *Allah* and in terms of how Islam views the roles of men and women. Although men are free to raise their children and be caretakers, the husband cannot be as proficient as the mother because they are biologically unequal; both sexes are free to own property. This will be discussed in the equality section, but it is mentioned in the freedom section because the *imams* (mostly Khattab) ensured to include aspects that explained that women were just as free as men in those terms. The domestically born *imams* discussed freedom in only one sermon. Freedom was only discussed under the theme of "Lack of Freedom," because the term was used to refer to becoming closer to Allah and dedicating oneself to the hereafter and Allah.

### *Conclusion of Human Rights*

Overall, the conclusion and comparison of this concept is mediocre at best. The samples collected did not discuss human rights or how they are understood in Islam. In the international sermons, there is some vague reference to peace and how Omar al-Khattab, the second caliph, who Rahman explained recognized the freedom and rights of all people on the day he conquered Jerusalem. That is the extent of the reference. There was a reference of human rights in the equality section, but that path will not be followed. The only comparison between the two write-ups shows someone's rights being respected by someone else. Similarly, in the domestic write-

up, Qadhi and Jangda reference human rights in terms of how to treat someone but not in terms of democratic values, equality, and basic rights that are given to Muslims either by *Allah* or by their leader. Human rights could be partially inferred in the write-up of the equality interpretation by foreign-born *imams*, but the researcher believed that the words reflected equality more than human rights, thus it was placed in the equality section. The information just is not present from the sample collected for analysis.

### *Conclusion of Justice/Equality*

#### *Justice*

Overall, foreign-born *imams*' interpretations delved deeper into the concept of justice compared to U.S.-born *imams*. Foreign-born *imams*' interpretations of justice focused on physical acts against opposing forces; the concept was equated to "goodness." Taking over, conquering, and retaliation were identified as acts of justice. These specific acts and examples of justice were directed toward both allies and enemies. The two domestic-born *imams* solely said that justice is for everyone and did not elaborate with specific actions. These were the themes extracted from the analysis.

The U.S.-born *imams* in the sample define kinds of justice and discuss the necessity of committing justice but also explain how someone can be the perpetrator and receiver of justice, as well. Kinds of justice were not specific, but the *imams* explained there were specific kinds of justice for different people. Because the kinds of justice were not specific, there was a lack of theme creation and extraction from the U.S.-born *imams* compared to what the researcher obtained from the foreign-born *imams*.

#### *Equality*

Pertaining to the theme of equality, the foreign-born *imam* Khattab was the only *imam* to discuss equality. He created themes such as: "in the affairs of daily life," "how life was created,"

and “in terms of dress. Khattab acknowledged the lack of equality between the sexes physically, emotionally, and psychologically but said that humans, during the creation of men and women, were created from the same *Nafs*, or soul, meaning they are equal. *Imams* born in the United States did not discuss equality at all, therefore no comparisons of the concept from their perspective can be discussed.

#### *Conclusion of Love*

Both domestic-born and internationally born *imams* spoke about love, but did so in different fashions. They qualified and described it in different ways. Internationally born *imams* explained love in terms of: acts of trust and justice, conduct, and brotherhood. This is contrasted with the domestic *imams*, who discussed love in terms of what they considered real/true love. Although the foreign *imams* explained that the broken-down categories (that the researcher extracted) were real love, they did not use those actual words to describe it, therefore the researcher did not code it as he had for the domestic *imams*.

#### *Conclusion of Oppression*

Oppression was not a prominent theme in the sampled sermons, in either the domestic-born or internationally born *imams*' sermons. The theme was not even discussed in the U.S.-born *imams*' sermons. Although it was not thoroughly examined in the foreign-born imam sermons, al-Qaradawi did speak about it in two sermons. Oppression was explored and discussed in the following terms: framing the only oppression as coming from Israel and those who do not attack Israel and as Muslim leaders oppressing their own citizens in Muslim governments throughout the world. Because only three foreign-born *imams* and zero domestic *imams* touch on the topic in sermons, the limited sample size does not allow for any kind of conclusive analysis or conclusion about the difference in how oppression is viewed in Islam between the two kinds of

imams. There is another sermon (examined in the tables in the appendix) that mentions and explores the theme of oppression, but there is no analysis attached.

#### *Conclusion of Peace/Treaty*

Overall, similar to oppression, peace/treaty does not have a solid conclusion in comparing how foreign-born *imams* and U.S.-born *imams* discuss the concept differently. Peace was mentioned in three foreign-born *imam* sermons, compared to only one domestically born *imam*'s sermon. But actually, in inspecting the sermons, the foreign *imams* discussed peace in terms of Muslims being the promoters and picture of peace while Qahdi (the U.S.-born *imam*) discussed peace in terms of the person themselves being at peace rather than promoting and acting on the concept in their daily lives.

#### *Conclusion of Self-Defense*

Overall, like oppression and peace/treaty, self-defense does not have a solid conclusion, because it is not comparable. Even though it was thoroughly explored by one foreign-born *imam*, it was not touched on at all by the U.S.-born *imams*. The researcher coded that al-Qaradawi spoke about it in terms of: oppression, death, and brotherhood, which are other themes in this analysis.

#### *Conclusion of Sin*

Sin was the most discussed theme extracted from the sermons. Although the researcher did not intend it to be so, these videos and sermons were very consistently located when searching. The researcher coded and found *imams* born outside of the United States discussed sinners divided into two groups. Those groups included those who commit extremist and terroristic violence and those who have turned their back on Islam; those who do not fulfill their duty to *Allah* and those who resist Islam; and finally those who do not listen or submit to *Allah*.

The next theme the researcher extracted from the foreign-born *imams*' sermons was: paths out of the way of sin and methods to repent for sins the person has committed.

Now, in terms of the U.S.-born *imams*' interpretation of sin, the researcher coded and found themes including: how to cleanse and repent for sin; obstacles to committing repentance; and the different kinds of sin, which included sub-themes about those committed inside of the body compared to those outside of the body. Both the cleansing and repenting of sin and the different kinds of sin were the most prominent that were discussed by the U.S.-born *imams*.

#### *Conclusion of Submission*

Foreign-born *imams* only spoke of Obedience to the Law of an Authority once, explaining fearing Allah comes between disobeying him and being obedient to him. This compares to the U.S.-born *imams*, who spoke of this sub-theme in terms of paradise. The authority in this sub-theme are the parents, because they even transcend religion, where the path to paradise includes submission to them. Submission to them is required, unless they are telling you to go against Islam and Allah, then although a child is allowed not to listen to them, the parents still must be respected.

Foreign-born *imams* also only spoke of Obedience as Requitil once, compared to the U.S.-born *imams* who spoke of it multiple times. In the foreign-born *imams*' sermon, the requital or the reward for submission was paradise. According to U.S.-born *imams*, the reward is approval from one's parents and from Allah. The researcher explains one might not see the approval from Allah as equating to obedience as requital because Allah says to obey one's parents and that their feet are *Jannah*—if one is being obedient and bowing to their feet to get to paradise, this would qualify as requital.

In terms of As a Way of Life, both one foreign-born *imam* and one U.S.-born *imam* spoke of it once. The *imam* from the UAE referenced Muhammad and *Allah* guiding all of us while

Qadhi explains the way of life is pleasing *Allah*. They both discuss this by explaining how Allah is the only one a Muslim needs to complete this goal. The submission from the UAE *imam*'s perspective is obedience while Qadhi's perspective is that desiring to please Allah's leads to obedience.

### *Conclusions of Terrorism*

Some themes extracted from both one international sermon and one domestic sermon are as follows: definition of terrorism, how to deal with those who accuse Islam of terrorism, and the effect of a Muslim who engages in terrorism on all other Muslims. First, in regards to the definition of terrorism, the researcher extracted attributes the *imams* discussed and made an educated guess on their words equating to their understanding of what terrorism meant. It is not decisively clear the two *imams* defined terrorism in the same manner—the aspect of killing indiscriminately is involved in some definitions of terrorism, but from the information the researcher has, it seems as though Rahman (foreign-born) defines terrorism in terms of those individuals who are involved in “extremism, exaggerations, violence and terrorism” while Yahya (U.S.-born) alludes to the understanding of terrorism as truth from the Prophet Muhammad. This was a major difference.

Second, when discussing how to deal with those who accuse Islam of terrorism, Rahman says qualities involving trust, truth, justice and “positive” (researcher's term) words should be directed toward the accuser. The accuser should not be treated in any negative manner. Compared to Rahman, Yahya suggests a more hands-off approach. He says praying for the guidance of those accused, attempting to help the accused, and then saving as many lives as possible is the solution. He does not explain for what exactly he would be praying for the accused. He does not explain how to help the accused. Finally, he does not explain how saving other lives helps the person accused of terrorism, nor how it helps Islam as a whole.

Third, the theme of what to do with the perception/affect Muslims who become terrorists have on the overall religion was extracted. Rahman explains that those who commit terrorism “defame” Islam and hurt the overall religion while Yahya discusses the responsibility of the remaining Muslims to reconcile their relationship with the rest of the world and how Islam is portrayed. Essentially, Rahman solely explains what problem those who commit terrorism create while Yahya explains what can be done to rectify said problem.

### *Conclusions of Truth/Lies*

Attributes and interpretations of what truth and lies mean in Islam were not consistent across *imams* born overseas and those born in the United States. The two themes the researcher extracted from *imams* born overseas included how True Islam comes from *Allah* and the standards of a True Muslim. The first theme laid out that anything other than *Allah's* words were lies and “innovations.” This was explained as a created aspect of life, meaning it was not the truth. This perspective was consistent from the UAE *imam*, Khattab, Gusau, and Rahman. The second theme explained to their *ummah* what they believed made someone a true Muslim. The *imams* were not consistent in explaining what a true Muslim was—there were many factors involved, such as a follower facing any incident rather than having Mohammad face it or acts such as visiting an ill person, attending a funeral, and committing the duties of brotherhood.

This contrasts with the only *imam* born in the United States who addressed truth. Jangda focused mainly on truth in terms of how this earthly life is a deception and the real and true life is the afterlife. He touched on different aspects of truth as those Muslims who understand truth but do not follow it. Jangda’s most prominent interpretation of truth came when he discussed how Muhammad gave Abu Bakr the name *al-Siddiq* because he accepted Islam without hesitation. This showed he was a true Muslim in Jangda’s eyes. So the definition of a true Muslim is different between U.S.-born imams and foreign-born imams in the acts one does. That

being said, since the sample size is very small, it may not be generalizable to a greater population.

### Thematic Analysis Tables

Research Question 1 asks, What are the differences in meanings of key Islamic concepts between internationally born *imams* and U.S.-born *imams*? To preface this analysis, the following has occurred up to this moment: After finding, transcribing (some), and coding 58 sermons for themes outlined in the literature review, a sample was selected: 10 sermons from U.S.-born *imams* and 10 from foreign-born *imams* were analyzed for the interpretation of the 10 themes the researcher outlined in the literature review. These 20 sermons are the researcher elaborated on in the following thematic analysis. Table 1 is a visual representation of the thematic discussion of each theme coded in the sermons, the sub-themes the researcher extracted from each sermon, and the comparison of the interpretation of each theme between *imams* born inside of the United States compared to *imams* born outside of the United States. The following analysis does not include the entire number of sermons (58) collected shown in the tables in the appendix but instead a summation and evaluation of the domestic *imams*' and international *imams*' interpretation of the concepts investigated in this thesis. This table is based on the 20 comparative analysis sermons, not the entire 58 sermons the researcher compiled and created in the appendix. That being said, it is not a holistic picture because this table was used for the comparative analysis. For a holistic picture of each sermon's interpretations of the concepts, the reader should refer to the appendix, where the researcher provided examples of all of the themes coded in each of the 58 sermons. The analysis discussion follows this table.



**Table 1. Thematic Comparative Analysis Table**

	Domestic	International
Brotherhood	Discussed brotherhood in terms of gathering and remembering Allah through collectivism.	Discussed brotherhood primarily in terms of defending and protecting other Muslim brothers. A secondary focus was directed to togetherness and Collectivism.
Death	Discussed death in terms of: thinking and remembering death, the process of dealing with dead bodies/Muslims and how lacking purpose kills one's soul even though their body might still be breathing.	Discussed death in terms of how <i>real life</i> was life after one's death and the physical and religious processes of the body and soul during and after death.
Freedom	Freedom was only discussed in one domestic sermon. Suleiman portrayed Freedom in terms of freeing oneself from their own desires and becoming closer to Allah.	Freedom was understood in terms of freeing oneself from worshipping anything and anyone but Allah; in terms of men and women: while men are free to raise their children and be caretakers, he cannot be as proficient as the mother because they are biologically unequal; and finally in terms of Khattab explaining the freedom to own property.
Human Rights	This concept was not present in the sample of sermons, because the researcher believed the closest possible example of this fit more in the Equality theme.	This concept was barely present in any sermon, other than mentioning recognizing the rights of all people.
Justice/Equality	In the two sermons this theme was present, both U.S.-born imams define kinds of justice, discuss the necessity of committing Justice, justice against one's parents, but also explain how someone can be the perpetrator and receiver of Justice, as well. Kinds of justice were not specific, but the imams explained there were specific kinds of justice for different people. This resulted in a lack of theme creation and extraction from the U.S.-born imams. U.S. imams did not even mention Equality.	Interpretations of Justice focused on physical acts against opposing forces; the concept was equated to "goodness"; taking over, conquering and retaliation. When discussing Equality, the imam focused on affairs in the daily lives of men and women, physicality, emotionally, psychologically, and how during the creation of men and women, they were created from the same <i>Nafs</i> , meaning they are equal.
Love	Discussed love in terms of defining real love, which always had to do with Allah.	Discussed love in terms of demonstrating love with acts of trust and justice, conduct (love toward Allah is more important than love toward family) and brotherhood (love was a prerequisite).
Oppression	There was not any mention of the oppression theme in domestically-born imams' sermons in the sample.	Only discussed in two sermons. First, he discussed how Israel is committing oppression against Muslims and how Muslim states are not standing up to oppression. Then he mentions oppression in terms of Muslim heads of state oppressing their own citizens.

