

Renaissance of Islam in North Africa: A Historical and Religious Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the renaissance and development of Islam in North Africa, focusing on historical accounts and religious narratives that predate the arrival of Islam through 'Amr bin 'Āṣ under the caliphate of 'Umar. This study is driven by the need for a deeper understanding of how Islam in North Africa underwent historical transformations, from its early introduction to the detailed development of Islamic laws and traditions. Some historians argue that Islam was introduced earlier through migration to Abyssinia, although it was not adopted as a way of life. Other perspectives, such as Nmah (2018), highlight the role of interactions between Muslims and Christians along the Nile River as the starting point for Islamization and Arabization in the region. The paper also examines the presence of Prophet Yusuf in Egypt and the mission of Prophet Musa to the Israelites, as described in the Qur'an. These narratives indicate that Islam has been known in Egypt since ancient times, though Islamic law was not fully detailed. This study identifies four key periods in the history of Islam in North Africa: the migration to Abyssinia, the period of Prophet Yusuf, the period of Prophet Musa, and the Muslim conquest of Egypt by 'Amr bin 'Āṣ. The study concludes that Islam's message has remained consistent since the beginning of humanity, with only the details of Shariah evolving. Future research should focus on the post-conquest period of 'Amr bin 'Āṣ, particularly the dynamics of Islamization and Arabization and their impact on local culture and society in North Africa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of Renaissance and Revivalism hold significant importance in the fields of history, art, and cultural studies. These terms often describe the resurgence of ideas, styles, or values from the past in new contexts. However, their interpretations and applications vary widely, influenced by the unique historical, social, and cultural conditions of each era. This paper seeks to address the gap in understanding how Renaissance and Revivalism are conceptualized and utilized differently across various historical contexts (Symonds, 1897).

To explore this dynamic, the study examines four distinct historical periods, each offering unique insights into the ways these concepts have been adapted and employed. By analyzing the motivations, processes, and outcomes associated with the revival of traditions or ideals, this research sheds light on the diverse roles that Renaissance and Revivalism have played in shaping societal identities and cultural narratives. This investigation not only uncovers the nuances of these concepts but also emphasizes their enduring relevance. By bridging the historical and contemporary applications of Renaissance and Revivalism, the paper aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how societies reinterpret and reconstruct their past to navigate present and future challenges (Ludtke, 1995).

Regarding Islam in North Africa, a few historians assert that it arrived through 'Amr bn 'Aṣ, who was a governor under the Caliphate of Umar. Some historians argue that the exodus to Abyssinia was the cause. Nmah holds another opinion that the interactions between Muslims and Christians along the Nile River, which is situated in Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt, marked the beginning of North Africa's Islamization and Arabization. Throughout the Middle Ages, there were several tiny Nubian kingdoms; the last fell in 1504, splitting Nubia between Egypt and the Sennar Sultanate, which led to the Arabization and Islamization of a large portion of the Nubian populace. (Nmah, 2018) According to the Quran, Prophet Yusuf was also sold into slavery in Egypt and went on to become one of the administrative ministers in Miṣra, or modern-day Egypt. Put another way, this merely means that, although the law was vague, the Egyptians were aware of the Islamic message from earlier Prophets. Thus, it can be considered that the Renaissance began around the time of Prophet Musa. Islam has unquestionably remained the same from the dawn of humanity; the only things that have changed are the specifics of Shariah (Dogan, 2015). This paper focuses on filling the gap of how the concepts of Renaissance and Revivalism are interpreted and applied differently in historical contexts. As such, this presentation covers four periods, which are: The Hijrah to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), The Period of Prophet Yusuf, The period of Prophet Musa, the Period of the conquest of Egypt by 'Amr bn 'Aṣ, under the Caliphate of 'Umar. As such, other periods after the conquests of 'Amr bn 'Aṣ are left for other researchers to explore. Therefore, this paper is confined within the purviews of the periods as mentioned above.

2. METHODS

This research uses qualitative research methods, namely textual and historical analysis methods for data collection (Chochlov dkk., 2017; Karcic, 2006). By this, the author reviews related and previous works concerning the research topic. The textual and historical analysis were based on the Quran verses, the Prophet's traditions, and the Islamic scholars' contributions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Concept of Renaissance

Renaissance means rebirth, a new beginning, (that is, a phenomenon that has been in existence before). That is reviving what is dead. It can also mean a period after the Dark Ages in Europe, between the 14th and 17th centuries (University dkk., 2016), when the whole of Europe was in darkness in almost all aspects of life, including darkness in the fields of science and technology, philosophy, and the like. However, in Islam, renaissance means a period of rebirth of Islam as a religion.

