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Reading Religion and the Religious in Modern Islam

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READING RELIGION AND THE RELIGIOUS IN MODERN ISLAM

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Pro-rector, Prof. Bots, thank you for the kind introduction and invitation to present my inaugural lecture, Honoured guests, Deans and professors of universities, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sayyid Ahmed Khan was among the first Muslim intellectuals to articulate a comprehensive modern approach to Islam. Born into an elite family close to the Mughal court in Delhi in 1817, he witnessed the changing fortunes of Muslim political power. After the Indian Revolt of 1857, he was the most prominent of Muslim intellectuals to advocate support for British colonial rule. In the context of a Hindu majority, he was convinced that the British Monarchy guaranteed the survival and modernization of Muslim communities in India. Until his death in 1898, he continued to hold on to this loyalist approach, and encouraged Muslims to take advantage of the new trends in science and education. He left a legacy in politics and education that continues in the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

Much has been written about Khan's modernism, but almost nothing about his reflections on religion in general and Islam as a particular instance thereof. Khan was one among a number of Muslim intellectuals who approached modernization through a conceptualisation of religion. I have identified at least two distinct trends among Muslim modernists, the first of which was led by Khan and the second initiated by Jamal al-Din Afghani. Khan searched and found an essence at the heart of religion, while Afghani focussed on the social and political function of religion. A brief illustration of each presents the modernist reinterpretation of Islam in a new light.

Khan's thoughts on Islam only make sense in relation to his characterization of religion as essence:

The strangest of all strange things in this world is the conception to which people give the name religion.

And,

... the notion of religion arises in the heart of every man without any external causes, without experience and [critical] examination and without any rational proof (Troll, 1978, p. 252).

Religion was an innate disposition in human beings that defied classification. However, human beings were also driven by other dispositions, backgrounds and prejudices. As a unique quality, religion was indistinguishable from these other tendencies until the intellect located its true nature:

What is the true principle for establishing critically the true religion? What is this true religion? As far as man can know by his rational powers (*quwa-i aqli*), it is nothing but nature (*qudrat*) or the law of nature (*qanun-i qudrat*).

And

... And what is the nature or the law of nature? It is that on whose account there exists in all material and non-material things around us a wonderful connection and harmony (Troll, 1978, p. 245).

And so, for Khan, while religion was in a sense beyond explanation and proof as an innate quality, true religion was identified by reason. True religion could be distinguished from the changing conditions that accompanied it. Just as the eternal laws of nature were often hidden by the many elements that were subject to change, true religion was obscured by tendencies that competed for human attention. As an important part of personal perception and belief, true religion corresponded to the principles of order and harmony in nature.

Khan then explored the permanent and the changing within religion itself. Religion for Khan consisted of the essential and the non-essential. The first he called *ahkam-i mansusah* (values derived from texts) that contained the original values (*asli ahkam*), while the second were values derived through intellectual exertion (*ijtihadiiyyat*). The former provided the foundations that reflected the harmony and order of true religion, while the latter consisted of the secondary details subject to variation and change. Khan transposed the permanent and changing within the human constitution to the structure of religions in history. In this analogy, then, the *ahkam-i mansusah* represented the permanent principles of order and harmony, while the *ijtihadiiyyat* were historical accidents and could be dispensed with.

Khan applied this model of religion to Islam. His own suggestion for the permanent element in Islam came from his fascination with modern science. Khan expanded on his unique perspective in a lecture on Islam delivered to Muslims whose faith was shaken by the discoveries of science. He argued that a new theology (*ilm-i kalam*) was required for those exposed to modern sciences. Traditional explanations and defences of religion developed by Muslims on the basis of Greek philosophy no longer made sense to those exposed to the new sciences (Troll, 1978, p. 314). Reason could no longer prove or justify the existence of God. The discoveries of science, particularly the so-called eternal laws deduced from experimental sciences, provided the justification for Islam. Nature, and the eternal principles of natural harmony and order, constituted the true meaning of Islam. The new theology of Khan was captured in his categorical statement: "Islam is nature and nature is Islam" (*islam huwa al-fitrat wa 'l-fitrat huwa al-islam*) (Troll, 1978, p. 317). This new doctrine was discovered in the experimental sciences of the nineteenth century. And it is this principle that was to be applied to historical religions (Islam).

