

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A STUDY OF SCIENTIFIC TRIHLAH IN THE MUSLIM INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

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Abstract: One of the traditions in studying is known as rihlah 'ilmiah. This paper will discuss the definition of scientific rihlah and the factors that encourage its development, the practice of scientific rihlah by presenting several samples of scholars both from outside and within the archipelago, and the role of scientific rihlah in the intellectual world. Scientific rihlah is defined as any journey that aims to gain knowledge, find a good place to study, find a more authoritative teacher, or also the journey of a scientist to various places, whether formally conducting academic activities or not. The practice of scientific rihlah is motivated by religious orders, the spread of scholars, extraordinary assistance and facilities from the government, and so on. Some samples of scholars who conducted scientific rihlah include Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Bathuthah, while scholars from the archipelago are Muhammad Yusuf Al-Maqassari, 'Abd Al-Ra'uf Al-Sinkil and Nur Al-Din Ar-Raniri. The function of scientific rihlah in the intellectual world, namely: as an effort to find a good teacher, as a way to broaden horizons, as a mode of spreading knowledge, as a knitter of the unity of Islamic civilization.

INTRODUCTION

Reading history reminds us how the enthusiasm and ideals of the scholars in the past were very strong to gain knowledge, it was also what encouraged them to travel even on foot regardless of the distance traveled and the many obstacles they faced. Ahmad Salabi wrote in his book History of Islamic Education about this spirit with the sentence: "Ibnul Chatib Al-Tabrizy once obtained a handwritten manuscript of the book At-Tahtzib fil Lughah, by Al-Azhary in several volumes. He wanted to investigate the contents of the book, and listen to it from an expert in the science of Lughah

Then someone advised him to go to Abul 'Ala Al-Ma'arry. He immediately

prepared to go. He put the books in a sack and carried it on his shoulders and set out on foot from Tabriz to Ma'arratun Nu'man. Sweat poured down his back and through the sack, soaking the books. In his poem he said "Whoever finds it boring to travel for a day then I am the opposite. Similarly, Yahya Ibn Yahya al-Laitsy who grew up in the city of Cordova had traveled to various regions to meet scholars in order to gain knowledge directly. When he was 28 years old he went to the Eastern Islan. Then he studied the book Al Muwatha' from Imam Malik in Medina. After that he went to Makkah and studied with Sofyan Ibn Ujainah. Then he went to Egypt, and studied with Al-Laits Ibn Sa'd, 'Abdullah Ibn Wahab, and 'Abdurrahman Ibnul Qasim. After that he returned to Andalusia.

Traveling to various regions to meet scholars was not just for the sake of gaining knowledge, among the Arabs it was known that scholars at that time were judged by the number of scientific trips they made and the number of teachers they had visited to gain knowledge. Such a situation further encourages them to do rihlah 'scientific. Hasan Asari explains that the importance of scientific rihlah is at least related to: 1. The breadth of intellectual insight; the more rihlah, the wider the scientific insight and illustration; 2. The occurrence of intense personal contact between scientists or between students and teachers (Shaykhs) which in turn creates a good scientific network; and 3. The spread of books and ideas which automatically occurs along with the mobility of scientists.(Asari, 2012)

Concluding this subtheme, Nicholson, as quoted by Ahmad Salabi, states beautifully about this scientific journey. A large number of scientific investigators and students with great enthusiasm have made long journeys across three continents, then they return to their homelands like bees returning to their hives with very sweet honey.(Rozana, 2024)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative method that aims to reveal how things actually happen in the field. The qualitative approach used in describing the results of this study is a descriptive approach.(K, 2009) Descriptive qualitative research is research that tries to describe a, symptom, event, event that is happening now. It was

further explained that descriptive research focuses more on actual problems as they are at the time of the research.(Moeleong, 2006)

Through descriptive research, researchers try to describe events and events that are the center of attention without giving special treatment to these events. Descriptive research according to its characteristics has certain steps in its implementation. These steps are as follows: starting with the existence of a problem, determining the type of information needed, determining data collection procedures through observation or observation, processing information or data, and drawing research conclusions.(A. K. Ahmad, 2003)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Rihlah Ilmiah dalam Tradisi Intelektual Muslim

In the Qur'an we can find the word rihlah which can mean traveling or journey, namely in QS. Quraysh: 2.