Going forward, scholars use some terms that are equivalent to mean renaissance, as such the most popular ones among them are: *Tajdīd*, *Iṣlāḥ*, *Iḥyā*, and *Naḥḍah*. However, it should be noted that these terms do not in any way qualify to describe the period of the Prophets, but the period is described as the period of Nubuwwah or *Risālah*. In Islam, a Messenger is sent after a period of *faṭrah*-- when people forget the entire message of a particular Prophet (Alias & Jalil, 2017). This is the tradition of Allah until after the Prophets. As such, what begins after the coming of Muhammad is Revivalism. In summary, renaissance in general terms refers to any period, as it is used in Europe. Any period after that marks a new start. However, in Islam, the Renaissance marks the beginning of a new message after the old one has come to an end, as opposed to revivalism. As such, some scholars view Umar bn Khattab and Umar bn Abdul Azeez, the saint of Umayyad (Fierro, 2015), (Rahim, 1981) as revivalists in Islam (Nasr, 1995).

Glimpse into the Equivalent's Terms to Renaissance as Used by Islamic Scholars --- Tajdīd, Iṣlāḥ, Iḥyā, And Naḥḍah

In this regard, the literal meanings of the above-stated equivalent terms shall be given. All the terms are used by Islamic Scholars interchangeably. In other words, the dictionary meanings show that they are synonymous to one another, and they are (Research and Studies Centre, 2008): 1) *Tajdīd*: It can simply be translated as revival, rejuvenation, Regeneration, renewal, renovation, restoration, reformation, modernization, and re-creation. 2) *Iṣlāḥ*: Literally, it means reformation, restoration, correction, reconditioning, rectification, improvement, and refit 3) *Iḥyā*: This also has the following meaning that is synonymous: restoration, renewal, rejuvenation, regeneration, and recreation. 4) *Naḥḍah*: It means; awakening, revival, renaissance, and rebirth.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the above equivalent terms have the same meaning; they are used for the same concept, but the terms may be used interchangeably, varying from one scholar to another. Hence, the fact remains that each of the terms shares the same commonality: reviving what is said to have been neglected. Therefore, an attempt to explain the concept of revivalism is adopted, and the preferred term to represent the other terms is *Tajdīd*.

TAJDĪD

In this aspect, this paper discusses the literal and technical meaning of the *Tajdīd*. It means making something new. That is to make it new, as opposed to old. Islamic scholars give several approaches to defining *Tajdīd* among which are to be presented. As such, the following three stages are presented for a better understanding of the concept: 1) Stage One: Reviving what has been interpolated or adulterated, from among the teaching of the practices of the Prophet and spreading it to people to work with. 2) Al-'Alqamiyy says: 3) To revive what has been

interpolated in actions as preached by the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Also, to hold fast to its requirements; Quran and Sunnah (Usāmah, 2003) 4) Stage two: Restraining innovations, novelties, and uncovering the people of innovations. To declare war against them by purifying Islam from the filth of ignorance attached to it. Also, returning to what the Prophet and his Companions stood upon. 5) Stage three: Applying the rules of Shariah on the happenings and occurrences and remedying them with the best approach sequel to the dictate of the revelation (Usāmah, 2003).

In summary, *tajdīd* means, taking the religion back to its original state as Allah has revealed it, concerning its text, principles, and understanding its methods and mode of deducing laws. Also, to eliminate all forms of customs and cultures attached to it, which have obliterated its nature and altered its truth (Usāmah, 2003). Hence, about these, the Prophet was reported to have said:

”إن الله يبعث لهذه الأمة — على رأس كل مائة — من يجدد لها دينها“

“The Prophet was reported to have said: Allah sends for this ummah at every start of a century, someone (revivalist) who revives the religion.” (Abu Dawood)

Why *Tajdīd*?

Tajdīd is a process of improvement or reform aimed at bringing Muslims back to the height of Islamic purity. Thus, *tajdīd* pertains to the endeavour of reorienting Muslims' beliefs and behaviors towards the core principles of Islam, rather than substituting Islam with an alternative doctrine. (Ismail dkk., 2017). On these, the following are noted as the reasons and necessities of *tajdīd* in Islam: 1) Eternity: The Law (Shariah) of Islam is extended and eternal till the last hour. It is indeed the law which Allah is pleased with. It will harbor no invalidation or replacement until the last hour when Allah will inherit the earth and what is on it. 2) Comprehensiveness: Comprehensiveness, as explained by Shariah, means it covers all the affairs of places, periods, and humans. 3) Hence, the comprehensiveness one the Shariah regarding the place means the message of Islam is not meant for a particular ethnic, tribe, clan, or nation. It is indeed to the entire human race. Allah says: “We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures. (Q: 21:107) Comprehensiveness concerning humans”: 4) This means Shariah covers aspects of human life, be it mundane or spiritual activities. Because no aspect of human life is not being addressed by the Quran. (Esposito & Shahin, 2018) Allah says:

One day We shall raise from all Peoples a witness against them, from amongst themselves: and We shall bring thee as a witness against these (thy people): and We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims. (Q: 16:89).