Jamal al-Din Afghani wrote a small tract condemning what he thought was the materialist naturalism of Khan. In his *Kitab al-radd ala al-dahriyyin*, Afghani made no distinction between the materialism of pre-modern philosophy and its contemporary forms. Moreover, Afghani suggested a link between materialism and the political goals

of European imperialism. Whereas Khan was a loyal and unapologetic supporter of the British, Afghani became a symbol of Muslim resistance against European colonialism. Jamal al-Din Afghani's origin is disputed between his own account in Afghanistan in 1838-9 and Shi'ite sources which cite Asadabad in Iran. After an unsuccessful career in what is now known as Afghanistan, he extended his horizons to the capital cities of Islam and Europe. He travelled extensively, giving lectures to young students and political advice to receptive sultans. As a teacher, he raised awareness among young intellectuals in Cairo, Istanbul and Iran, about the dynamic and progressive nature of Islam, on the one hand, and the need to be completely free from colonial powers on the other. As a political agitator, he advised the Ottoman and Persian Sultans to take more independent positions against European powers, and to be more accountable to their own people. He argued for constitutional monarchies where the Sultans relinquished their absolute hold on government (Goldziher).

Afghani's politics seemed to guide his general understanding of Islam. In the pamphlet written against Khan, Afghani set out one general conception of religion. Unlike Khan who was concerned about the justification for belief, Afghani took an extremely functionalist approach to religion. He believed that religion was good for society because it enshrined two fundamental beliefs and six principles. The two beliefs were an acceptance of a creator, and the consequences of reward and punishment for things done in this world. The first of six principles was a belief in the fact that human beings were terrestrial angels for the unique non-material quality that they possessed that separated them from other creatures. Secondly, every religion contained a belief in its own superiority and salvation to the exclusion of all others. Thirdly, life in this world was a preparation for a better world to come after death. The fourth, fifth and sixth principles were qualities that were generated from the beliefs: a sense of shame for committing wrong, truthfulness and trustworthiness. All the beliefs and qualities identified by Afghani were useful for building a good and powerful society. He was entirely consumed by the social and political demands of the day, and saw in religion/Islam a key to renewal. To that end, he suggested a highly functionalist approach to religion where beliefs in principle may not even matter.

... religion, even if it be false and the basest of religions, because of those two firm pillars ... and the six principles that are enshrined in religions, is better than the way of the materialists, or *necheris* (the naturalists like Khan) (Keddie, 1983, p. 168).

Taking a functionalist approach, Afghani was keen on emphasising the qualities in religion that could serve social and political goals of the day.

In a response to Ernest Renan, Afghani presented another more critical perspective of religion in general and Islam in particular. Renan's critical remarks towards Islam were part of his general thesis that Semites were less likely to promote science, civilization

and modernity, than the Aryans. Afghani's response defended Arabs against Renan by claiming that Arabs had indeed displayed an ability and willingness to engage in philosophy in the early period: "... science made astonishing progress among the Arabs and in all the countries under their domination" (Keddie, 1983, p. 184). He effectively challenged the racist remarks of Renan which the author himself conceded in a subsequent response. But Afghani agreed with the more substantial argument that religion in general, and not only Islam, was a stumbling block to the continued development of science and civilization. Whilst Renan had particularly singled out Islam and Semitic religions, Afghani felt that the criticism was valid for all religions. Religion may play an important role at a point in the history of a people, but dogma finally closed the door to free thinking:

If it is true that the Muslim religion is an obstacle to the development of sciences, can one affirm that this obstacle will not disappear someday? How does the Muslim religion differ on this point from other religions? All religions are intolerant, each one in its way (Keddie, 1983, p. 185).