	Domestic	International
Peace/Treaty	The term was mentioned one time in the context of finding inner happiness, meaning the sheikh equated inner happiness with peace.	Mentioned in three sermons, peace was never explained in terms of the aspects, attributes or processes. The term was never defined, but explained Muslims were the promoters of peace.
Self-Defense	This theme was not mentioned in any of the domestic-born imams' sermons from the sample.	It was mentioned a good amount, and was compounded with other themes from the analysis, such as: Oppression, Death and Brotherhood. He accuses Israel of oppression and frames other Muslim countries as protectors, since they are not retaliating. In terms of death, he explains dying for Egypt, killing as self-defense because Israel has "humiliate[d]" Egypt and killing in the cause of Allah. Lastly, he framed self-defense in terms of brotherhood, explaining it is a requirement to defend Muslim brothers.
Sin	The themes in the domestic sermons the researcher extracted, included: how to cleanse and repent for sin, obstacles to committing repentance and the different kinds of sin, which included those committed inside of the body compared to those outside of the body.	Discussed in five sermons, sin was described in terms of two themes: discussing sinners in two groups and discussing the definitions and actions of sin. In terms of the first theme, these two groups are: those who turn their back on Islam and those who commit terrorism and the second group is those who do not submit and fulfill their duty to Allah. In the second theme, the repenting of sin and how each of them defined it: living one's life the way Islam intends, learning about how to repent and learning about the only way forgiveness is given to sinners: through acts of submission or obedience to Allah.
Submission	This theme was found in four of the ten sermons. The sub themes were the same as the international imams' sermons: Obedience to the Law of an Authority, Obedience as Requital and As a Way of Life. In terms of As a Way of Life, Qadhi explained it in terms of pleasing Allah, while the UAE imam focused on followers being guided by and obeying Muhammad, by pleasing Allah. In term of Obedience as Requital, Qadhi refers to a Muslim's parents feet as paradise, Yahya explains obedience is done to seek and attain Allah's pleasure and Cazales explains conducting <i>istighfaar</i> will take away blame from the believer. This means the reward from Allah is the believer and follower receiving no blame.	This theme was only found in one sermon. The theme was described in three themes from the literature review: As a way of life, Obedience as Requital and to the Law of an Authority. First, Submission was seen "As a Way of Life", because when discussing this sub-theme, it encompassed the body, mind and life of the believer. Second, Submission was seen as "Obedience as Requital", because Obedience/Submission was seen as a requirement and Paradise was referred to as the reward for fulfilling the requirement. Third, Submission was seen as Obedience to the Law of an Authority. This was described as fearing Allah is the opposite of disobeying Allah.

	Domestic	International
Terrorism	Referenced in only one sermon, it was not able to be generalized. Rahman defines terrorism by quoting a a surah as evidence: "...if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land – it would be as if he killed all mankind...". He then explains the best way to defend against Terrorism is exerting good character, qualities and behavior.	Also, only referenced in one sermon, Yahya seems to define terrorism, as indiscriminate killing, but is vague and says it is the Prophet's truth. He then describes how the general Muslim population should handle accusations of terrorism against the Muslim community. That being acting like the Prophet and "preserv[ing] as much life as he could." Lastly, he says anyone who commits terrorism is seen as a "sign of the end of times" and if they are attributed to the Muslim community, it will damage said community's reputation, making it more difficult to get back.
Truth/Lies	Themes extracted from domestic sermons about truth included: Earth being the faulty life and a lie and what true acceptance of Islam means. First, in terms of the faulty life, Cazales and Wahhaj describe how Earthly items and possessions are "false" and one who focuses on this is not living their life as a "true believer". Second, true acceptance is immediately embracing Allah's faith and word and understanding in yourself thati it is truth, therefore following his word.	Themes extracted as Truth/Lies fell into three categories: the belief that "True" Islam comes from Allah directly/the Qur'an, what the standards of a "True" Muslim is and that occurrences in the world mean that it is what Muslims want and is seen as the "Truth". The first theme means that anything Allah says is true. The second theme is acts that identify a true Muslim. This can be facing a battle for someone else, committing acts such as attending a funeral. Another true Muslim standard was described in terms of dress and that covering is required. Lastly, this theme involves how new converts, mosques and communications about Islam means the world wants Islam and this is proof of this "truth".

### Speech Codes Theory Comparative Analysis

In the thematic analysis, the researcher solely compared the themes that were extracted based on the themes from the literature review. There were snippets of sermons placed into the analysis to give information and primary evidence to reinforce the researcher's claims. In contrast, the comparative analysis between U.S.-born *imams*' and foreign-born *imams*' use of speech codes will be less of an extensive look because they have already been explained in the previous sections. What follows is an analysis from the sample the researcher collected, focusing

on Proposition 2, which focuses solely on the speech codes uncovered, fully answering Research Question 2: Do foreign-born *imams* and U.S.-born *imams* use different speech codes when discussing key concepts in Islam? This will add to structure and cohesion.

Now that the researcher has provided context, he will now review Proposition 2, comparing what the similarities and differences are between the U.S.-born *imams*' use of speech codes and the foreign-born *imams*' use of speech codes. These foci will be around categories/factors of speech codes the researcher took from Kotani's (2016) understanding of speech codes and then some he created (extracted and named) during the analysis process. These speech codes are social, cultural, religious, and other non-prominent ones that will be explained.

In terms of discussing overall speech codes (social, religious, and cultural) and answering Research Question 2, imams born in the United States and imams born overseas used almost identical categorizations of speech codes—the researcher called them social, religious, and cultural. Although they used the same speech code classifications, the imams who were born in the United States focused more on religious speech codes compared to the international *imams*, who focused more prominently on cultural speech codes when discussing the key concepts in Islam in their sermons. What follows is the difference between how these imams interpreted social, religious, and cultural speech codes.

### *Social Speech Codes*

Social speech codes from domestic *imams* included child-and-parent relationships and how children should show respect, how Muslims should not gamble, how Muslims should put their faith in the next world and complete deeds when they can (not procrastinating, because this is living for the next life), *imams* endorsing communicative actions revolving around prayer, relationships, and repenting toward Allah. This is contrasted with *imams* born overseas, who discussed social speech codes such as greetings by Muslims, proper social interactions between

Muslims, equality (between genders), blame between Muslims, proper acts of brotherhood, and the fate of those who are non-believers. Looking at this overview, social speech codes from between the different groups of imams are different due to how domestic *imam* speech codes are more religious in nature than the international speech codes, which seemed to be more based in relational aspects.

### *Religious Speech Codes*

Religious speech codes from domestic *imams* included how parents transcend religion, how a Muslim should live every day like it's their last (not expecting to have another day), how a Muslim should repent immediately if one sins, committing actions that remind the believer of death, how every prayer should be done as if it is the last, how one should use correct speech to *Allah* and others, how a Muslim interprets endorsed religious acts, how happiness comes from worshipping *Allah*, and having the intent not to sin again even though the sinner knows he/she will. As the reader can see, there are many different facets involved in the domestic *imams*' religious speech codes. As for *imams* born overseas, religious speech codes include how a Muslim should act, how Muslims should deal with non-Muslims, how "real" Muslims deal with aspects (such as blame and food that is haram) vs. how those who call themselves Muslims deal with the same kinds of aspects, historical references, defining those who disbelieve (or are not Muslims), and the religious perspective on equality between men and women. Contrasting these two religious interpretations, the *imams* born outside of the United States seem to have more of a theme surrounding "authentic" or "true" Muslim identity interpretations while *imams* born inside of the United States focus on acts that can be involved in a Muslim's everyday activity and how these acts should properly be carried out.

### *Cultural Speech Codes*

Cultural codes from domestic *imams* include how a parent knows more than their child, how Muslims who are converts inspire a certain *imam* more than Muslims who were born to the faith because they are willing to give up their “cultural obligations,” how enticing cultural aspects (such as parties) are fake happiness compared to commitment to *Allah*, how a society can better itself, certain rules the global *ummah* should follow, and how sin should be expected but repented with the intent not to commit it again. This is compared with foreign-born *imams* who focused on perceived oppressive cultures, the best method to defend Islam, how to deal with non-Muslims, how freedom is necessary for Muslims in other countries, and how “real” Muslims act in terms of injustice. The most glaring difference between these two interpretations, it seems, is that the domestic *imams* provide uplifting, positive aspects and methods for the global *ummah* to follow while the foreign-born *imams* focus on a Muslim’s method of self-defense/need for freedom against outside, oppressive forces. One might say that the domestic-born *imams* project peaceful cultural codes while foreign-born *imams* give off aggressive active interpretations.

### *Improvement of the Three Theories*

After using three separate theories to analyze collected sermons, a little bit of each theory has been improved on. What follows will be the improvements and contributions the researcher believes he has made to Speech Codes Theory, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Identity Theory.

In terms of Speech Codes Theory, the most prominent improvement of the application of this theory overall was the application to *imams*’ and *clerics*’ sermons. The researcher had not uncovered any application of this theory to this artifact or any kind of similar artifact. Therefore, this study opens up an avenue of study for future researchers to improve on these findings by using Kotani’s (2016) definition as well as the propositions the researcher focused on. One might

say this study offers a piece of a future literature review for a study on *imams*, because the researcher attempted to gain a diverse number of U.S. *imams* in terms of location.

In terms of the improvement to the factors Kotani (2016) mentions (i.e., social, cultural, gender, occupational, and other factors), this look into 20 *imams*' interpretations gives the next researcher an ability to restructure the focus to a different factor. The researcher grouped the factors the *imams* spoke about into these categories, leaving room for future research into imam/cleric interpretation of the Islamic faith and how *imams* describe these concepts to their *ummah* in terms of these categories.

This is essentially referring to Proposition 2, Proposition 4, and Proposition 6. Proposition 2 was prominent because the multiple speech codes described in this proposition depended on where the sermon took place (America, overseas, more Muslim saturated area/less saturated area). This is because there were different concentrations of different groups in each sermon's location. Plus, the *imams* discussed what they believed was correct interpretation of Islamic beliefs and customs and the correct way to submit and adhere to Allah. Although the theory explains "correct" and "incorrect" in terms of communication, the *imams* discussed "correct" and "incorrect" ways to act on the concepts discussed, which included correct communication when dealing with brotherhood, as an example.

Proposition 4 was important because the *imams*' interpretation gave the meaning of the concept its significance. Proposition 5 was improved upon because it showed how the religious aspects could never be removed from the sermons. If the religious aspects were removed, it would change the meaning the *imam* was interpreting. The classifications the researcher extracted from the sermons showed that for future research into *khutbahs* or *imam* interpretation of concepts, the religious aspect will most likely be discovered.

Proposition 6 was prominent because the *imams*' speech was going to be considered effective or ineffective depending on how they reinforced their message. This is why social legitimacy was consistently mentioned. The more socially acceptable things the *imam* puts in his sermon, it is expected he would be more socially revered and believed. These previous propositions improved researchers' understanding of this theory because it can now give context to studying Muslim populations. *Imams* are held to a very high standard in Islamic society. This information can be incorporated in social engagement events with different religions and it can assist universities who juggle multiple different religious organizations on campus.

In terms of Symbolic Interactionism, the researcher showed explicitly what gave meaning to the *imams*. The researcher discovered symbols and interpretations that the *imams* expressed in their sermon with the intention of shaping their *ummah*'s reality. The *ummah*'s physical reality was altered due to the symbols the *imams* used in their sermons.