الْفِهِمَ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

“(i.e.) their custom of traveling in winter and summer”(Agama, 2019)

In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word rihlah means travel; trip; travel; tourism. Meanwhile, the word 'scientific' means scientific in nature; scientifically; fulfilling the requirements (rules) of science. By combining these two words, it can be seen terminologically that rihlah 'scientific is a trip that is scientific in nature.(Bahasa, 2002)

Hasan Asari in his book *Menguak Sejarah Mencari 'Ibrah* interprets rihlah 'ilmiah as any journey aimed at demanding knowledge, looking for a good place to study, looking for a more authoritative teacher, or also the journey of a scientist to various places, whether formally conducting academic activities or not (Asari, 2013) Not much different from the opinion above, Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Bathuthah in his work *Rihlah Ibn Bathuthah* defines rihlah as the process of moving from one place to another for a safar (journey).(Bathuthah, 2012) The word safar can be found in the Prophet's hadith which is also a motivation to the people to travel, “Fight, then you will get a prey. Fast and you will be healthy. Travel and you will be rich.”

Imam Shafi'i in his poem said (Walidin, 2003)

*Stay in a foreign land for the sake of glory
Go on a journey, for there are five benefits in a journey
Relieving distress and gaining livelihood
Knowledge, manners, and making friends with noble people
If it is said
"In travel there are weaknesses and ordeals
Penetrating the sahara and meeting the challenges"
Then, it is better for a young man to die
Rather than live ignominiously among slanderers and spiteful people.
Similarly, in another poem
A knowledgeable and civilized person will not stay at home
Leave your country and migrate to a foreign land
Wander, you'll get substitutes from relatives and friends
Toil, the sweetness of life is tasted after the fatigue of struggle
I saw the water become corrupted because it was held still
If it flows it becomes clear, if not, it will be murky stagnant
If the lion does not leave the den, it will not get prey.
If the arrow doesn't leave the bow, it won't hit the target.
If the sun in its orbit does not move and continues to stand still
Of course people would be bored with him and reluctant to look
Gold ore is like ordinary soil before it is extracted from the mine.
Agarwood is like ordinary wood in the forest.*

2. Factors that Encourage Scientific Rihlah' Activities

a. Religious Commands

In the case of scientific pilgrimage, there are several factors that support such activities, the most important of which is religious command. In the Qur'an Allah states that He created the earth to be so vast that it allows humans to move from one place to another, "Indeed, those whom the angels pass over in a state of oppression, (the angels) ask them: 'What state are you in?' they answer: "We are the oppressed in the land (of Mecca)". The Angels said: "Is not the land of Allah vast, so that you may migrate therein?". Those people are the place of Hellfire, and Hellfire is the worst of places to

return to.(Agustia et al., 2023)

In the Quran itself there are also many verses that praise those who are knowledgeable and encourage the pursuit of knowledge, for example in QS Al-Mujadilah verse 11:

"O you who believe, when it is said to you, "Spread out in groups," then spread out, and Allah will make room for you; and when it is said, "Stand up," then stand up, and Allah will elevate those who believe among you and those who are given knowledge by several degrees; and Allah is aware of what you do: "Stand up," then stand up, and Allah will elevate those who believe among you and those who are given knowledge by a few degrees, and Allah is aware of what you do."(Agama, 2019)

With regard to scientific pilgrimage, the Qur'an has indicated that not all Muslims should fight but that some should seek knowledge, and it is also commanded to ask the experts if they do not know. One of the ways to do this is by organizing a scientific pilgrimage.