Lastly, Ḥasan Albannā says, Islam is a complete system that addresses all aspects of life. Therefore, these are some of the reasons for the need for *tajdīd* in the religion. Umar bn Khattab and Umar bn Azeez were known to be revivalists. Also, scholars like, Hasan Al-Bana, Al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduhu were known to be revivalists and among others. (Al-Banna, 2006)

Islam

Islam is a universal system or way of life in which peace, tranquility, and happiness are attained by humanity through unconditional submission to the dictates and will of Allah, the creator of the universe. (Ibrahim, 2008). Islam, therefore, is not a national faith; a Muslim is not

an Arab who retains his nationality, and Islam was not founded by the Prophet who happens to be the Prophet of Islam as erroneously claimed in a recent book (Iwuoha, 2005).

Islam indeed started from the time of Prophet Adam as contained in Quran chapter 2:135-140. Therefore, of all religions in the world, the name Islam is unique as it is not named after any person, saint, Prophets, or tribe, and was not supplied by "the busy hand, the curious and the outsider, but Islam rather came into being with its name (Lugira, 2009), Allah says: "*And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter, he shall be one of the losers.*" (Q:3:85)

The global vision of universal peace for all humanity is encompassed in the teachings of Islam, as its fundamental tenets are stability, mutual respect, and non-aggression to those who live in peace and according to just terms. This includes those who, like Christians and Jews, have a basic understanding of a revealed religion from Allah as the foundation of their civilization (Islam, 2019).

Geographical Location of North Africa

North Africa is one of the world's most important and culturally varied areas (Hermassi, 2023). The region is important geopolitically because of its geographic location at the intersection of North Africa, West and Central Asia, European countries of the Mediterranean Basin, and traditionally, Sub-Saharan states. A number of the region's states are particularly significant as oil producers, providing the primary energy source for both home and commercial use for countries all over the world. The region's historical connections, which date back thousands of years, via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal to South Asia, the Mediterranean Sea, and Southern Europe, significantly increase its importance in world affairs. Therefore, North Africa's strategic location and vibrant historical culture contribute even more to the region's social, political, cultural, military, and economic issues. For many centuries, this has been the situation in the area (Tiliouine & Estes, 2016).

Moving on, the African continent is constituted of four regions, which are: 1) East Africa. 2) West Africa. 3) South Africa. 4) North Africa

The geographic location of North Africa therefore becomes the primary emphasis of the discussion. The northernmost portion of the African continent, which runs from Morocco's Atlantic coast on the western side to the Red Sea and the Canal of Suez in the eastern part, is therefore frequently referred to as "Northern Africa." Using these standards, the following nations are included, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Moroccan, Sudan, Tunisia, and The Western Sahara.

The Polisario Front also claims the region, which is presently governed by Morocco, making the Western Sahara's presence on the U.N. list extremely contentious. Not to be confused with North Africa, which from a political perspective is frequently restricted to the four contemporary countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The latter's definition is hotly debated. The Maghreb, also known as the Arab Maghreb (or Maghrib) countries exclusively, is a smaller region in Northern Africa that consists of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia (Julien, 1980). During French.

colonial times, it was known as Afrique du Nord (Encyclopedia Britannica). Other academics contend that Sudan ought to be considered a part of "North Africa" in the same way that it was formerly a part of Egypt and naturally occupies significant portions of the Nile Valley (Tiliouine & Estes, 2016).

The Hijrah to Abyssinia (Ethiopia)

Ab initio, this paper explores the renaissance of Islam in North Africa. However, it is essential to examine the impact of Islam's interaction with Africa due to the Hijrah of the Prophet. While Ethiopia (then Abyssinia) is situated in the eastern part of Africa, its role in the renaissance of Islam in the continent is significant. Historically, when persecution against Muslims became unbearable, particularly for those without families to support them, the Prophet instructed some of his companions to migrate to Abyssinia, present-day Ethiopia. The Prophet (pbuh) remarked that:

If you had left Makkah for Abyssinia, there lived a king who was never unjust to people, it is indeed a land of truth. Seek asylum with him until Allah paves the way for you. Then the Muslims among the Companions of the Prophet sought asylum there afraid of tribulations and ran to Allah for protection upon their religion. In the history of Islam, this was the first Hijrah (Ahzamiyy, 2005).