Further, the researcher focused on a medical interpretation in the literature review in terms of doctor-patient communication as an example of this theory. This is why the researcher of this thesis mentioned in the future research section the idea to analyze the "Question and Answer" portion of talks *imams* make, if this is ever possible. In the analysis, though, the researcher repeatedly stated that he only knew what the *imam* was saying and not what the *ummah* or audience were thinking. The researcher found the *imams* focused on the symbols mentioned by using social and religious overtones. The researcher referenced Handberg et al. (2015) in the literature review, which explained that the individual and the context cannot be separated. This is how the researcher improved this theory: by furthering the idea of inseparability, showing how the *imams* continued to create the reality for the audience by interpreting the concepts and teachings of Islam. Thus, it was impossible to see the reality



without seeing it through the film of religiosity. So in the study of the doctor mediating their patients' reality by not telling them they are dying, the doctor made meaning from not telling patients they were dying because he believed it would improve their well-being. In terms of the *imams*, the *imams* want their *ummah* to attach the interpretation of everyday symbols they were discussing to the actual symbols, but in terms of religiosity. They were mediating their *ummah's* objective environment with a religious, symbolic environment. So the researcher furthered application of this theory by having *imams* have their own symbolic interaction rules between themselves and their *ummah*, and then the *imams* creating the symbolic interaction rules for the *ummah's* relationships with other Muslims.

In terms of Social Identity Theory, the *imams* always had someone or some act to strive toward to improve the state of being a Muslim. Although it was not always explicitly stated, *imams* explained how Muslims struggled with the task of being a good Muslim, which essentially created categories of an in-group and out-group. Every *imam* expressed certain qualities, offered tasks and rituals believers could do to be a good Muslim, and outlined other behaviors that made someone a bad Muslim. Analysis of the literal words religious leaders (*imams*) used improved Social Identity Theory because it showed what the *ummah* believed they needed to do to identify with the preferred group that the imam was praising and elevating in terms of social stature.

The application of this theory to the sermons also uncovered a similar conclusion to Strelan and Lawani's (2010) study. Instead of viewing terrorism in terms of perpetrator and victim, as Strelan and Lawani had, terrorism was a by-product of the *imams'* views of what qualities make up a true Muslim. The in-group was true Muslims while the out-group was fake Muslims. Further, the application of social identity theory exposed what *imams* believed about

the Bible and the Qur'an in some sermons. This is relevant because the concept of death was discussed. When death was discussed, truth and what true Muslims did in terms of death was analyzed where *imams* evaluated actions of Muslims who were living for the hereafter. In this analysis, they used in-groups and out-groups.

The discussion of death and identity is important because although the literature explained an “us vs. them” in-group and out-group mentality in terms of terrorism, Strelan and Lawani (2010) evaluated Muslims’ interpretation of terrorism using this theory. The researchers’ explanation of identity being a factor in forgiveness with regard to terrorism gives a baseline perspective. This analysis furthered this understanding of identity as connected to terrorism and the concept of death. This researchers’ exploration of death being a prominent factor using this theory shows that because identity was a factor in forgiveness with regard to terrorism, identity was also factor in terms of a Muslims’ interpretation of *Allah’s* forgiveness when attempting to understanding the concept of death. This means that this researcher uncovered another subject where Muslims believed an interpretation solely on the basis of someone’s religion.

#### Limitations

Although this study was mostly successful in showing the differences between U.S.-born and foreign-born *imams*’ interpretations of the investigated Islamic concepts, a prominent limitation in terms of the theories applies regard Symbolic Interactionism. Even though the *imams*’ meaning of concepts was seen consistently reinforced with references to the *Qur’an*, hadiths, customs, and social bonds, there was not much “social interaction.” This is a problem, because social interaction is one of the building blocks of Symbolic Interactionism. The symbols that were discovered and discussed were only discovered because the imam brought it up in his sermon. The lack of understanding of what the audience or *ummah* thought about the sermons or delivery hurt the application of this theory to the sermons.

A prominent limitation of the study is the number of sermons involved in the analysis. As the researcher has explained, he obtained as many sermons as possible, and because of the amount of transcription that would need to be done for analysis, more could not be collected. Even so, the number of sermons in this analysis are not a significant fraction of the total number of sermons delivered by *imams*, which can possibly reach into the millions.

Another limitation includes the lack of information surrounding multiple factors of the sermons. For example, the time of many of the sermons was unknown. The time, specifically the year, would have provided additional room for analysis. If the year was known, the comparative analysis might have been able to give a conclusion on whether the interpretations of the concepts changed over time, in regards to world events. This can also include whether the speech codes *imams* used have changed over time. Another factor involving the lack of information was the *imams*' personal information. The researcher could have included hundreds of sermons in this analysis, but had no way of verifying the birthplace of many of the *imams*, therefore, adding them would not have improved the analysis.

Another limitation is the lack of diversity in the location of U.S.-born *imam* sermons. Although the researcher explained sermons would be found in both Texas and Florida, many came from Florida and only from one *imam*. Other U.S.-born *imam* sermons were also found online, but transcripts were almost exclusively discovered from foreign-born *imams*, thus leading to the lopsided number of sermons from foreign born *imams*.

#### Why Are the U.S.-born Imams' and Foreign-born Imams' Perspectives Different?

Although the researcher did not have a hypothesis about the intended outcome of the interpretations of either the themes or speech codes, it struck him odd that those imams born in the United States were more focused on religious speech codes, compared to the imams born overseas, who focused more on social speech codes. The researcher believed that imams born

overseas would be seeped into Middle Eastern culture that places high priority on religion. This does not mean that America does not do the same, but the researcher believes Americans are more likely to be united and hold values more so in terms of culture and country, instead of religion. This leads into how perplexed the researcher was when imams born overseas focused on social speech codes such as interpersonal relationships and equality. One might believe that because Islam is criticized for these kinds of attributes by groups and cultures outside of the Middle East, then imams might be attempting to show their understanding of the teachings of Islam pertaining to these kinds of subjects. This can be a point of debate which might get cleared up if each date of each sermon was known.

The religious speech codes were not surprising because Muslims born overseas and practice overseas seem to have a more fundamentalist understanding of Islam and their faith, so it makes sense they would have a more “authentic” or “true” interpretation, which is what the researcher mentioned in his explanation. Can this lend credence then to the fact that many Muslim terrorist attacks occur in the Middle East and Africa? That the clash of the supposed “self-authentic” interpretations clash more so than in America? To move to the domestic-born imams’: their focus on more everyday activities and cultural aspect makes sense because this fits with the American culture placing high priority on the allowing of multi-cultural atmospheres integrating within one American culture. Further, it was not surprising was how imams born overseas applied more aggressive and radical interpretations of cultural speech codes than the U.S.-born imams.

It was also interesting at the attitude and tone of the imams’ sermons. While this is, again, only based on the sample extracted, the researcher explained in the cultural speech code analysis that domestic imams were uplifting and positive, while the internationally born imams were

more focused on self-defense and freedom from outside and oppressive forces. This was not surprising to the researcher, but the reasons behind this are. Can it be attributed to the differences in how they understand the concepts investigated, thus the speech codes are different? Can it be attributed to America's place in the sermon and whether the country was the subject or the target of it?

In terms of the interpretation of the extracted themes, certain ones fit a narrative that the researcher explained above in terms of aggressive and radical interpretations by imams born overseas. This can be seen in the Brotherhood theme where internationally born imams discussed it in a more aggressive tone. Something that was odd though, was how freedom was not discussed by 9 of the 10 U.S.-born imams. This is specifically an interest of the researcher because America is seen as the beacon of freedom by the world. So, with this conclusion, a couple thoughts come to mind. One, this could be solely a result of the sample extracted and that if a separate 10 were extracted, freedom would be mentioned much more. But the researcher believes the interpretation of freedom would not change, and that freedom from anything but Allah would dominate the interpretations of the theme.

Something that the researcher believed he would find many sermons about, as well as many interpretations, was the theme of Peace and Treaty. Thus, it was surprising that it was mentioned once in U.S.-born sermons and three times in Internationally-born sermons. The fact that many Islam-apologists continuously claim Islam is solely about peace, makes the researcher inquisitive about whether activists and apologists say this publicly, but private believe this not to be true. The proof would have been in the focus on peace or at least interpretations.

Lastly, the theme of Human Rights was very interesting. First, even though the imams spoke of Islam creating a set of Human Rights, and how they were the first peoples to do this,

this theme was not present in almost any of the sampled sermons. Brief allusions of how all peoples have rights from when they were born does not satisfy this researcher's inquisitiveness. It was odd that of the sampled sermons, it was an internationally-born imam who held this view. One might think, again, that because the United States is country run on equality, more or at least one U.S. born imam would have discussed Human Rights and tied it back to the Constitution. This might lend more questions to be asked about whether imams look at the United States Constitution and see it fitting in any of their interpretations.

### Future Research

With regard to the limitation of using Symbolic Interactionism, something that could improve this theory in future research would be analyzing Question and Answer sessions after the sermon to focus on what individual attendees found interesting or necessary to elaborate on. Although this is not a normal occurrence after sermons, the actual delivery might have to change as well. Focusing on *imams* who speak on college campuses who have a Question and Answer session after their sermon might be the best way to get a more holistic understanding of Symbolic Interactionism's application to this topic. This would improve the application of Symbolic Interactionism as a theory to this kind of subject, because it would (hopefully) show what the Muslims or attendees found most important in the sermon or what confused them and required clarification. This interaction between the attendees and the *imam* or cleric would give more meaning and better context to the *imam's* sermon overall.

In addition, instead of focusing on the sermon specifically, analyzing videos that show a consistent view of the audience would make Speech Codes Theory a much stronger contributor to the analysis. This, in addition to using the S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. model as the basis for the theory might yield different data. The S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. acronym represents: Setting and Scene, Participants, Ends, Acts Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms and Genre. Using the

S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. model would give the reader more context and a more comparable rubric for researchers to compare sermons to each other, because it would ensure that every sermon collected would be analyzed from the same standard.

**APPENDIX. TABLES OF SERMONS**



**Table A.1. Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradawi (January 9, 2009)**

Theme	Example
Oppression	“Oh Allah... You destroyed the Pharoah and his soldiers... Oh, Allah take this oppressive, Jewish, Zionist band of people. Oh Allah, do no spare a single one of them. Oh Allah, count their numbers, and kill them, down to the very last one.”
Justice	“We say to the West, and especially America, that Allah will not let you support falsehood. He will not let you support inequity against justice.”
Brotherhood	“My brothers, put the boycott against the nation’s enemies into action. Every riyal you pay turns into a bullet, n the heart of your brothers in Gaza and in other Islamic countries.”
Truth/Lies	“This is my message to the treacherous Jews, who have never adhered to what is right, or been true to their promises, who violate each time the promises they make to you.”
Us vs. Them	“Oh Allah, take your enemies, the enemies of Islam.”
Brotherhood	“But I say that it is a disgrace on your part to do nothing by watch while your brothers are being destroyed, slaughtered and tormented

**Table A.2. On the Assembly of the Prophet Pbuh**

Theme	Example
Submission	
- As a way of life	<b>As a way of life:</b> “O Allah, we pray to You to guide us all to obey You and obey Your Messenger Muhammad...in line with Your orders: ‘O you have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you’.” You that shall come between us and disobedience of You, and of obedience to You,
- as requital	<b>As requital:</b> “O Allah, apportion for us, fear of You that shall come between us and disobedience of You, and of obedience to You, which shall cause us to obtain Your Paradise.” An-Nisaa: 59
- to the law of an Authority	<b>To the law of an Authority:</b> “...O you who have believed, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.” An-Nisaa: 59
Brotherhood	“...the gatherings of Messenger of Allah pbuh also gave space...so that the different generations would interact by exchanging their experiences and expertise as well as nurturing religious values and good ethics in the hearts and minds of the younger ones.”
Love	“All praise is due to Allah, abundant, good and blessed praise as our Lord loves and is pleased with.”
Peace	“O Lord, we beseech You to bless all of the Muslim countries and the whole world with stability and peace.”
Truth	“O Allah, make them rally for the word of truth and legitimacy, and bless them with welfare and stability, O the Most Generous.”
Equality	“In like manner, women also took share in the daily assembly of the Messenger of Allah pbuh.”

**Table A.3. H. E. Sheikh Dr. Abdul Rahman**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	“Amongst great emphasis of Islam after monotheism is the unity and agreements of the Muslims and their bonds of brotherhood. Allah, the Almighty said: [‘The believers are but brothers’]”
Submission - as a code of life - to the law of an authority	<b>As a code of life:</b> “It is extremely important for Muslims to unite upon the Islamic Monotheism and adhere to the Qur’an and Sunnah in this current climate which is full of crises and challenges.”
Sin	“...Islam has been defamed by two groups of people. A) People of extremism, exaggerations, violence and terrorism and B) people who have abandoned their religion, gave up their principles, lost their identity, lost their confidence and become completely hopeless.”
Terrorism	To avoid terrorism: “...respect the system and laws of their country especially the laws and regulations which do not go against the religion of their Lord because the religion came to maintain the goodness of public, and it prohibits anything which cause the harms and dangers for the public.”
Peace	“Also, Muslims should behave with Non-Muslims in a beautiful manner which includes peace, harmony, safety, security, coexistence, dialogue and tolerance and they must avoid any kind of violence with Non-Muslims.”
Justice	“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes.”
Truth	“O servants of Allah, there is no distinction between words and actions in this religion...How can someone be a true Muslim while he gives up his faith, he plays around with the safety, stability and innocent souls of people?”