Afghani argued that religion was an obstacle to innovation, discovery and new knowledge. According to him, Islam and other religions claimed to have solutions and answers to all questions. This attitude blocked the path to discovery and innovation. In this context, Afghani believed that there was nothing inherent within Muslim societies to escape from this oppressive regime. And it was only a matter of time before Muslim societies would be relieved from the yoke of religion as Christians had been in Europe.

It seems to me that the two contradictory notions can be reconciled in Afghani's functionalist approach to religion/Islam. Religion/Islam was indispensable for social order until the development and proliferation of science and philosophy. A functionalist approach to religion displaced belief and commitment to a secondary level. In Afghani's life, the political goals of liberation and independence were hitched onto the shoulders of Islam/religion.

Both Khan and Afghani, in their distinctive ways, set the grounds for reform and social change within Islam. I am arguing that that they did so by re-evaluating the meaning of Islam in the light of some general notion of religion. Khan posited an enduring essence of religion together with changing and dispensable characteristics, while Afghani worked on the social and political use of religion. In the theories of change espoused by these leading modernist intellectuals, the idea of religion played a useful role in positing a general principle or social value against which Islam in particular could be re-articulated. Both were aware of the need for reform and the need to respond to European political powers and new intellectual challenges. Religion as abstraction provided a powerful instrument to think through change. It created an opportunity for Khan to posit a new foundation for Islam, and for Afghani a justification for renewal. I would like to make a wider claim by arguing that other developments in modern

Islam can also be better understood by paying attention to the categories of religion in social practices. Thinking with abstract and general categories is not the special privilege of scholarly analysis and research. In various ways, some more successful than others, deliberations about the meaning of religion and its boundaries find their way into religious discourses. For modernizers, in particular, locating a definition of religion was absolutely essential for rethinking Islam. But they were not the only group affected by such deliberations and demands. In my lecture, I would like to explore two other ways in which contemporary practices reflect or mimic academic imagination. These and others, I suggest, are crucial for making sense of modern Islam.

As an important counterpart to another abstraction, the secular/religion binary pair also provides an important instrument to Muslims for change. Recently, Talal Asad has argued for the importance of looking at the religious and the secular as inseparable twins:

I would argue that "religion" is a modern concept not because it is reified but because it has been linked to its Siamese twin "secularism". Religion has been part of the restructuration of practical times and spaces, a re-articulation of practical knowledges and powers, of subjective behaviors, sensibilities, needs, and expectations in modernity. But that applies equally to secularism, whose function has been to try to guide that re-articulation and to define "religions" in the plural as a species of (non-rational) belief (Asad, 2001, p. 221).

The division between the secular and the religious in Europe has been endlessly debated in sociological literature. And since the religious has been more clearly separated from the political in Europe and North America more than in any other place in the world, doubts have been raised about this polarity in other cultural contexts. I think that the debate is worth another look. If we suspended for a moment the particular content of the religious and non-religious in a particular society, we can follow the changing meaning of the religious and non-religious in modern Muslim societies. Developments in political organization, science and economics forced a fundamental shift in the boundaries and jurisdiction of particular religions. So, whilst religions may previously have played a fundamental role in economic management and ethics, the fact of globalisation and mercantile capitalism forced a re-negotiation of the boundaries. This negotiation has been particularly evident with respect to the role of the *ulama* and their new associations in almost all Muslim societies. Religious leaders have not argued for a re-interpretation of Islam on the basis of an abstract, internalised meaning of religion, but re-defined the boundaries of religious jurisdiction in the presence of a powerful nation-state and fundamental social transformations.