"It is not fitting that the believers should all go (to war). Why not go from each group among them a few men to deepen their knowledge of religion and to warn their people when they return, so that they may guard themselves. "And We sent before you none but men to whom We gave revelation; so ask those who have knowledge if you do not know" (Sura al-Baqarah 2:1)."(Agama, 2019)

This religious command is in line with the overall Islamic spirit of knowledge. The command to travel for the sake of knowledge is a practical part of the very strong exhortation in the Quran and hadith to love, demand and disseminate knowledge. This principle taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him) has inspired many scholars of later times. (Panggabean et al., 2022). The doctrine taught by the Prophet was not just lipstick, during his time there were also companions who were ordered to travel to various conquered areas to spread knowledge, one of which was the incident experienced by a friend named Mu'az Ibn Jabal.(Sa'ad & Al-Humaidi, 2013)

Similarly, during the time of the Khulafa' Al-Rashidin, this scientific pilgrimage grew. In the beginning it was a simple activity to study, but later it became more widespread after the development of false traditions. Many companions traveled long distances to research the truth of a narration. This can be seen from the order of Caliph

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz who pioneered the official and mass codification of hadith.(Harahap & Ependi, 2023)

b. Scattering of the Scholars

In the early days of Islam after the death of the Prophet, Islamic scholars from among the Companions were scattered across the conquered territories. Many of these scholars narrated traditions and Muslims were keen to know the traditions directly from the narrators. For this reason many scholars went on scientific excursions to meet the scholars in person in order to verify the authenticity of a hadith even if it was only to confirm the authenticity of a single hadith.

It is reported that Djabir Ibn 'Abdillah Al-Anshary heard that 'Abdullah ibn Anis al-Djuhany had heard a tradition from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) so he bought a camel and rode it to Egypt to meet 'Abdullah Ibn Anis in order to learn the tradition from him directly.(Asari, 2013) Reading history reminds us how the enthusiasm and aspirations of scholars in the past were very strong to gain knowledge, it was also what encouraged them to travel even on foot regardless of the distance traveled and the many obstacles they faced.

Ahmad Salabi writes in his book History of Islamic Education about this spirit with the sentence: "Ibnul Chatib Al-Tabrizy once obtained a handwritten manuscript of the book *At-Tahtzib fil Lughah*, by Al-Azhary in several volumes. He wanted to investigate the contents of the book, and heard it from an expert in the science of Lughah. Then someone advised him to go to Abul 'Ala Al-Ma'arry. He immediately prepared to go. He put the book in a sack, carried it on his shoulders, and set out on foot from Tabriz to Ma'arratun Nu'man. Sweat poured down his back and through the sack, soaking the books. In his poem he said "Whoever finds it boring to travel for a day then, on the contrary, I have found it boring to stay." (Kartanegara, 2006)

Similarly, Yahya Ibn Yahya al-Laitsy, who grew up in the city of Cordova, traveled to various regions to meet scholars to gain knowledge directly. When he was 28 years old he traveled to the Eastern Isles. Then he studied the book *Al Muwatha'* from Imam Malik in Medina. After that he went to Makkah and studied with Sofyan Ibn Ujainah. Then he went to Egypt, and studied with Al-Laits Ibn Sa'd, 'Abdullah Ibn Wahab, and 'Abdurrahman Ibnul Qasim. After that he returned to Andalusia.

c. Extraordinary Favors and Facilities

One of the factors that encouraged the scholars to undertake scientific rihlahs was the tremendous help and facilities they received from both the rulers and the common people wherever they were, and in whichever country they stopped. Their presence was respected and treated with honor. (Ependi, 2020) Perhaps this was not the main objective of the scholars in undertaking the scientific pilgrimage, but whether we realize it or not this factor provided a strong impetus and explains why the scientific pilgrimage continued to flourish for centuries, despite the difficulties experienced.

“Ahmad Salabi quotes Ibn Bathuthah as saying When we came to the city of Aqshara, which is a city belonging to Iraq, we were welcomed by Sharif Al-Husein, who is the Viceroy's representative in charge of that city, and we were honored in such a way ... And we also went to the city of Siwas, which is located in Iraq, and we were invited to stay at the house of Achi Djalabi and we accepted the invitation. After that we were asked by other people to stay at their houses, but we could not fulfill this request because of the invitation of the people who had invited us first. The ruler of the country sent us a horse, clothes and money, and he wrote letters to his representatives in the provinces that they should entertain and honor us and give us provisions... And when we were in the city of Arz- Al-Rum, we came to know an elderly Sheikh, who was over 130 years old. He respected us so much that he even served us a meal. And when we intended to leave the place on the following day, he expressed his objection and did not allow our departure. He said to us: “If you leave now, you will be doing us a great disservice, for the shortest period of time for me to leave would be to leave.”(Sjalabi, 1973)