**Table A.4. Shaykh Qaradawi’s Friday Sermon at Al Azhar Mosque**

Theme	Example
Justice	“O you who believe!...Stand out firmly for justice even against yourselves and against whom you love and against whom you hate. It is obligatory on Muslim to be Just with everyone.”
Death	“This is the Muslim nation, the powerful nation...because any martyr is more powerful than the most armed person in the whole world. The martyr owns his soul and those do not own their souls.”
Oppression	“Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds and the end is for the righteous. Let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.”
Freedom	“Their throats were their only weapons with which they called for freedom and dignity for this nation.” “We call the whole world, ‘free yourselves of worshiping whims, free yourselves from worshiping anything by Allah, free yourselves of worshiping people.’”
Brotherhood	“Every believers is a brother to other believers. No believer should let his brother down.” “So when a single Muslim gets assaulted, every Muslim all over the world should be jealous for their brother and cry: ‘... I should protect him, defend him...’”
Self-Defense	“And we want them to unite and stand together against whoever attacks them. No Muslim should be attacked while other Muslims around him remain silent. Islam does not allow such attitude by any means.”
Sin	“Oh Allah forgive us, and have mercy upon us and pardon us, ‘Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and anything We may have done that transgressed our duty...’”

**Table A.5. 4/13 Sermon**

Theme	Example
Truth	“The Prophet asked him [Muhammad], ‘O Abu Bakr, do you prefer yourself over me to face any incident that may occur! Abu Bakr answered, ‘Yes, indeed. By the One Who sent you with the truth, it is a fact.’”
Submission (Obedience)	“Truly, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was known for his trustworthiness, piety and munificence. He spent his wealth in the sake of Allah’s obedience.”
Love	“In like manner, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, loved the Messenger of Allah pbuh to the extent that he preferred him over himself and his children.”
Death	So, their blessed companionship continued after their demise the same way it was during their life time.”

**Table A.6. Status of Woman in Islam**

Theme	Example
Equality	“There is no such thing as an “Islamic” dress. But what Islam requires is for one to be covered modestly.”
Truth	“What Islam requires in the covering...it is not what your dress looks like or what its shape is, because this differs from one place to another
Brotherhood	“Islam is a sharing. Islam is a brotherhood. Islam is a co-operation...Assuming it was correct, and then the proper action would be to extend your hand to your brothers in their time of need.”

**Table A.7. Moses and Aaron Come to Pharaoh**

Theme	Example
Peace	<p>“In this context Musa and Haroon are saying to Pharaoh that if he listened to them, accepted the message with which God had sent them, then he would live in peace with God, in peace with the people, and in peace with himself, because he would become Muslim. The word Muslim is taken from the root silm which means ‘peace’.”</p>
Truth/Lies	<p>“The knowledge of that is confined to God, He is the one that does not err, and He is the one that does not forget, He is the one who is aware of the Unseen and He knows everything.”</p> <p>“But no one can know the Unseen. No one knows.”</p>
Death	<p>“And on that Day, the trumpet of judgment will be sounded...and then it will sound again-and lo! Standing before the Seat of Judgment, they will begin to see the truth!”</p> <p>“There will be a blowing of the horn and everyone will die. That is the end of life.”</p>
Equality	<p>“...there is a distinction between those who work and those who don’t work, those who act and those who don’t act: they will not be equal...otherwise, if there is equality between the two groups, it means that there is no justice.”</p>
Submission/Obedience	<p>“...don’t lie on God, what you are about to do is a fake; if you are going to do that God will destroy you with a painful doom, because everyone who disobeys Allah will eventually suffer disappointment and frustration.”</p> <p>“And when he was about to drown, Pharaoh exclaimed, ‘I have come to believe that there is No deity save Him in whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender themselves unto Him!’”</p>

**Table A.8. 11.18.13**

Theme	Example
Submission	<p>“And sincerity Allah and His Messenger and it only added to their Faith and to their submissiveness (to Allah).”</p> <p>“If you notice the spread of Islam in Europe or in the use of Muslims to modern media for the dissemination of Islam in Europe... while you will find that the number of visits to 5 million or 6 million in one year. All of this shows people’s willingness to Islam and also the desire of non-Muslims to Islam.”</p>
Truth	<p>“And also the companions of the Prophet certain that Islam will be victorious, as stated in the Hadith of Muslim from Abdullah bin Amr said: We were sitting About the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the man asked him: O Messenger of Allah, listen to the questions companions (Sahaabah) unsure which show that Islam is the truth...”</p>
Death	<p>“We ask Allah to we die and we are Muslims. We ask Allah to make us steadfast in our faith until we die.”</p> <p>“I got the keys to the Yemen. I swear to Allah I see the gates of Sanaa from this spatial. And go years on the Prophet, peace be upon him, and did not see open the Levant, Persia, Yemen and Egypt. But the Prophet, peace be upon him, handed his soul to the Lord and he died.”</p>

**Table A.9. The Believers are Nothing**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allah alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (SAW) is His ‘abd (servant) and messenger.”</p> <p>“It is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother for more than three days, each of them turning away from the other when they meet. The better of them is the first to greet the other with salaam.”</p>
Death	<p>O you who believe! Revere Allah the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims.”</p>
Submission	<p>“O you who believe! Revere Allah and say fair words. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allah and His Messenger have certainly achieved a great victory” (Al-Ahzaz, 33:70-71).</p>
Brotherhood	<p>“the strongest and most lasting bond is that of brotherhood based on religion, which cannot be undone...”</p> <p>“...letting down or forsaking a Muslim is a serious matter; it leads to breaking the bonds of brotherhood...”</p>
Love	<p>“In such a society, the bond of faith takes the place of materialistic bonds, personal interests and selfishness, whereby the Muslim loves for his brothers what he loves for himself.”</p> <p>“Islam fought against it and brought in its place brotherhood and love.”</p>
Sin	<p>“Repent, repent, O Muslims, from the disease of forsaking one another and turning away from one another.”</p> <p>“With this, my beloved and respected people, I conclude my Khutbah (sermon)and ask Allah again the All-Mighty and the Sublime to forgive all of our sins and failings.”</p>

**Table A.10. Muhammad al-Arifi Sermon**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	“We have to grieve for their grieve, feel wounded for their wounded and feel distress for their agony. ‘Verily the Believers are brothers!’” “If Allah Glorified and Exalted, is reproaching his slave asking... Then how if your brother his being killed, crushed and raped and his daughters are raped His money is taken and they stand between him and his religion Then how will your status be in front of Allah?”
Justice	“I appeal to everyone who belongs to his army not to cooperate with him in his oppression. Do not spill forbidden blood as the disappearance of the heavens and the earth is easier in Allah’s sight that than of the killing of the Muslim unjustly.”
Self-Defense	“In every place there... defend your honour... defend yourselves. Defend your wealth... do not be an easy prey in the mouth of villians.”



**Table A.11. Status of Women (intro): Imam A.M. Khattab**

Theme	Example
Equality	“That is what Islam requires. Religion is the base for any civil contract because there are Qur’anic verses, hadith, interpretations, and schools of thought which dictate what that contract should be in the light of the Qur’an and the Sunnah in order to make equality prevail.”
Death	“Mention to them the story of the two children of Adam. They each slaughtered an animal as qurbani (sacrifice) to God. It was accepted from one and not from the other. So the one whose qurban was rejected said to his brother. ‘I am going to kill you’...And since this was the first incident of murder on earth he did not know what to do with the dead body...So who was the teacher? A raven. A raven came and killed another raven then went and dug in the ground and buried his brother...”
Truth	“When we explain the Qur’an we have to stick to the text. It is better to say we don’t know, we leave it up to God, but not to invent stories from our own.” “You cannot just take the literal meaning of a word and say that is what the Qur’an said because the Qur’an uses metaphorical language extensively.”
Sin	“The Qur’an talks throughout in the dual. It means it is not the fault of Eve alone, it is not the fault of Adam alone but it is the fault of the two. They made the mistake together and they were forgiven together and, as a result, both of them came to earth together (ihbitaa-in dual form).” “If Muslims are behaving differently, it is not a shortcoming of Islam, but it is the sin of Muslims.”

**Table A.12. Status of Woman in Islam: Is Woman Equal to Man or Not?, Imam A.M. Khattab**

Theme	Example
Equality	“The first woman created-Eve...She was not only created equal to Adam, but was treated on an equal footing with Adam in heaven as well as on earth.”
Submission	“We know the story of Ibrahim that he offered to slaughter his son Isma’il as a qurban for God. There is a very good chance that this was the boy who was very dear to his father as he was the only son, and whom God made the subject of the test for Ibrahim to see how far he was willing to go in his obedience to God.”
Death	Killing within Islam: “Yusuf was a son of the Prophet Yaqoob-
- Killing within Islam	Jacob...the other ten children of Yaqoob were from another woman...Someone suggested killing him. But the older brother reminded them that they were the children of a Prophet and, because killing was not permitted by religion, no one would accept that.... “They took him and threw him in the well, took his shirt and stained it with some colored thing like blood and returned in the evening crying, screaming that the wolf had eaten Yusuf and as proof produced his blood stained shirt. That is exactly the basis for the Arabic saying: ‘he kills someone and then joins in his funeral’- that is exactly what had happened.”
Love	“...The wife of the prime minister felt love towards Yusuf...So one day she entered her bedroom attired nicely, called upon Yusuf, closed the door and said to him: ‘Now you know what I want.’...Yusuf said, ‘I seek refuge in God from you...The people who act against the rules of God will never be successful.’”

**Table A.13. Status of Woman in Islam: Is Woman Equal to Man or Not? (Inheritance Equality)**

Theme	Example
Equality	<p>“The reason Islam gave the man two shares is because he is responsibility for the females. Nowadays he does not fulfill his responsibilities. As a result, this question of shares should be put to the big scholars to study because people change with time and with place.”</p> <p>“When Islam gives rights it attaches responsibilities to them. If we compare the rights and the responsibilities of the brothers and the sisters, we find that the sister, upon final analysis is better off than her brother. That is because ‘the men are the guardians of the women’ [4:34]. What is the meaning of this verse? What is the meaning of guardianship? It means that the husband is fully responsible for the maintenance of his family financially.”</p>
Freedom	<p>“It is very well-known in Islam that the woman is the responsibility of her father before her marriage. She is the responsibility of her husband after her marriage. She is the responsibility of her father or brother if she is divorced.”</p>
Justice	<p>“In Pakistan it is ‘haram’ for the girl to have a share in the estate of her father...although, they have the same Qur’an! I don’t know from where they get these ideas. But that is the work of the Muslims it has nothing to do with Islam. Islam is a religion of justice.”</p>

**Table A.14. The Meaning of Destiny in Islam and Its Relationship to Free Choice**

Theme	Example
Freedom	<p>“Allah...created man in unique fashion...All these [bodily] systems function under two powers: iraadah and qudrah as we call them in Arabic. Qudrah is the power or ability to do things, while iraadah means choice...every part of your body has the power to do something...by virtue of its qudrah... Man is free: it means nothing external is pushing him to do things in a certain way, except his own choice- his own iraadah.”</p> <p>“Philosophically speaking, we talk about iraadah, ‘Amr, and ‘Ilm. Iraadah means choice. ‘Ilm means knowledge. Amr means order. God ordered (‘Amr) man to be good. Man is accountable before God as to whether he follows His orders or not (iraadah); he is not accountable for His knowledge (‘Ilm).”</p> <p>“So, it depends on your choice- your iraadah- and how you utilize that article which Allah created for you.”</p> <p>“And the difference between halal and haram is very easy to determine: ‘if you accept it for yourself it is halal, if you cannot accept that action for yourself it is haram’ that is what the Prophet said. Islam, I think, is the exercise of common sense.”</p>
Sin	<p>“When someone comes to an area where there is scarcity of water and urinates in that water it is a sin in Islam. Why? Because you are playing a detrimental role in contaminating that water and your relationship with the water is supposed to be a certain way so as to keep it wholesome for the benefit of the people.”</p>

**Table A.15. Clarification of the Concept of Jihad=War**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“But the West has equated jihad with war and the Muslims have accepted that interpretation and act upon it accordingly.”</p> <p>“But notice that you are talking about the word jihad only and that word by itself has its own meaning, but to use the word jihad in the context of Islam there is another phrase which has to be attached to it – Jihad fi-Sabeelillah (Exerting efforts or struggling in the cause of God). Jihad in the cause of God or exerting efforts in the cause of God is what Islam requires in order for it to be called true “war = jihad.”</p> <p>“The Prophet put it in very simple and easy terms: ‘Anyone who is fighting to make the word of God the highest that is what will be fi-Sabeelillah’.”</p> <p>“If your thinking is good you are doing a good deed and that is why the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: ‘Actions are to be judged according to intentions.’ So, you are accountable for even what is in your head. That is religion.”</p>
Self-Defense	<p>“So when it comes to the word “jihad” it has to be understood in terms of the meaning of that term and not only jihad as a war, because, jihad signifies struggle in different things and war happens to be one of them. And when we are engaged in jihad it has to be for the cause of God.”</p>
Submission	<p>“Muhammad, if they will disobey you, if they refuse your invitation say to them: ‘Then be witness that we are Muslims’.”</p>