Egypt's religious leaders and the famous religio-educational institute Azhar present an interesting example. With the political and social changes at the turn of the 19th century, the British explicitly left the courts, the religious endowments (*awqaf*) and

education in the hands of the Khedive. These particular domains of political and social life were ostensibly unique to the Egyptians, and presented an opportunity for the Azhar to play a key role. However, Azhar did not and could not take advantage of the new social and economic demands, and forced the government to establish the Dar al-Ulum and Madrasat al-Qada to train teachers and judges respectively. A law in 1923 formally defined a teaching role of *religion (din)* for Azhar, and officially excluded the judiciary from its jurisdiction. The law was changed in 1956, but the role of the *ulama* in the judiciary has not increased dramatically. There has been a consistent decline in the number of religious cases brought to the courts that attests to the development and growth of non-religious sectors of social life. By 1973, only 277,717 out of 4 669 279 (5.9 %) cases had any connection with religion. Closely following the judicial sector, Azhar was also losing its role in general education. Student numbers in religion declined over the course of the 20th century from 39% of all students in secondary education in 1913/1914, to only 5% of students in 1970/1. Summarizing these developments, Eccel argued that Azhar lost its monopoly over the courts and primary education. However, he also illustrated how Azhar thrived in establishing itself as a state bureaucracy and for playing a key role in *religious* education. Both have ensured that Azhar provides employment to its graduates and increases its influence in secular fields by reinventing the meaning and purpose of religion in society. My reading of Eccel's data is that the nature of the religious and secular were re-negotiated over the course of the 20th century. The boundaries between the secular and the religious have been shifting with the growth of the secular social and economic sectors. The Azhar re-invented itself as a moral religious body in relation to such secular sectors where it has refused to participate in, or more correctly, where it has been unable to lead effectively. Whilst the secular domains were expanding, the religious domain became at best a moral watchdog over all areas, or a specialist organization teaching a body of knowledge called religion. My general argument is that the religion-secular division is an underlying ground for the transformation of the modern organization of the religious. Like the abstract definition of religions in the hands of reformers, the religion/secular division provides a useful instrument for adjusting religion to modern social and political transformations.

There is yet a third way in which religion plays an important role in the reconstruction of modern Islam. Contemporary analysis of religion has shed considerable light on the nature and meaning of symbols, rituals, discourses, locations, and dispositions within religious traditions. Modern Islam has no shortage of these and more that call for analysis. One of the striking and dominant symbols of modern Islam has been the mosque. In the presence of the modern state, the mosque has taken on the distinctive and outstanding feature of the religious space par excellence. Using the tools of analysis from the comparative study of religion, we can discern at least two additional aspects

of the mosque: its status as a sacred place, and its status as a male-dominated site. All three elements, its prominence, its sacredness and its maleness, are linked with each other. Allow me to draw on examples to illustrate my point.

Sandra Freitag and David Gilmartin have highlighted the rise of the mosque as a symbol of the Muslim community in British dominated India. In a number of spectacular cases, struggles over the meaning of mosques in northern India highlighted the increased emphasis on a mosque or any of its sections. Freitag analysed the conflict over the British confiscation of the ablution portion of a mosque in Kanpur in 1913 in order to build a new road. The British obtained approval of some Muslims that such a place did not constitute a central section of the mosque. But other Muslims did not quite agree, and the town rallied around the "martyrdom" of the mosque (Freitag, 1988, p. 21). Gilmartin analysed Muslim reaction to a Sikh destruction of another mosque in 1933 with a controversial history in Mughal India. The newly developed press and poetry exalted the meaning of the mosque for Muslims. When all protest failed, Muslims filed a case at a local tribunal in the name of the mosque (Gilmartin, 1988, p. 157). The personalization of the mosque, beautifully highlighted in the mosque as litigant and martyr, was a powerful illustration of its growing prominence.