Hence, Dr. Alli Aş-Şallābī presents the following reasons why the Prophet commanded his followers to migrate to Abyssinia, following the instructions of Allah. Before this, the Prophet had remarked on Abyssinia, saying that if one were to migrate there, they would find a king who is never unjust to anyone and that it is a land of truth. He advised seeking asylum there until Allah paves the way. Following the advice of their instructor, the Muslims made their first Hijrah—a migration to Abyssinia—in the annals of Islamic history. The reasons are as follows: 1) To manifest their faith, even though it was hard on them while in Makkah, Abyssinia allowed them to express and manifest their faith. 2) They ran away from Makkah to defend their religion against the Idol worshipping in Makkah, 3) To disseminate the truth; to preach the new faith beyond Makkah, 4) To find a place of succor for the Muslims.

The Prophet chose Abyssinia (Present day Ethiopia) as the land of asylum for the Muslims for the following reasons: 1) The king was a just Christian ruler, who was never unjust to anybody. 2) The king was a good man who held strictly to the teachings of Christianity. 3) Abyssinia was one of the places where the Quraysh used to visit for trade activities. 4) The Prophet also loved the king being a good king that was a Christian, because the type of Christianity they practiced then was closer to Islam. Also because of good news he had heard about people from Abyssinia through Ummu Ayman, from authentic sources, Ummu Ayman was said to come from Abyssinia (Aş-Şallābī, 2005).

Furthermore, history had it that when the Quraysh heard about the hospitality given to them in Abyssinia, they sent 'Amru bn 'Āş to dissuade the king from chasing the Muslims away from his land. Interestingly, Allah granted the Muslims victory over the Quraysh in the palace of Negus, as Jafar bn Abī Ṭālib presented Islam and defended it before the King. One can easily conclude that the Prophet had known that they would be granted asylum, which was the reason he chose Abyssinia for the safety of the Muslims. Indeed, the Prophet will never say anything, except that which Allah instructs him on. Allah says: "Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired. Q 53:3-4)"

Summarily, the migration to Abyssinia to escape the persecution of the Quraysh was a landmark event in the history of Islam in Africa. Although Islam was present in Africa before the Prophet, the contact with Abyssinia marked a period when Allah revealed important legal commandments for humanity. This migration is highly relevant to the discussion of the renaissance of Islam on the African continent.

The Period of Prophet Yusuf.

Prophet Yusuf was sent with Islam, just like other Prophets of Allah, he did not face tribulations on the platform of preaching Islam, which might have been a renaissance during this lifetime. However, the tribulations he encountered were a sequel to the rivalry that occurred among his half-brothers towards him, except Bunyāmin—his younger brother. The Quran refers to Prophet Yusuf, the son of Ja'qub, seventeen times. His brothers left him well in Jerusalem, and they took him to Egypt, where he rose to a prominent position in the administration. Afterwards, his brothers and father located him relocated to him in Egypt. (*Islam*, t.t.)

The verse of the Quran alludes to the journey of Prophet Yusuf after his brothers plotted a scheme against him. Allah says:

“And there came travelers and they sent their water-drawer and he let down his bucket. He said: O good news! This is a youth; and they concealed him as an article of merchandise, and Allah knew what they did.” (Q: 12:19)

The Prophet Yusuf (as) was discovered by slave merchants and sold to an Egyptian, according to the Qur'an. This has the following relation:

“And the Egyptian who bought him said to his wife: Give him an honorable abode, maybe he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son. And thus did We establish Yusuf in the land and that We might teach him the interpretation of sayings; and Allah is the master of His affair, but most people do not know.” (Q:12: 21)

Allah ensured Prophet Yusuf's safety, well-being, and chance to grow up in Egypt through the Egyptian who purchased him. His buyer gave his wife careful, loving instructions on how to care for him when he was handed to her. They even considered adopting Yusuf because they believed he could be of great value to them. This is just more indication of Allah's help, backing, affection, and sympathy for the prophet (Halim, 2016).