**Table A.16. Hijab (Part 1)**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“I say there is no Islamic dress. [Imam states this with great emphasis] There is no such thing. There is no uniform, which Islam says you have to wear. What Islam is asking is a certain covering- doesn’t matter what you cover with.”</p> <p>“We are mixing traditions with religion.”</p>
Freedom	<p>“I know that the topic is controversial, some people may support, some people may reject, but as I say always, I am not imposing upon anyone my belief or my conviction. Everyone is completely free to practice the religion the way he or she believes.”</p>
Equality - in terms of social classes	<p>“Because the hijab is not only for the Muslim woman but there is a hijab for the Muslim man also... You will be amazed to know that not a single hadith in that chapter on dressed is addressed to women; it is limited to men.”</p> <p>“Any woman going out into the street in Cairo without a milaya would be described in unfavorable terms; she was not considered a good woman.”</p> <p>“In the summer because of the heat you see our brothers coming in here in shorts and they say: ‘O, for a man it’s okay, no problem. But that devil woman is taking us to Hell...’ The Qur’anic verses that refer to lowering the gaze are directed to the man first before they are directed to the woman. They advise the man first. There must be a reason for that.”</p>

**Table A.17. Hijab (Part II)**

Theme	Example
Freedom	<p>“The books of tafseer say that the “Qur’anic verse came to tell them to lengthen their dress [gallabiya] so that the long dress will distinguish the believers and the free women from the slave women.”</p> <p>[when discussing the awra of a woman] “A slave woman could be more beautiful than a free woman!”</p> <p>“...sheikh from Syria. He said: We have varieties of Muslim schools of thought and you are free to select whichever one you want. There is no right and no wrong among them. And if you would like to quote one school of thought today and another school of thought tomorrow you are still okay. You can do that.”</p>
Truth	<p>“The kuffar or the Qureshites used to say when the Prophet read the Qur’an for them: ‘Muhammad, there is something covering our hearts which makes us unable to comprehend or to respond to your call or preaching. There is some cover on our ears that makes us unable to hear what you are saying and there is a cover on our eyes -- ‘hijab’—so we don’t see the truth, which you are preaching.”</p> <p>“Another verse in the Qur’an says: God does not communicate with his Messengers except though three methods...(3) From behind a curtain or a cover or a wall or whatever you want to call it...A hijab or some form of barrier prevents the human being from seeing God.”</p>

**Table A.18. Hijab (Part III)**

Theme	Example
Freedom	<p>“As I said to you in the beginning I am not here to impose my opinion on anybody. I am discussing the strict as well as the lenient interpretations according to the Muslim schools of thought...a man cannot judge men. God is the only Judge. I leave the decision for you. Follow whichever suits you. It is your business not mine.”</p> <p>“What he is requiring is that the dress should not show the parts of the body so that you can distinguish between the chest and the back, the waist and the other parts of the body.”</p> <p>“The choice now is yours: If you would like to be Salafi, enjoy yourself; if you would like to follow Abu Haneefa, have fun. If you would like to follow Ja’fari, it is your right. No one is right and no one is wrong. Everyone made his own ijtiḥad and it is left up to you to practice the way you like.”</p> <p>“Tolerance inherent in Islam permits everyone to practice Islam the way he thinks is best for his religion and more importantly, no man can judge man; that is the difference between Islam and many other faiths: that man cannot judge man.”</p>
Truth	<p>“And here you will be perplexed, but here that very important and basic principle in Islam applies: The Judge is God. No man can judge a man.”</p> <p>“When there is no applicable Qur’anic verse or Sunnah, ijtiḥad or qiyas [analogy] is used to arrive at an explanation.”</p>



**Table A.19. Funerals and Burial Rites**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	<p>When performing wudu in the Islamic Center: “They are in the social hall not just ignoring or neglecting the goal for which they came here but at the same time they are committing mistakes in addition to that by gossiping and backbiting. And I think the mosque should not be a place for this.”</p>
Death	<p>Proper pre-eminent death etiquette: “It is a duty on Muslims to go and visit that person in the hospital...But according to our tradition, if that person is terminally ill...All what we need is two or three people around the sick person or the one who is dying. And what should they do?...The main thing to do around him is to pronounce ash-Shahadah because this is a reminder for him or her.”</p> <p>[Regarding washing the body] “We say within 24 hours because we are in a foreign environment. Back in our Muslim countries we wash and bury the body within two hours...Here [America] burial has to wait until legal procedures are completed and death certificate obtained, and the funeral home finalizes its arrangement and business with the cemetery and grave diggers.”</p> <p>“After washing the body the next step is the kafan...You cut one of them into two and with one half wrap the upper half of the body and with the other half the lower half of the body. Then you wrap the entire body with the full sheet and tie it at the top of the head and at the bottom of the feet.”</p>
Equality	<p>“Now, when a body is taken to the cemetery some people say women are not supposed to go to the cemetery. And that is the practice in many Muslim countries and followed by many Muslim communities in America also. My Islam may be a little bit different in that respect because I look at the goal.”</p> <p>“Why should it be made of cotton?...The idea of the kafan is the idea of ihram (the pilgrim’s garb during hajj). Why does ihram consist of two towels made of cotton? Everybody wears them during the tawaf around the Ka’bah so you cannot distinguish between the king and the janitor. They are equal before God. Unity. Equality.”</p>

**Table A.20. Status of Woman in Islam: Is Woman Equal to Man or Not? (Women Prophets)**

Theme	Example
Equality	<p>“In connection with the subject of the status and equality of woman in Islam, the question has been raised whether, in the history of mankind, there were any women Prophets...Imam Al Qurtubi maintains there is no discrimination because God created human beings equal.”</p> <p>“From the history of Islam we know that there were very pious women. If we look into the hadith we can sense the role of ‘Aiysha bint AbuBakr and how great a part she played in educating males and females in what the Prophet said and did...the Prophet himself said: ‘Take half of your religion from that woman’ pointing to ‘Aiysha.’”</p>

**Table A.21. The Original Sin**

Theme	Example
Sin	<p>“If I am driving my car in the street and I kill a human being what will the police do? Will they arrest me or my son? Ask any Christian this question and they will answer “You.” Why not my son? And they reply because he did not commit the crime. So if Adam committed a crime (the Original Sin) then why is the logic turned upside down?”</p> <p>“The idea of transferring the blame for the Original Sin is completely refuted in Islam.”</p> <p>“According to the Christians every child is born with the sin of Adam because he inherited it from his father who inherited it from his father and so on up to Adam. So the sin is transferred from the father to the child. That is not so in Islam: the child is born like a blank page, completely free of sin; and during their period of childhood they are deemed free of committing sins.”</p>
Justice	<p>“The justice of this earth does not hold my son responsible for my crime because that would be a gross injustice. So how can the perfect justice of Heaven hold the children of Adam and Eve responsible for the sin of Adam and Eve? Logically it is not acceptable. The sin is not transferable.”</p>
Truth	<p>“A lot of people believe that Eve was the one who tempted Adam to eat from the tree and thus, she was responsible for the fall of Adam. This is a Christian interpretation of the faith. But, I’m sorry to say, our Muslim interpreters and commentators of the Qur’an have quoted these things from their books and you find this account in some tafseers also, whereas the Qur’an completely refutes that idea.”</p>

**Table A.22. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 1 (Creation of the Universe)**

Theme	Example
Submission	<p>“Praise is due to Allah whose worth cannot be described by speakers, whose bounties cannot be counted by calculators and whose claim (to obedience) cannot be satisfied by those who attempt to do so, whom the height of intellectual courage cannot appreciate, and the divings of understanding cannot reach...”</p> <p>“Then Allah asked the angels to fulfill His promise with them and to accomplish the pledge of His injunction to them by acknowledging Him through prostration to Him and submission to His honoured position.”</p>
Truth	<p>[description of how Allah created Adam] “Allah collected from hard, soft, sweet and sour earth, clay which He dripped in water till it got pure, and kneaded it with moisture till it became gluey. From it He carved an image with curves, joints, limbs and segments. He solidified it till it dried up for a fixed time and a known duration. Then He blew into it out of His Spirit whereupon it took the pattern of a human being with mind that governs him, intelligence which he makes use of, limbs that serve him, organs that change his position, sagacity that differentiates between truth and untruth, tastes and smells, colours and species.”</p> <p>“Then Allah sent His messengers and series of His prophets towards them to get them to fulfill the pledges of his creation, to recall to them His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom...”</p>
Equality	<p>“In course of time many people perverted Allah’s trust with them and ignored His position and took compeers along with him. Satan turned them away from knowing Him and kept them aloof from His worship.”</p>

**Table A.23. Nahjul Balaga Sermon 2**

Theme	Example
Sin	<p>“I praise Allah seeking completion of His blessing, submitting to His Glory and expecting safety from committing His sins.”</p> <p>(Also submission)</p>
Equality	<p>“None in the Islamic community can be taken at par with the Progeny of the Prophet (Ali Muhammad). One who was under their obligation cannot be matched with them.”</p>

**Table A.24. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 3**

Theme	Example
Equality	“The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly up to me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it.”
Death	“Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are made feeble and the young grow old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah (on his death).” “Nevertheless, I remained patient despite length of period of stiffness of trial, till when he went his way (of death) he put the matter (of Caliphate) in a group and regarded me to be one of them.”
Submission	“When I took up the reins of government one party broke away and another turned disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the word of Allah saying: ‘That abode in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (therein); and the end is (best) for the pious ones’ (Qur’an, 28:83).”
Freedom	“Yes, by Allah, they had heard it [the above citation] and understood it but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if there had been no pledge of Allah with the learned to the effect that they should not acquiesce in the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the treatment as to the first one.”

**Table A.25. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 4**

Theme	Example
Peace	“The ears which do not listen to the cries may become deaf. How can one who remained deaf to the loud cries (of the Qur’an and the Prophet) listen to (my) feeble voice? The heart that has ever palpitated (with the fear of Allah) may get peace.”
Truth	<p>“The curtain of religion had kept me hidden from you but the truth of my intentions disclosed you to me.” (Also Equality)</p> <p>“Today, we stand on the cross-roads of truth and untruth. The one who is sure of getting water feels no thirst.”</p>

**Table A.26. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 5**

Theme	Example
Submission	“Prosperous is one who rises with wings (i.e.: when he has power) or else he remains peaceful and others enjoy ease. It (i.e.: the aspiration for Caliphate) is like turbid water or like a morsel that would suffocate the person who swallows it. One who plucks fruits before ripening is like one who cultivated in another’s field.”
Death	“If I speak out they would call me greedy towards power but if I keep quiet they would say I was afraid of death.”

**Table A.27. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 6**

Theme	Example
Truth	“Rather, I shall ever strike the deviators from truth with the help of those who advance towards it...”
Sin	[continuing the quote above] “...and the sinners and doubters with the help of those who listen to me and obey, till my day (of death) comes.”

**Table A.28. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 7**

Theme	Example
Sin	“In this way he has led them to sinfulness and adorned for them foul things like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks untruth through his tongue.” (Also truth)

**Table A.29. Nahjul Balagha Sermon 8**

Theme	Example
Submission	“He claims that he swore allegiance to me with his hand but did not swear with his heart. So he does admit allegiance. As regards his claiming it otherwise than with his heart he should come forward with a clear argument for it. Otherwise, he should return to wherefrom he has gone out.”

**Table A.30. 2/20/15 Imam Murtada Gusau Sermon**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“And I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped in truth except Allah, alone, without partner... Indeed the most truthful of speech is the speech of Allah, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (SAW). And the most evil of affairs are the newly-invented affairs (in religion), and every newly-invented affair (in religion) is a bid’ah, and every bid’ah is misguidance, and going astray, and every misguidance and going astray is in the fire.”</p> <p>“<i>Ihtadaw</i>, in the verse, means: guide themselves-to do something for yourself, to make Du’a (supplication) then follow it up-look around-observe- reflect- see from where you can find guidance. Maybe something happens that opens your heart and eyes to the truth and leads you to guidance.”</p>
Death	<p>“Yusuf bin al-Asbaat said: ‘Indeed the world was not created that people may look towards it but rather that the people may look by it to the Hereafter’.”</p> <p>“A son of Ubaidullah died so Salih al Murree visited him and said: ‘if the death of your son opened up for you an admonition/warning in your heart, then your calamity was a good calamity. But if the calamity in your son did not open up for you an admonition in your heart, then the calamity in your heart is greater than the calamity in your son.’”</p> <p>“So there is absolutely nothing from the life of this world which endures and lasts beyond death except good or bad deeds.”</p>

**Table A.31. Nahjul Balagha Meticulously Describes Death**

Theme	Example
Truth	“Every human being acknowledges the inevitability of death. With every breath, we move a step closer to the moment of departure. Allah (SWT) reminds us in the Holy Quran of this undeniable truth.”
Death	“The Holy Quran describes the process of dying in Surah number 50: verse 19, Allah says, [speaking in Arabic], Allah says, ‘And the intoxication of death will bring the truth. That is what you were trying to avoid. The Holy Quran describes death as a state of Intoxication and sensory impairment.’”