In connection with this scientific rihlah activity, which has basically become a habit of intellectuals in the past, Hasan Asari wrote down some facts about this scientific rihlah activity, namely:(Asari, 2013)

1. The general attitude of Muslims towards people engaged in science is very supportive of scientific activity. Many of the wealthy and political elite set aside a portion of their wealth as waqf for scientific activities. It is reported that a wealthy man named Badr Ibn Hasanawaih Al Qurdi spent a large amount of his wealth to build hundreds of inns (khan) for travelers, both travelers for scientific purposes and for other purposes.
2. The integrity of the civilization of the classical Islamic world. This is a great advantage that the classical generation of Muslims had. At the height of Islam's heyday, its territory stretched from the Arabian Peninsula and other major cities to the archipelago (Indonesia). It was a large and intact area that was open to scholars

from everywhere. Although there were certain boundaries, for a scientist these boundaries were generally not binding. Scientists are free to go in whatever direction they think is necessary for their scientific career. Research shows that during the Middle Ages, half of the Damascus scholars were immigrants while during the 9th/15th centuries about a third of the Cairo scholars came from outside the city.

3. The general progress of Islamic civilization Culturally, every advanced civilization is always open to the presence of others from its own community. Such an advanced classical Islamic civilization also provided great possibilities from an economic point of view. Although most scholars were not wealthy, they were generally able to undertake any scientific pilgrimage they wished. A scientist could do so at his own expense or with the help of others.

3. Some scholars who undertook scientific journeys

a. Ibnu Bathuthah

In his travels through various countries, Ibn Bathuthah met many Kings and Amirs. He praised their kindness in his poems. Through the various gifts and provisions he received, he was able to continue his rihlah to other regions. On various occasions on his journey, Ibn Bathuthah also learned a lot from various famous scholars in the areas he stopped, for example when he stopped in Damascus precisely in the mosque of bani Umayyah, Ibn Bathuthah followed the study of the book *Ash-Shahih* by Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail al-Ja'fi Al-Bukhari ra. The book was read in the assembly of Shaykh Shihabuddin bin Ahmad bin Abu Talib bin Abu An-Niam bin Hasan bin Ali bin bayanuddin, which is one of the teachers at Madrasah Ah-Shalihyah better known as Ibn Shahnun Al-Hijazi..(Bathuthah, 2012)

It is recorded that Ibn Bathuthah's rihlah took 27 years, which ended in 1352 AD. Finally, it is known that he returned to his homeland, Morocco, and became a confidant of Sultan Abu Inan, one of the Kings of Bani Marin. While there, he dictated his notes and travel stories to be rewritten by Muhammad Ibn Juzai Al-Kalbi in the city of Fez in 756 A.H. The work was titled *Tuhfah An-Nazhhaar fi Gharaa'ib al Amshaar wa 'Ajaa'ib Al-Asfaar*, and has now been translated into various languages such as English, French and Portuguese. He finally passed away in Marrakech in 779 AH/1377 AD. Thanks to

his long journey, Cambridge University in its published books and atlases pinned Ibn Bathuthah a title: "Leader of Muslim Travelers".

b. Ibnu 'Arabi

His full name is Abu Bakr Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, on Monday night 17 Ramadan 560 H coinciding with July 28, 1165 AD in the city of Murcia, Andalusia. At the age of eight (568 AH), his parents moved to Seville or Lisbon so that Ibn Arabi could study with local scholars, such as Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Thufail. In 595 AH, Ibn Arabi visited Maria, where he wrote the book *Mawaqi' al-Nuzum*. Then when he was 37 years old (597 AH) he traveled to Centa to meet with scholars and scholars in Sufism and philosophy. The year 598 AH was a year of transition in ibn Arabi's attitude and lifestyle and was the beginning of his period of wandering in the Eastern part of the world. His first destination was Makkah with the intention of performing the pilgrimage. On his way he made a stopover in Egypt and stayed there for two years, but eventually had to leave Egypt because he was accused of being a *zindiq* by the orthodox. (Z. A. Ahmad, 1878)