Gilmartin distinguished between the discourse of Islam around symbols such as a mosque in this case, and the discourse of personal pietistic practices that were at loggerheads with each other. However, a longer view provides an opportunity to see how the symbolization and the personal practices worked together to produce the mosque as the exalted place in Muslim religious life. In a preliminary survey of *fatawa* (juridical opinions) produced by the leading Muftis of Egypt, I have found that they consistently favoured a view that made mosques inviolable. Mosques that were no longer used or became seriously damaged could not be rebuilt in another place. The *fatawa* referred to a special quality of mosques called *masjidiyyah* inherent in them.¹ In my own research on mosques in South Africa, I have documented how mosques became inviolable in the face of apartheid forced removals and land confiscation (Tayob, 1999, p.).

But the ritual production of the mosque is particularly striking in the absence of women. Most men consistently maintained that women had no place, or a marginal place, in the mosque. In modern contexts, some argument had to be presented by way of religious texts or opinion that the best place for a woman's prayer was at home. When a more accommodating position was taken, a separate section of the building would be designated for women. And these mosques more creatively exhibited the exclusion of women from this male-centred place than their inclusion. Everything possible was done to separate and exclude the women's section from the large expansive areas. A variety of ways were invented to achieve this purpose: thick heavy curtains, opaque decorative panels, basements, mezzanine floors, one-way mirrors, and even close-circuit television cameras. Sometimes, newly acquired mosques that were previously

churches or community halls began with more transparent divisions. Over time, the divisions and exclusions were articulated through ritual behaviour. The importance and prominence of the mosque was inversely proportional to the presence of women therein.

The importance of the mosque as a public space, and the associated exclusion of women, is even more striking when one recalls another feature of modern Islamic discourse. The proliferation of pamphlets and books on women in Islam is hardly confined to Muslims. Among Muslims though, religious opinions and tracts on women and their religious obligations have led many analysts to correctly conclude that women are expected to carry the burden of tradition as never before in the history of Islam. The sheer number of tracts, discussion forums and television documentaries about women in Islam is simply overwhelming and unprecedented. In one such very popular pamphlet on seclusion (*hijab*) from South Africa, the authors reveal an important thread in the symbolization of mosques. The authors identify contemporary western culture as essentially immoral in its sexual exhibitionism: “the whole outlook of Western man is permeated with this attitude of licentious immorality” (Islamic Hijab (purdah), 1984/1404, p. 2). In answer to this sexual exhibitionism, women have to represent and exhibit Islam by their total absence and seclusion:

The Muslim Ummah is basically and essentially a spiritual Nation in which the Rooh is supposed to dominate. In the acceptance of Western libertine ways - in the destruction of Hijab - the bestial nafs has overwhelmed the celestial Soul and the Muslim Ummah is wallowing in a quagmire of corruption and degradation from which it can never extricate itself as long as it follows the path of Westernization. Our moral fibre has been destroyed by the brutal onslaught of immorality which was unleashed by the abandonment of Hijab (Islamic Hijab (purdah), 1984/1404, p. 4).

As an inseparable part of faith, the seclusion of women represents the only choice for Muslims. I believe that this particularly extreme viewpoint hints at the meaning of women in mosques. Their absence from the mosque is highly symbolic for the present malaise suffered by Islam under Western cultural dominance. They can only represent true Islamic values by being absent. The modern symbolization, in my view, can be summarized as follows. The mosque increased in importance, first with the decline of political power, and then with the emergence of the religious sector (illustrated by the British colonial period and the elaboration of religious leadership). And the exclusion of women was particularly pronounced in the ritual elaboration of this all-male space. This space is also defined by the absence of women who can only carry the burden of Muslim culture by their absence. I suggest that the symbolic production of mosques as gendered space is an essentially modern articulation of Islam. Like abstraction and differentiation, symbolization constitutes an important element of modern Islam.