**Table A.32. Murtada Gusau Death of Arisekola Alao**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“The word ‘Death’ and its derivatives ‘die, dying, dead’ are found more than 160 times in the Qur’an. The Qur’an put a lot of emphasis on death.” [re: verse: al-Imran, 3:185]</p> <p>“Every soul shall taste it [death] no matter what...this verse represents one of the important tenets of Islam which is the fact that there is another life after death. Thus, for us, death is not the end of the world it is just the start of an everlasting life.”</p> <p>“Allah is commanding us not to die except as Muslims. But we are never sure when death will come to us. Therefore, we have to be Muslims all the time.”</p> <p>“Death remembrance is the best way to become one of those whom Allah has praised in the Qur’an...In short a truly wonderful person.”</p>
Love	“Why are we not willing to sacrifice? For the same reason, fear of death. We love life so much; we think we will live forever.”
Truth	“The other fact stated in this verse with no uncertainty is that the true measure of success is not in this life...the real success is to be saved from the hell fire and be admitted to paradise.”
Submission	“Always be in a state of Islam, in a state of submission to your Allah, so that when Death comes, you will be ready.”
Sin	“In Islam, keeping silence when one should protest is a sin, but why is no one protesting? Because life is so dear to Muslims. Muslims assume they will live for too long.”

**Table A.33. Friday Khutbah (Sermons): Death**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“...And only on the day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to Paradise he indeed is successful.”</p> <p>“Death, as manifested in its character and effects is one of the mysteries that dazzles human intelligence because it has to do with the soul.”</p> <p>“The carrier of the bier to the cemetery today is taken back there tomorrow (as a dead person) and is left there only with his deeds either good or evil.”</p> <p>“Remembering death does not in any way make one’s life loathsome to him...It is rather meant to deter him from committing sins and soften his hard heart. We remember death in order to have good preparation for it and for all that follows it by doing righteous deeds, obeying Allah and increasing one’s efforts in all acts of worship.”</p> <p>“During death and its pain...and the Day of Resurrection and its horror people fall into two groups. A group shall remain firm; secured from fright and given glad tidings of Paradise while the other group shall suffer disgrace and ignominy.”</p>
Truth	<p>“Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, ‘None of you should die except in the state of having positive thoughts about Allah.’ (Muslim) The Sunnah encourages talking about good deeds of a dead person and abstaining from talking about his misdeeds.”</p>



**Table A.34. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi Gave a Khutbah at Islamic Foundation Masjid in Villa Park**

Theme	Example
Love	<p>“And he saw a man doing tawaaf around the Kaaba who had a very old lady on his back. And when the man saw ibn Umar, he rushed up to him, recognizing who he is, and he said, ‘Oh ibn Umar,’ oh son of Umar ibn al-Khattaab, ‘Oh ibn Umar, this lady on my back is my mother.’ This lady is my mother...I could not afford an animal. I could not afford to bring her in any other means except by carrying her on my back, ...have I done my duty as a son?...Umar responded: ‘You have done nothing in return.’”</p> <p>“This is the decree of Allah – the eternal decree of Allah: be good to your parents.”</p> <p>“You will NEVER understand what it means to love somebody until you become a parent.”</p>
Peace/Treaty	<p>“From the earliest civilizations, Allah ‘azza wa jal took a <i>meethaaq</i> – do you know what a <i>meethaaq</i> is? It’s a covenant of the highest order! It’s a treaty that should never ever be gone against and contravened. It is a treaty between Allah and man.”</p>
Death	<p>“The death of a parent was not just a personal loss. It was a religious and spiritual loss as well.</p>
Sin	<p>“He listed a whole long list of sins, and he had just repented and come back to Islam. He said, ‘What can I do now?’ Ibn Abbaas said, ‘Are your parents alive?’ .... ‘Go stick to her-go at her feet-go service there-go give everything you have to her- because I know of no other deed that forgives the amounts of sins that serving your parents does.’”</p>
Justice	<p>“The status of parents is something that transcends even religion...Allah ‘azza wa jal says: ‘even if your parents try to force you to idolatry...’ ‘Don’t listen to them.’ But: leave their affair to Allah, ‘in this world, you must be good to them...be kind and just to them’.”</p> <p>“We should try and strive that when they leave this world, they leave this world pleased with us...because it is possible a parent will die...and you haven’t done your job – you haven’t done justice.”</p>

**Table A.35. Friday Khutbah (Sermons): People’s Rights**

Theme	Example
Human Rights	<p>“To actualize this noble goal, Islam holds people’s rights and giving instructions on how to make proper use of them in a nature way. It is from this point that Islamic teachings covetously aspire to protect people’s rights and respect them...”</p> <p>“Among the people’s rights about Islam guarantees and firmly laid it’s foundation and principles is paying debts owed to fellow human beings.”</p> <p>“Further, Islam strongly condemns violation of these rights...Islam regards debts so seriously, that they are exempted from the deeds that can be forgiven and overlooked.”</p>
Sin	<p>“Allah will forgive the martyr all his sins except for his debts.”</p>
Death	<p>“It is also to stress the gravity of debts that the Prophet did not pray upon a debtor when he died.”</p> <p>“His abstention from praying on debtors when they died was because his prayer on them is an intercession, and his intercession is accepted, while nothing cancels debts except paying it.”</p>
Justice	<p>“Deferment of paying outstanding debts on the part of rich people is injustice.”</p>

**Table A.36. Encouraging Truthfulness and Warning Against Lying**

Theme	Example
Submission	“Fear Allah by abiding by His commandments and abstaining from all that He forbids, for fear of Allah is the gateway to all good while disobedience and sin is the gateway to all evil.” (And sin)
Equality	“Equally, evil deeds and deplorable characters increase their owners in punishment and torment according to their harm.”
Truth	“Truthfulness is a noble character that can only be possessed by people of sound hearts.”  “Truthfulness reveals man’s upbringing, pure mind and good nature while lying reveals man’s filthy mind and bad conduct. Truth saves while lying destroys...Allah promises great reward for truthfulness in this world and the next. In this world, Allah provides for the truthful good name and love of Allah and His creatures.”  “Truthfulness means to be sincere in sayings and deeds. It also means conveying the Word of Allah or that of His Prophet to mankind, to enjoin truthfulness, forbid falsehood and saying what is concordant with reality.”  “Truthfulness in deeds is to worship Allah with sincere intention, honesty, love and certainty; and to relate with sincerity, compassion and honesty.”  “Therefore, endeavor to be among the truthful in your speech and deeds for truthfulness is one of the gateways to Paradise...It is part of the truthfulness to keep away from treachery and deceit and the gravest act of lying is to lie about Allah.”

**Table A.37. Awrah: Between Freedom and Dignity**

Theme	Example
Sin	“In other words, mankind that are not clothed or exposing their ‘awrah, they are heading down the path of sin and incurring the Wrath of Allah.”
Equality	“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts...to wrap their head covers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband’s fathers, their sons, their husband’s sons, their brothers, their brother’s sons, their sisters’ sons, their women...”
Freedom	“Some society actually deems the covering of ‘awrah restricts individual freedom. Is such allegation true? Such allegation must be refuted altogether. It is all sensationalized by the enemies of Islam through propaganda ...we have now become confused between what is permissible and impermissible by the Shara’. Allah...has forbade the Muslim men and women from exposing their ‘awrah not to restrict their freedom but because Allah actually honors and recognizes them.”
Oppression	“No men or women becomes oppressed or persecuted by covering their ‘awrah. On the contrary, it is those exposing the ‘awrah that are actually oppressing themselves and even harming others.”

**Table A.38. Ustaz Ibrahim Khalil bin Abdullah Imam**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	<p>“In other words, Islam prohibits any matter or action which can lead to division. Therefore, as Muslims, we should act upon two matters for the goodness of the community and country: First, making efforts to strengthen the unity and the prosperity of the community and country...Remember that a united ummah produce incredible success.”</p> <p>“Rasulullah s.a.w. as the core of solidarity has given us the best example. He took steps to unite Muslims through brotherhood ties among Muslims...enforced the obligation to maintain brotherhood relations that contribute to the cohesion and unity of the nation...Then the Prophet Muhammad said, ‘That you worship Allah and not associate Him with something, establish prayers, pay zakat and connect brotherhood.”</p> <p>“During this time we can feel the sense of unity, humanity, mutual aid among the community helping one another, either from the victims government agencies or NGO’s.”</p>
Truth/Lies	<p>“There are those who deny the legislation and jurisprudence from the Quran and the hadeeth of Rasulullah s.a.w. There are those who are willing to oppose the teachings of the Prophet s.a.w. Therefore, are the lies, insults and objections made by those who are not comfortable with the teachings brought by the Prophet s.a.w. futile?”</p> <p>“Remember that the power and help of Allah is always with the jamaah and those who are truthful.”</p> <p>“Truly, hereafter is the everlasting and permanent abode. So let us devote to Allah for obtaining happiness and escape from the punishment of hellfire.”</p>

**Table A.39. Why Do We Sin?**

Theme	Example
Sin	<p>“We learn from the Prophet (SAW) that sin is that which causes discomfort (or pinches) within your soul and which you dislike that people should come to know of it. The human being is created with an internal mechanism to sense which acts are sinful, and the soul is uneasy when it performs sinful acts.”</p> <p>“However, if man was free from the urge to commit sin then there would have been no difference between him and angels. The angels lack the urge to sin.”</p> <p>“We can counter Satan’s plan...by increasing our faith, knowledge and good deeds and that can elevate us to a level which can merit our meeting with Allah with bright and shining faces. Alternatively we can ignore Allah’s commandments...thus bringing in darkness and sadness on our faces.”</p> <p>“Lack of knowledge about religious matters, and the gap that it creates in our understanding, is one of the reasons why many of us engage in sins.”</p> <p>“Many of us sin not because of willful disobedience but because sometimes we get pulled into the act reluctantly.”</p> <p>“A false sense of pride and arrogance also leads us into committing sin. One sign of such an attitude involves engaging in frequent argumentation, disputes, and quarrels simply to push misguided viewpoints.”</p>
Brotherhood	<p>“Additionally, Islamic teachings also command us to advise each other on matters of right or wrong. When communities fail to promote these principles, sins spread more easily.”</p> <p>“The believer conceals the sin of his brother and advises him, while the evildoer disgraces and condemns him.”</p>
Freedom	<p>“While we have the ability to maneuver our ‘free will’ in the right direction, we remain exposed to Satan’s attacks and whispers that can stray us from the straight path.”</p>

**Table A.40. Truthfulness**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“Hence Islam commands truthfulness and forbids falsehood and deception. The Qur’an commands believers to speak the truth and to be with those who are truthful.”</p> <p>“In Islam, truthfulness is the conformity of the outer with the inner; the action with the intention, the speech with the belief, and the practice with the preaching...the very cornerstone of the upright Muslim’s character and the springboard for his virtuous deeds.”</p> <p>“As for the next Life, through Allah’s grace and mercy, the obedient ones—the practitioners of truthfulness will reach a station in paradise alongside those most fortunate.”</p> <p>“The wrost betrayal is to tell a lie to a brother of yours while he trusts you and believes in you.”</p> <p>“The most dangerous and highly condemned act of lying according to the Qur’an and Sunnah is to lie about Allah and attribute things to Allah that He did not reveal.”</p> <p>“Lying is not permitted except in three cases: (1) a man’s speaking to his wife to make her happy, (2) lying at times of war; and (3) lying in order to reconcile between people.”</p>
Sin	<p>“In contrast to truthfulness, deception and lying are mentioned in the Qur’an and the hadith as one of the worst sins.”</p>
Death	<p>“Indeed lying is a grave sin...Often due to lying, innocent people are sentenced to death, and their families destroyed.”</p>

**Table A.41. Remembering Death**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“...remembering death can actually motivate us to live a purposeful and useful life.”</p> <p>“Reference to drawing the last breath or the trance or the stupor of death is found in the Qur’an. ‘The trance of death will come revealing the truth: that is what you were trying to escape’.”</p> <p>[First moments of death] “Indeed, the sight of the dying person during the stupors of death will be quite sharp. He will for the first time be able to see angels, who are created of light, and the jinns who are created of smokeless fire. He will be able to see and hear his family, relatives, friends and strangers who are around him at the time of death and who will soon bear his casket to the cemetery.”</p> <p>“Remembering death softens the heart...It is said that whoever frequently remembers death is honored with three things: (1) quick repentance, (2) contentment, and (3) energy for acts of worship; and whoever forgets death is punished with three things: (1) delayed repentance, (2) lack of contentment, and (3) laziness in acts of worship.”</p> <p>“The two types of souls- the good and the evil are honored or dishonored in their respective journeys to their heavenly abodes- the Sijjin or the Illiyin. Sijjin is the record in which the deeds of the evil souls are preserved, while Illiyin is the record in which the deeds of the righteous souls are preserved.”</p>