It is also rumored that he made a brief visit to Baghdad for about twelve days, and planned to make more pilgrimages to the holy places in Hijaz and Syria. From Baghdad he moved to Makkah and stayed for seven years and returned to Baghdad (608 AH/1212 CE). not long in this city, then he traveled in Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Syria and visited Mosul and then returned to Makkah in 611 AH. while in Makkah he wrote a book entitled *Futuh al-Makkiyah*.

c. Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri (w. 1068/1658)

His full name is Nur Al-Din Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Hasanji Al-Hamid (or Al-Humayd) Al-Syafi'I al-Ash'ari Al-'Aydarusi Al-Raniri, an Indonesian scholar who was born in Ranir (modern: Randir), an old port city on the coast of Gujarat. Although not originally from Indonesia, he is more identified with Malay-Indonesian scholars who are one of the figures spreading Islam in the archipelago, especially the Aceh region. His mother was Malay and his father came from a Hadhrami immigrant family with a long tradition of migration to South and Southeast Asia.

Parents in A-Raniri's birthplace had a tradition of sending children and youth to their homeland and to Haramayn to study religious sciences. After completing their

studies, most of them returned to their homeland or traveled to other places in the Islamic world. Al-Raniri started his education in Ranir and then continued it in the Hadhramawt region. There is no explanation about how long Al Raniri studied in Hadhramaut, but it is known that one of Al-Raniri's most famous teachers was Abu Hafs 'Umar bin 'Abd Allah Ba Syayban Al Tarimi Al-Hadhrami (d. 1066/1656) who was also known in the Gujarat region as Sayyid 'Umar Al-Aydarus. It was also his teacher (Ba Shayban) who initiated him into the Rifa'iyyah order, an Arabic order.

d. 'Abd Al-Ra'uf Al-Sinkili

Al-Sinkili's full name is 'Abd Al-Ra'uf bin 'Ali Al-Jawi Al-Fansuri Al Singkili, and according to his name we can know that he was a Malay who came from Fansur, Singkil (modern: Singkel), on the North-West Coast of Aceh. There is no exact history that explains the date of his birth, but there is one opinion that states that he was born in 1024/1615. Al-Sinkili received his early education in his home village of Singkel, mainly from his father. Then he continued his education to Fansur and continued to Banda Aceh, the capital of the Aceh Sultanate, to study with Syams Al-Din Al-Samatrani. It was later discovered that he was already in Arabia. Through one of Al-Sinkili's works, 'Umdat Al-Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin, he provides information about the tariqahs with which he was affiliated, the places where he studied, the teachers he studied with, and the scholars he met in Arabia.(Siregar, 2005)

The area that became Al-Singkili's next travel route was Jeddah, where he studied with his mufti 'Abd Al-Qadir Al-Barkhali. Then continued his journey to Makkah and studied with Badr Al-Din Al-Lahuri 'Abd Allah Al-Lahuri. In the end, Al-Singkili's long journey in studying ended in Medina. It was in the city of the Prophet that he was satisfied to have completed his studies. Al-Singkili studied with Ahmad Al-Qusyasyi.

e. Muhammad Yusuf Al-Maqassari

This archipelago scholar from South Sulawesi, Makasar, whose full name is Muhammad Yusuf 'Abd Allah 'Abu Al-Mahasin al-Taj al-Khalwati al Maqassari, also known as "Tuanta Samalaka ri Gowa" (Our great teacher from Gowa), was born in 1036/1627. Al-Makassari had received good religious instruction since childhood, and thanks to the encouragement of his Arab teachers, he had the ambition to study further

in the Middle East. It is reported that Al-Makassari left Makassar for Arabia in Rajab 1054/September 1644.

Through the international trade network, Al-Makassari boarded a ship to the port of Banten. Banten is known as one of the important Islamic centers in Java, and it is very likely that he also studied there. While in Banten, al Makassari heard news about Al-Raniri's fame and intended to study with him. Then Al-Makassari left for Aceh, but Al-Raniri had left Aceh and returned to his homeland, Raniri in 1054/1644. It is reported that Al-Makassari followed al-Raniri to India and studied with 'Umar bin 'Abd Allah Ba Syayban, Al-Raniri's teacher. It is possible that Al-Makassari continued his journey to the Middle East from the coast of Gujarat, his destination being Yemen.