It is clear that I put myself firmly in the company of those who argue that one can not speak about contemporary Islam without turning attention to its interaction with modernity and all its facets. In my view, Islam has not been bypassed by modern developments. It does not represent the voice of tradition against the ravages and possibilities of modernity. Islam is not the final bulwark of the modern march to humanism, progress and unlimited growth. Contemporary Islam, which I have called modern Islam with full consciousness, is steeped in modernity. Religion is at least one such abstraction that provides a window of analysis that highlights this modernity. My thesis is that turning attention to the category of religion and the religious as abstract, generalized, terms provide an extremely useful way of understanding Islam over the last hundred and fifty years.

For some time in the study of religions, spelt out in a particularly Protestant fashion by Wilfred Cantwell Smith with his *The Meaning and End of Religion*, religion has been regarded as an abstraction invented by scholars. This invention has been traced to the nineteenth century origins of the study of human societies and cultures. Projecting the particular development of Christian theology in the shadow of modernization, a unique sense of religion was posited that could be separated for analysis and observation. Partly refining and partly protesting this trend, Smith argued that the invention of religion has not been helpful in understanding religious societies and individuals. In his well-known phrase, Smith found many religious individuals and religious practices, but no distinct religions as such: “Neither religion in general nor any one of the religions, I will contend, is in itself an intelligible entity, a valid object of inquiry or of concern either for the scholar or for the man of faith” (Smith, 1978, p. 12). Smith provided a useful guide for religious thinkers and theologians to make a distinction between an absolute, indefinable God and historical religious traditions. Eliminating religions from this framework has preserved the absoluteness and indefinability of God, whilst accounting for the changing historical development of religions as specific instances of human subjectivities. Some leading Muslim modernists have followed Smith in the second half of the 20th century

I keep a critical distance from these reinventions, and argue that religion and its modern categories are an indispensable part of modern developments. I want to turn attention to ways in which the categories of religion and religious practices have been used to re-invent Islam for the modern world. In this way, I do not only point to the ways in which modernizers have reinterpreted Islam, but also the so-called tradition-bound sectors of Muslim societies. My inspiration for this particular approach comes from some divergent studies in sociology, religious studies, and cultural studies. From the sociologist Anthony Giddens, I take the idea of the reflexivity of theory and social practice. Giddens characterized modernity as a continuous loop between sociological abstraction and new social action: “Sociological knowledge spirals in and out of the

universe of social life, reconstructing both itself and that universe as an integral part of the process" (Giddens, 1990, p. 15-16). I do not go along with his claim that this is the defining characteristic of modernity, but I take from him the idea that abstraction of religion and general religious categories play a direct and indirect role in the practice and elaboration of new possibilities and limitations within religions. Religion as abstraction and distinctive category, even though an invention of scholars and policy makers, finds its way in practice. The example of Khan and Afghani illustrate this reflexivity very clearly.

From the comparative scholar of religion David Chidester, I have been inspired to look at the construction of religion at the coalface of social and political life. The loop that Giddens identified was, according to Chidester, invented by those who were engaged in social and political conflicts. The key terms of comparative religion, categories of sameness and difference, were employed in imperial conquest in fundamental ways: "Knowledge about religion ... reinforced a global control over the entire expanse of human geography and history" (Chidester, 1996, p. 3). Chidester's challenge keeps me vigilant about the origins of social science constructs, and their circulation among academics and researchers. What I take from him is the vigilance, that our inventions rely on keen observations and respect of opportunities provided by societies, and their continuous play with concepts and symbols. And from Talal Asad, I borrowed the observation that the construction of the limits and boundaries of religion in Europe were negotiated concurrently with the limits and boundaries of the secular. The religious and the secular were an inseparable abstract pair that forced itself in the elaboration of a modern nation state.