**Table A.42. Are You Ready to Die?**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“Allah is my witness, there is not one day that goes by, that I don’t think about death.”</p> <p>“I want you to consider this ayat from the Quran: [Arabic] ‘O you believe, fear Allah as he should be feared and do not die except as a Muslim’. Let me tell you the problem you have as young people: the problem that you have as young people is that you feel invincible...Allah created death and life to test you. Who’s best in conduct? So the purpose of life is to be tested by Allah and death to be tested by Allah.”</p> <p>“But all of those years are not wasted. Not as a Muslim. Because everything you do for the pleasure of Allah, you get reward from Allah.”</p> <p>“Why is death important? Because death is that defining moment when something happens...because when a person dies, his works is cut off.”</p> <p>“Soon, soon someone will be carrying you. Look at you, this morning you got up, you washed yourself. You took for granted, you took a bath, you took a shower, you took that for granted. Soon, you won’t be able to wash your own self. Somebody, some Muslim has to wash your body.”</p>
Sin	<p>“...if you make a mistake, which you will make a mistake, you will commit sin, there’s none perfect. But if you make a mistake and you commit a sin, ask Allah’s forgiveness. Immediately. And follow up a bad deed with a good deed, it will wipe it out.</p>
Justice	<p>“If justice is to come to this country, and in the world, it will have to come from you. You, the future of Islam. Hey, if Allah spares your life, and you’re around for another twenty years, that’s twenty more years of good that you can be doing.”</p>



**Table A.43. Live Your Life On Purpose, Part 2**

Theme	Example
Truth/Lies	<p>“In fact, you and I, each one of us, we have been deceived.. We are living large, having fun, enjoying the beautiful things in this life, and we become deceived into thinking we have time. I can turn back later. I can repent later.”</p> <p>“This hadeeth is a clear sign that a true believer does not put his aspirations and heart into this world. This world is not his real home. Instead, what you should have on your mind is that you are moving toward your real destination, your real home, and your real and final resting place.”</p>
Death	<p>“My dear brothers and sisters, DEATH is coming. There is no stopping death...”</p> <p>“And what is one of the best ways to remember death? Visting the graves.” “The janaazah, brothers and sisters, is for you and me, the purpose is for us. The janaazah is for you to wake up and realize that you will soon be buried in the earth, with only your deeds along with you.</p> <p>“Three things follow the deceased person, and two of them return, while one remains behind with him. The things which follow him are his family, his wealth and his deeds. His family and his wealth return, while his deeds remain.”</p> <p>“When one lives in such a state of remembrance of death, he will not leave the good deeds that he can or should do in the morning until the evening...instead, you will do them as soon as possible; you will take advantage of every opportunity.”</p>
Freedom	<p>“And if you remember, in the hadeeth talking about the rights of your brothers upon you, we are COMMANDED to follow the janaazah.”</p>

**Table A.44. Best Thing You Can Do: Good Character**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“Fear Allaah the way he should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.”</p> <p>“For the believer, the goal is crystal clear: the goal for each and every one of us is EVERLASTING Paradise, a Paradise wherein you will have ANYTHING and EVERYTHING that you want.”</p> <p>“This is something that should excite us and motivate us. It would seem that the goal of attaining this Everlasting Paradise should always be at the forefront of our hearts and minds.”</p> <p>“Nothing is heavier on the scale of a believing servant (of Allaah) on the Day of Resurrection than good conduct.”- (At-Tirmidhi)</p> <p>“My dear brothers and sisters, look at the importance of your conduct. We work on our appearance and our wealth, yet Allaah only cares about hearts and our deeds. When will we stop working for this life and start investing into our Hereafter?”</p>
Sin	<p>“Fear Allaah and say correct speech. Allaah will amend for you your deeds and will forgive you your sins.”</p> <p>“Good conduct increases one rank in the sight of Allaah and erases one’s misdeeds.”</p> <p>“These were three examples of good deeds that lead to righteousness: Salaah, reconciliation and having good character.”</p>

**Table A.45. Omar Suleiman**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	<p>“You’re sitting in a lecture hall sitting for hours and Allah is giving you life. You feel a sense of life. And when I see this type of gathering on a Saturday night, I remember the hadith of the Messengers of Allah, when he said, ‘The most beloved places to Allah are the masjids of Allah...because of the remembrance of Allah and the mention of Allah that takes place in the houses of Allah.’”</p> <p>“Dear brothers and sisters, have you ever felt the feeling that you’ve felt tonight? After sitting in the gathering where Allah wasn’t mentioned and the only thing that was mentioned was gossip and backbiting and nonsense?...Allah is sending us messages. That we dedicate ourselves to these things that actually give us life...”</p> <p>“And we are in the greatest place because we are in a place where Allah is being mentioned.”</p>
Death	<p>“...and we have this understanding in our deen that a place that is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is a dead place. And a heart that is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is a dead heart.”</p> <p>“This applies to all of us coming to the realization that nothing and no one is going to give you what Allah can give you. And that’s why as we said, a place that is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is dead...”</p>
Truth	<p>“Allah sends you more wake up calls. For your own good. So that that can be a catalyst to you understanding what the prophets taught us, ‘Oh Allah, there is no life, there is no true life, except for the life in the hereafter.’”</p>

**Table A.46. Defending the Honor of the Prophet Muhammad: Abdul Nasir Jangda**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	<p>“One of these first believers was al-Arqam b. Abi al-Arqam, who was hosting the Prophet and his companions within his own home so that they would have a place to pray and a place to learn and a place to congregate.”</p>
Truth/Lies	<p>“The Prophet said, ‘Anyone I presented this religion to took a moment to reconsider things except for Abu Bakr. He immediately embraced the faith...I came and called all of you to Islam, and all of you initially said, ‘You lie,’ except for Abu Bakr. I told him the message and he said, ‘You speak the truth.’ This is why the Prophet gave him the title of al-Siddiq.” (Also submission)</p> <p>“The second thing [I wanted to present] is that there will always be ignorant people on the face of this earth. This is a reality of life. Stupid is as stupid does. There were ignorant people at the time of the Prophet who would say, ‘Yes, this is the truth, but I still want to oppose it.’ There is no reasoning with that man.”</p>
Self-Defense	<p>“The family of Abu Bakr, the majority of which were non-believers, swore that if he dies, they would kill ‘Utbah b. Rabi’ah in retribution.” (Death/Killing)</p>
Peace	<p>“...you people are notorious for not paying people back on time. Pay up! I don’t trust you...’Umar draws his sword and says, ‘Give me the word, O Messenger, and I’ll finish him right here where he stands...The Prophet of Allah says, ‘Sheath your sword, ya ‘Umar.’ He turns his attention to ‘Umar b al-Khattab and say, ‘Umar, me and him didn’t need someone to jump into the situation ready to spill blood’... Both sentiments are human reactions, but both sentiments need to turn back and look at the life of the Prophet... We need to look at the Prophet for guidance. We want to defend him, so defend him by means of his guidance and his teachings.”</p>

**Table A.47. Tawbah (2): Parts 1 and 2**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“My dear brothers and sisters, as we have discussed and remind you each time, the goal for each one of us is EVERLASTING Paradise, wherein we will be given ANYTHING and EVERYTHING we want. While this most amazing goal should, in theory, keep us focused and dictate that we live in a very determined and purposeful life, the unfortunately reality is that we become distracted by the beauty and adornment of this dunya, we forget ourselves, we forget our purpose, and we lose sight of this most tremendous goal.”</p>
Sin	<p>“But for many people, they feel this is easier said than done because of what they perceive to be obstacles in their path towards repentance...many suggested obstacles have been discussed, such as: Taking sins lightly, or feeling, ‘what is the point? I will only end up doing it again’, or people who say ‘well, Allaah is forgiving, so let me sin and enjoy’, and ‘or even others that feel they have given up and are destined to be a perpetual sinner’.”</p> <p>“All the sons of Adam are sinners, and the best among the sinners are those who repent.”</p> <p>“This hadeeth is not a license to sin. Rather, this hadeeth is used to show our nature and the expectation that we will sin, and the expectation that we will turn back to Allaahu, subhannahu wa ta’aala, with a sincere repentance.”</p> <p>“He feels ashamed of everything he did, and this shame will make him feel shy to ask for forgiveness. And there are a variety of other thoughts going through his mind.”</p>

**Table A.48. True Happiness—Yasir Qadhi**

Theme	Example
Peace	<p>“My dear brothers and sisters in Islam, it is a common fact of existence that each and every living being, each and every breathing organism has but one ultimate goal...And that goal is to find an inner happiness...That goal is to be fulfilled...is to feel peaceful within themselves.”</p>
Submission	<p>“In their hearts they have nothing to enjoy that [fancy suit, better car] because their minds are always thinking about this money and how to get more and how to make sure it doesn’t go away. They become slaves to the money that they were worshipping besides Allah.”</p> <p>“But you seen, most people consider pleasure only to be composed of body. So they find pleasure through bodily experiences. They forget, what makes them really human is the rooh. What makes them <i>above</i> other beings, other creatures, is the intelligent rooh that Allah gave us...Allah gave us a mind, a rooh, an active mind to think”</p> <p>“They ask you: ‘what is the rooh?’ Say: ‘the rooh is from the command of Allah and you don’t have any knowledge except a little bit of it’ (17:85). But we do know it is from Allah. So the question is, what will we nourish the rooh with?”</p>
Sin	<p>“And the same goes for sensuality, and the same goes for satisfying your bestial desires. Ask anybody-anybody-and many of us, unfortunately have fallen also into these types of sins...”</p> <p>“...is it like a poisoned sweet, that you enjoy something for a while...This is something we experience in our daily lives, when we commit a sin, whatever that sin might be. Sure we enjoy it, that’s why we committed the sin. Let us not fool ourselves and say there is no pleasure in sin...But let me ask you, when we finish that sin, even during, while committing that sin and as soon as we finish it: Do we feel proud? Do we feel good? Do we feel happy inside of ourselves? On the contrary, we feel disgusted. We feel evil, we feel dirty...All of this shows us that the paths to happiness that mankind has chosen are not the ultimate paths to happiness.”</p>
Death	<p>“So by feeding the rooh, we attain eternal life. And by neglecting the rooh, we suffocate the rooh. What is the rooh fed by?...Therefore, to feed the rooh, we need to sustain it via a connection with Allah...we need a feeding tube, if you like, from all that relates to Allah...”</p> <p>“...even if the body is dead- when the rooh is alive, it will enjoy the blessings from Allah in the hereafter.”</p> <p>“But if the body is alive, and the rooh is not fed – if you don’t feed the rooh – no matter how ‘alive’ your body is, your rooh will be dead. And if your rooh is dead, you don’t feel any purpose of living, you don’t have enjoyment of life.”</p>
Truth	<p>“So the point being, when we correct our sinner state, our rooh, the outer state becomes truly irrelevant...if we feed the rooh, then the body becomes content, and when it becomes content, then and only then is where we find ultimate happiness.”</p>
Brotherhood	<p>“Five words that summarize the entire khutbah. Allah SWT says: ‘Know and realize that only through the remembrance of Allah- the worship of Allah- do the hearts achieve tranquility’ (13:28).”</p>

**Table A.49. Tawbah (1), Parts 1 and 2**

Theme	Example
Truth/Lies	“My dear brothers and sisters, Allaahu, subhaanahu wa ta’aala, describes this life as a deception...why?...We are enjoying life, living large, having fun, perhaps ignoring our deeds and our hereafter, and we are deceived into thinking we have time.”
Death	“We cannot stop death. And when it comes, our repentance will be too late.”  [after death] “...know that there is a hereafter, and know, that as distant as it may seem to you and me right now, as abstract as it may seem, know that on that Day, the Hellfire will not be abstract at all...and you will want to turn back and repent...But on that Day, brothers and sisters, it will be too late.”
Sin	“we need to fix our hearts now, soften our hearts, increase in our belief and immediately strive to embody what is arguably one of the most important characteristics of the believer: the characteristic of being remorseful, resulting in your turning back to your Lord with sincere repentance.”  “My dear brothers and sisters, Allaahu, subhaanahu wa ta’aala, is well aware that peoples weaknesses and deficiencies make them commit sins...”  “Some faith traditions may claim complete forgiveness...but these are unfounded statements, with little or no evidence in their respective sacred books. However, in Islaam, we find a plethora of passages talking about the mercy and forgiveness of Allaahu, subhaanahu wa ta’aala.”  “He [Allah] said that we commit sin by night and by day. And we know we do. But what did He then say: JUST seek my forgiveness, and I will forgive you.”  “And my dear brothers and sisters, do not think this forgiveness has a statute of limitations, or that it is only for ‘20 units’ of sin.”