4. Fungsi Rihlah Ilmiah dalam Dunia Intelektual

From the explanation above, we can indirectly understand that scientific travel is one of the traditions of scholars in the past that played a major role in spreading knowledge. We cannot imagine what would have happened if scholars in the past did not have a strong will, going through various obstacles, just to meet a teacher or confirm a story whose truth they doubted. In fact, at that time, making a journey was something that was very difficult and burdensome, because there were no fixed roads and organized caravans, moreover, the limited vehicles, especially those with sophisticated technology like today. In the book entitled *Menguak Sejarah Mencari 'Ibrah* by Hasan Asari, several functions of scientific travel are explained, namely as follows:(Asari, 2013)

a. As a way to find a good teacher.

Learning through books usually, although recognized as one way is usually considered less than perfect as long as the possibility of not meeting the author directly in person is still open. Imam Syaffi, for example, has read and memorized the entire book of al-Muwatok, but still feels the need to meet and learn directly from the author, Imam Malik ibn Annas.

b. As a way to broaden horizons.

Through scientific travel, a person gains new experiences, through this activity, experience and insight become broader because a scientist who conducts scientific travel will automatically be exposed to these traditions. Not infrequently, it is precisely social, cultural, and religious experiences that make a scientist seen as

more valuable. And also, considering the vast territory of Islamic civilization, it seems that the average age of humans is impossible to be sufficient to absorb all of the almost infinite diversity

c. As a mode of disseminating knowledge.

Scientific travel played a major role in the process of disseminating information in the intellectual tradition of the classical period. The movement of scholars from one region to another played a major role in spreading knowledge, books, both their own works and the works of other scientists that they brought. This section also provides an important explanation of how a book can spread from one region to another. It is narrated that Abu Raihan Al Biruni wrote about India in his work Anthropology which is still appreciated until modern times. In a more specific context, scientific travel also expanded the intellectual network involving a series of teachers and students that could be very long and complicated.

d. As a unitary knitter of Islamic civilization.

Scientific rihlah allows for the exchange of information between various regions in the Islamic world. Through this exchange of information, a process of mutual learning and mutual enrichment of knowledge occurs. Hasan Asari wrote a beautiful sentence about this section: "If only the footsteps of scientists left permanent traces on every path they passed; if only we could see the footprints of these scientists, surely these traces would form a rope that intersects each other, intertwined to form a knit that also plays a role in binding the vast Islamic world into one unit of civilization." (Asari, 2013)

Through this scientific journey, information circulates, knowledge is inherited, exchanged and developed, intellectual civilization is maintained intact. Those who conduct scientific journeys gain great benefits in the form of new knowledge/experience and broader insights. Given the great benefits of this scientific journey, the practice of scientific journeys deserves to be considered and popularized again among intellectuals today. Although changes in the era and technological advances have reduced these activities, which have also changed the ways and practices of intellectuals today, gaining knowledge through technology, such as the internet, cannot be equated with experiencing knowledge through experiences that are integrated with real life. A Muslim scientist should instill that the wealth of experience and insight is far more valuable than

material wealth. The wealth of experience has a liberating power, while material wealth contains a restraining power.(Z. A. Ahmad, 1878)

CONCLUSION

Scientific travel is any journey aimed at seeking knowledge, seeking a good place to study, seeking a more authoritative teacher, or also a journey of a scientist to various places, whether formally carrying out academic activities or not. The practice of scientific travel is motivated by religious orders, the spread of scholars, extraordinary assistance and facilities from the government, and so on. Some examples of scholars who conducted scientific travel include Ibn 'Arabi, Ibn Bathuthah, while scholars from the archipelago are Muhammad Yusuf Al-Maqassari, 'Abd Al-Ra'uf Al-Sinkil and Nur Al-Din Ar Raniri. The function of scientific travel in the intellectual world is: as an effort to find a good teacher, as a way to broaden horizons, as a mode of spreading knowledge, as a knitter of the unity of Islamic civilization.

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