Whilst freely building on these insights, and being grateful for their fruitful leads, the most difficult task for me lay in understanding the development of modern Islam without falling victim to tracing and trailing behind European developments. How can one analyse modern Islamic perspectives whilst keeping in mind industrialization, colonialism, and modern religions? How can one do this and not lose sight of the integrity of the new Islamic articulations? The challenge of understanding modern Islam lay at this critical point. The insights of Giddens, Chidester and Asad provide hints for a creative re-reading of modern Islamic perspectives. Giddens, Chidester and Asad themselves have much more to say about the reflexive loop of social theory and social action in Europe, the elaboration of comparative religion in the service of European imperialism, and the unique development of European Christianity and secularism respectively. I suggest that one may begin with the role of religion and its categories in cultural practices.

Religion as academic category and religion as cultural practice are not easily separated. The option to distance oneself from religion because social science observers invented it is likely to lead to a partial assessment of modern religious developments.

The concept of religion as a general idea imposes itself on contemporary reformulations of religions. My presentation has identified at least three sites where religion and the religious have played a major role in the production of modern Islam. The earliest modernists, and many others who followed them, reinvented Islam by turning their gaze to a generalized conception of religion. New Muslim organizations representing learned scholars remapped the boundaries of the religious for changing societies. And religious practices and sites were subject to new symbolizations in changing political and social contexts. This is a framework for understanding and interpreting modern Islam that I present to you today.

In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure to thank each and everyone of you for taking the time to join me this afternoon on this special occasion. I have come to value your acquaintance and friendship over the last two years, and thank you for the many ways you have welcomed my family and me to your country and your homes. I have slowly come to expand my circle of friends in Nijmegen and Arnhem, and treasure their friendship. Your presence here means a great deal to me. I want to particularly thank my colleagues at the Radboud University Nijmegen in the various faculties and departments for the wonderful intellectual context that you have created, and also for your support in personal matters over the last two years. I will not forget the calls to my head of department, Prof. Kees Versteegh and my dean, Prof. Hans Bots, when I was settling down the first six months finding a home, work for Hawa, and schools for my children. I want to single out each one of my colleagues of the afdeling Talen en Culturen van het Midden Oosten, for the warm and productive atmosphere, particular in E 9.28. I am not there as often as I like, as Marijke keeps reminding me, but I do take it as a place to return to, even when I come back from South Africa.

My indebtedness to ISIM and its staff is equally great. I fear to reveal that without Mary, Ada, Nathal and Kitty, not much would happen at this productive institute. I thank you for your dedication and your efficiency. To the ISIM professors and Dick Douwes, to Khalid and Peter (who have since moved on), Asef, Martin and Annelies, I thank you for creating a stimulating and challenging environment to accompany students in their paths to academic excellence. To the ISIM fellows and to the Nijmegen students, I thank you for the exchanges and also for the companionship at the various outings. Both Radboud University and ISIM have become additional homes for a globalized family. To Mariette, Laila and Naima, I want to thank you for the support in the challenging and daunting project of the Rights at Home.

Through ISIM, I have also built on my earlier contacts in the Netherlands. To the faculty members at Leiden, Amsterdam and Utrecht, I wish to acknowledge your role and emphasise my indebtedness to you in my intellectual development. Amongst you, but not entirely restricted to you, I would like to single out Ruud, Leon, Ben, Karin, Jose, and a now retired friend Jan Platvoet and his partner An Mercx. I have also great

pleasure in welcoming the speakers to the conference that follows this inaugural lecture. My intellectual and social bonds and debts go back a long way with you. I have had great pleasure in making this list. Fearing that I may forget a name has been painful, and I ask you for your gracious forgiveness. But it has been a greater joy in remembering all of you, those named and unnamed here, as I come to my final paragraphs.

I have, of course, not forgotten the two people closest to me here today. I have particularly left them for the last honoured mention. I thank Tahseen, my daughter, and Hawa, for the companionship, the support and not least, the critical spirit. You yourself know how much my work depends upon you.

Ik heb gezegd.

NOTES

- 1 One lengthy example of this discussion occurs in a juridical view produced by the late Jad al-Haq (1983/1403, p.).

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