**Table A.50. Shaykh Mujahid Abdul-Karim on Justice**

Theme	Example
Submission	<p>“I counsel all of you as well as myself to have taqwa of Allah, obey His commands and refrain from His prohibitions inwardly and outwardly out of awe, fear and love of Allah.”</p>
Death	<p>“Taqwa is the quality in which there’s all good of this world and the next. Taqwa ia the quality that’s a means of escape and deliverance from any hardship. Allah said that if someone has taqwa of Allah, He will make for him a way of deliverance; a way of escape, and provide for him where he did not expect.”</p> <p>“The Final Hour will not come until many things happen...knowledge is taken away...and there will be plentiful earthquakes and time will become close; meaning that there won’t be a lot of benefit in a given time, and tehre will be trials; fitn disruptions and chaos and discord and sedition, and there will be much killing and your wealth will be abundant.”</p>
Truth	<p>“And the news if we were to view it this week, someone could view it and say, ‘Oh no, what am I gonna do as a Muslim in an environment like this?’ and someone else might read it with an eye of faith in Allah and His Messenger, and confidence in the oneness of Allah and the Messenger and his sunnah and say, ‘the Prophet has spoken the truth’.”</p> <p>“One might see a lot of indiscriminate killings and earthquakes in the same week, and that tells him, ‘The Prophet had spoken the truth’.”</p>
Terrorism	<p>[In response to Terrorism] “The best response to the wretched, evil actions that are attributed at times to members that are claimed to be of this community is that we demonstrate the bright and beautiful face of the Messenger when his own face was wounded; he prayed for the guidance of those who did so, he tried to avert punishments from them, he tried to preserve as much life as he could.”</p> <p>“Someone who engages in indiscriminate killings, that person is a sign of the end of time, that person is a sign that if they are attributed to the Umma.”</p>



**Table A.51. Avoidance of Sins Committed by the Limbs**

Theme	Example
Sin	<p>“Sin is that which causes discomfort within your soul and which you dislike that people should come to know of it. Sin consists in transgressing the bounds set by God.”</p> <p>“Sinners will be divided into different groups in accordance with their different sins for their entry into hell from seven different gates specified for each different sin...the ears were created for us only to listen to the speech of Allah; to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah; as for the tongue, it was created for us only so that we could spend much time in the remembrance of Allah...we guide Allah’s creatures to His way and that we express our needs in worldly and religious matters...as for the stomach, it has to be protected from eating the forbidden and the doubtful...the fifth part of the body that has to be guarded refers to the private parts or genitals...As for the hands...they are created by Allah for certain specific purposes related to the good of body and soul...as for the feet...without necessity or compulsion, using one’s feet to go to oppressive places.”</p> <p>“A sin remains a sin no matter how much one rationalizes it.”</p>
Submission	<p>“Disobeying Allah with our limbs is the ultimate ungratefulness to Him, and betraying the trust He has placed in us is the ultimate tyranny.”</p> <p>“Man’s capacity to move any of his body’s parts or to keep them still is a grace of Allah. Therefore, the limbs or parts should not be moved to do anything which involves disobedience to Allah.”</p>

**Table A.52. Human Rights from the Prophet’s Hajj Khutbah**

Theme	Example
Human Rights	<p>“During his speech he...said: ‘Your blood, wealth and honour are as sacred as this day (the day of ‘Arafah), this land and this month (Dhu’l-Hijjah). These are eternal human rights which no man-made law or system could ever dictate or administer.”</p> <p>“Islaam protects the human’s right to have an honourable and upright life which is led in peace, security and stability. Islaam also ensures that Muslims do not become a source of harm and danger and therefore establishes justice based on the <i>Sharee’ah</i> of Allaah;”</p> <p>“The new civilization...the purely materialistic civilization, propagates its own version of the principles of human rights. In reality, these rights are weak, deficient, geared only towards greed and driven by foul racism. Moreover, these rights are not underpinned by faith...”</p> <p>“Islaam has honoured women and protected their rights.”</p>
Brotherhood	<p>“Also, Islaam builds the brotherhood and fraternity between the Muslims that leads to the honouring of rights and obligations towards all; this includes the upkeep of family ties, dutifulness to parents, kindness to neighbours, honouring the rights of marriage and ultimately, relations between nations who are to be judged and ranked by virtue of their piety.”</p>
Self-Defense	<p>“One of the protected principles in Islaam is that a Muslim cannot be impartial while a fellow Muslim is being harmed in his presence, nor can he allow anyone to insult them in their absence, whether this harm is physical or emotional, by action or words.”</p>
Death	<p>“Islaam not only honours and protects mankind during life but also death as it has commanded that the dead be washed, shrouded, prayed over and respectfully buried. Islam forbids breaking the bones of the dead or damaging corpses in any other way.”</p>
Peace	<p>“He who wants to attain peace and security, will find the solution in the Qur’aan.”</p>

**Table A.53. Human Rights, Human Wrongs**

Theme	Example
Brotherhood	<p>“Muslims everywhere are always deeply distressed by any acts of violence against their brothers and sisters, whether it be in Iraq or Kosovo, in Kashmir or Palestine. The Ummah is one single body. When one side hurts, we all feel their pain and suffering...”</p> <p>“Every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim. You are one brotherhood. All are equal. No one has superiority over others except in piety and good actions...”</p>
Human Rights	<p>“Throughout history, man has struggled to be freed from oppression by his fellow man...thousands of years later, the Conquistadors, who were really, militant Catholic Fundamentalists, drove Muslims and Jews out of Spain...More recently, our Palestinian brother and sisters were driven from their homes to make way for the state of Israel...”</p> <p>“If we look at the attitude of Western governments, and sadly, even some Muslim governments, concerning human rights, the record is disappointing. Their observance of human rights is expediency.”</p> <p>“Perhaps we should add one more right to the list of Human Rights which all people are entitled to: the Right to know the truth about Islam.”</p> <p>“...we Muslims must not see Human Rights as some nebulous idea, out there, somewhere, that concerns someone else. Human Rights actually begin with us, individually. It is intimately connected with our idea of the ummah, of community life, of our families, of how we see ourselves.”</p>
Justice	<p>“In US foreign policy, their kalima shahada is not universal justice or even-handedness, but: ‘our national self-interest’.”</p> <p>“In Islam, Justice is not there, only for the convenience of Muslims. It is not based on expediency, to be observed or ignored as we please... We must earn our way to Allah’s pleasure..So often, today’s victim can be tomorrow’s oppressor. Islam therefore goes beyond other ideologies in its pursuit of justice.”</p>
Equality	<p>“...O people, you have certain rights over your women, but they also have rights over you. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers...”</p> <p>“Let us therefore make certain, that when non-Muslims live within our midst, they are shown respect and fairness and are made to feel welcome and safe.”</p>

**Table A.54. Friday Khutbah: Suicide**

Theme	Example
Death	<p>“Western societies these days live in social and physical diseases as a result of a negative effect of its material civilization...Suicide as a matter of fact, is regarded the ultimate means of permanent escape from the hell and woes of this life.”</p> <p>“it is not strange that a kaafir commits suicide, because, he does not have any fortress of faith that could protect him, neither a strong family structure nor a loving community.”</p>
Sin	<p>“Therefore, committing aggression against it [life] is an offence that has its consequences the severest sin and a great punishment in the hereafter.”</p>
Justice	<p>“Let us ask the person who killed himself, what did he want to gain from perpetrating this act? Did he want...to escape into a world that is free from all problems? If that was his intention he has done a great mistake because, he would be treated according to Divine Justice with what contradicts his intention and wish by preparing for him a reward that is of the same kind of what he did in order to make his punishment perpetual.”</p>

**Table A.55. Taqwa, Part 1**

Theme	Example
Truth	<p>“...which characteristics can you identify that embody and describe the believer who is truly trying to live his or her life on purpose: some suggestions: honesty and truthfulness, humility, thankfulness, patience and many more.”</p>
Death	<p>“Taqwa...is a great treasure; it is the treasure of the Dunyah, of this life, and the treasure of the life to come.”</p>
Submission	<p>“As defined by the scholars, religiously, Taqwa means to take a shield from punishment of Allaah, which is done by obeying him, following His commands and staying away from his prohibitions.”</p>
Sin	<p>“Who in here wants to have his sins erased and his reward expanded? Then work to increase your Taqwa, because this is what Taqwa does for you...”</p>

**Table A.56. Reliance (1), Parts 1 and 2**

Theme	Example
Death	“...a tremendous characteristic, a characteristic that we may not immediately think of when trying to identify those needed for the all-important path to Paradise...the characteristic of reliance.”
Submission	<p>“ ‘Be mindful of Allaah.’ Meaning, be mindful of the limits set by Allaah, minding His rights, minding what He has ordered, and minding what He has prohibited. This is the meaning.”</p> <p>“And as you obey Allaah more and more, Allaahu, subhaanahu wa ta’aa, protects you in an even greater fashion...”</p>
Truth	“...when one is truly mindful of Allaah. If you are mindful of Allaah, you will find Allaah with you in all of your affairs, supporting you, protecting you, guiding you, and strengthening you in all your actions.”

**Table A.57. Reliance (2), Parts 1 and 2**

Theme	Example
Freedom	“IF no one can harm or benefit another except by what Allaah has decreed for a person, why should anyone ask or seek help from anyone other than Allaah. Everything is in Allaah’s hand and in His control.”
Peace	“Your provisions are not determined by a ruler, or by your boss. Your provisions are not determined by a government, or by whether or not you have a beard or wear a hijab. Your provisions are only determined by Allaahu...having correct belief in this part of the hadeeth does something amazing for each of us: it gives you complete peace, tranquility, and happiness in the soul.”
Truth/Lies	“Be mindful of your Lord, and Allaah will protect you and be in front of you, and if you ask or are in need, you should ask of Allaah and seek His help. Complete reliance on Allaah...the mindset of the true Muslim.”

**Table A.58. Thankfulness (1), Part 1**

Theme	Example
Death	“We need to constantly remember our purpose and then embody the characteristics and actions of one who is truly liv[ing] their life for their Hereafter, living their life on purpose.”
Truth/Lies	“From the very beginning of Man’s creation, the issue of ungratefulness and ingratitude has been discussed. We read in the Quraan that after refusing to bow to Adam, Iblees (the Shaytaan) said: ‘then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones.’ This statement from the worst of liars has proven to be true, not only among the disbelievers, but also among the Muslims.”
Brotherhood	“Allaahu, ‘azza wa jall, commands us to remember Him. Should we have to be commanded for this? I mean, it should be automatic right? Allaah does so much for us that remembering Him should be just as automatic as remembering someone who gives you a million dollars.”
Death	“We should not read into this <i>hadith</i> that it is happening now because most likely this <i>hadith</i> refers to something right before the Day of Judgment. In one <i>hadith</i> , the Prophet said, ‘There will be three major armies in the world fighting each other: an army from Iraq, an army from Yemen and an army from Sham.’ This is going to be a major civil war between Muslims... This is one of the signs of Day of Judgment that is going to take place before the Day of Judgement.”  “The very last group of believers that will be on this earth before the Day of Judgment will be in the land of Sham;”  “Then the Prophet said, ‘there will be a scented, perfumed, beautiful wind coming from Sham that will take the soul of every believer.’ This will be right before the trumpet is blown. When the trumpet is blown, the believers will not hear it because the wind from Sham will have taken them away, and will have died when they smelled this beautiful scent coming from this region of Sham. This will be the end of the Muslims on Earth.”
Peace/Treaty	In another <i>hadith</i> reported in <i>Sahih Muslim</i> , the Prophet predicted that there will be a treaty between us and al-Rum (the Roman Empire) and we will fight a common enemy. This is also something that will occur right before the coming of <i>al-Dajjal</i> , so we should not read in anything about it in our times”  “The Prophet said, ‘there will come a time when you will have a treaty with the Roman Empire. After you fight the common enemy and defeat them, that treaty will be broken. Then they will march against you...80 different flags will be gathered to march against you and at that time, the camp of the Muslims will be in a land...and what is around it.” [This land is Sham]

Theme	Example
Love	<p>“...the one who can spend the last few week enjoying and heedless...disconnected from the reality of Syria is the one whose <i>iman</i> is nonexistent in the heart. It is a sign of <i>iman</i> to love for your brothers and feel pain for your brothers. It is a sign of <i>iman</i> to live with your brothers and sleep with your brothers. It is a sign of <i>iman</i> that when something is hurting them, something is hurting in you.”</p> <p>“Shaykh’l-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, ‘when Allah wants to punish a ruler, the first thing that He does is removes the love and respect that his people have for him. When a people hate their own ruler and curse their own ruler and despise their own ruler, this is the sign that Allah will humiliate that ruler.’”</p>
Brotherhood	<p>“Do you not realize that the blood of Islam is thicker than the blood of actual blood brothers? Do you not realize that the brotherhood of Islam is deeper than the brotherhood of nations and the brotherhood of ethnicity and the brotherhood of race? ‘Indeed all the believers are brothers’.”</p> <p>“There is no question, brothers and sisters, that this is a major trial afflicting not just the people of Syria but the Muslim ummah because it is Syria and because they are our Muslim brothers and sisters in Syria. Realize that in every trial and in every <i>fitnah</i> there is also Allah’s <i>rahmah</i> and mercy.”</p>

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