Prophet Yusuf was sold to Egypt. As such, he was later freed and was made to be part of the Egyptian Government because of the advice he gave the king when the king had a dream. Allah says:

“And the king said: Surely, I see seven fat kine which seven lean ones devoured; and seven green ears and (seven) others dry: O chiefs! Explain to me my dream, if you can interpret the dream.” (Q: 12:43)

A new era in the life of Prophet Yusuf began when the monarch discovered the truth. Upon the arrival of Prophet Yusuf, the ruler bestowed upon him a position of great importance and trusted counsel. The Qur'an says the following concerning this:

And the king said: "Bring him to me that I may attach him to my person." Then, when he spoke to him, he said: "Verily, this day, you are with us high in rank and fully trusted. Yusuf said: "Set me over the storehouses of the land; I will indeed guard them with full knowledge" (as a minister of finance in Egypt, in place of Al-'Aziz who was dead at that time). Thus, did We give full authority to Yusuf (Joseph) in the land, to take possession therein, as when or where he likes. We bestow of Our Mercy on whom We please, and We make not to be lost the reward of Al-Muhsinun (the good doers). And verily, the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and used to fear Allah and keep their duty to Him (by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds and by performing all kinds of righteous good deeds). (Q:12: 54-57).

He went to Egypt as a slave, as you may recall, and was held captive there on the baseless and disgusting guise that he was jealous of a woman. However, Allah succeeded in doing

something that at first glance would have appeared "impossible," making Prophet Yusuf a significant figure in the Egyptian administration. Acknowledging what seems extremely unlikely but is within the realm of Allah's vastness and wisdom (Yahya, 2003). The Prophet remained the trustworthy advisor even after ascending to the throne. Using Islam as his system of rule, he taught his subjects that the majority of people were unaware that it was against the law to worship gods other than Allah. The way of truth was invited by him (*Islam*, t.t.).

Given that Prophet Yusuf reigned with Islam as a Prophet of Allah when he eventually became the king of Egypt, this implies that people were aware of Islam during his time, since all Prophets of Allah were sent with Islam.

Period of Prophet Musa: The Start of Major Renaissance

Three different kinds of narratives are included in the Qur'an: the first is about the Prophets and their wonders, followed by the stages of da'wah (missionary effort), antagonists, and disciples. like the narratives of Ibrahim, Musa, and the Prophet Nuh. Secondly, the biographies of some people, including Ashabul Kahfi, Qarun, Thaluth, and Luqmanul Hakim (Essa & Ali, 2010). Thirdly, events that took place during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, like Isra' Mi'raj, the Battle of Badr, and the Battle of Uhud (Effendi, 2018). Thus, the situation of Prophet Musa fits into the first section.

Appearing 136 times in the Quran, Prophet Musa is the most frequently named prophet. The doctrine of monotheism (tawhid: worship of One True God) was first introduced to the Egyptian populace by Yusuf before the reign of Musa. As his brothers and father, Ja'qub, too made Egypt their home and gradually converted the entire country, his purpose was reinforced. The Israelites, who were the offspring of Joshua, increased in number and social standing after Yusuf, while the Egyptians reverted to polytheism (shirk). Amidst their enslavement by the Egyptian Fir'aun, Musa was the first Prophet sent to the Israelites. After being persecuted, Musa escaped to Madyan. He was given nine amazing miracles and became a prophet at Mount Tūr in the Sinai (Abou-El-Enin, 2009).

As a result, "Fir'aun" appears 74 times in 27 separate chapters. Regarding the identity of the Fir'aun Tafsir experts were divided. Fir'aun, according to Imam al-Qurtubi, was the name of some of Egypt's greatest kings. Fir'aun was known by the name Qaboos while he lived under Musa's reign. Furthermore, he contended that Fir'aun was a quality rather than a name. Ibn Adil says it implies "defiance, resistance, grumbling" in Tafsir al-Lubab fi 'Ulum al-Kitab. Fir'aun, according to Imam al-Suyuti, is a title (Fauziah, 2023).

Going forward, as the conversation between Musa and Fir'aun makes clear, the great Renaissance started during the time of Prophet Musa. To deliver their word to Fir'aun, Musa traveled with his brother Harun. Musa spoke with him the duties of worship and monotheism, as well as Allah's kindness and Paradise. Fir'aun mockingly listened to Musa's remarks and wrote him off as insane for questioning his absolute power. The Quran 26:16–31 provides a caption for the conversation between Musa and Fir'aun. It says:

And when you both come to Fir'aun (Pharaoh), say: 'We are the Messengers of the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists). So allow the Children of Israel to go with us. [Fir'aun (Pharaoh)] said [to Musa (Moses)]: "Did we not bring you up among us as a child? And you did dwell many years of your life with us. And you did your deed, which you did (i.e. the crime of killing a man). And you are one of the ingrates. Musa (Moses) said: "I did it then, when I was ignorant (as regards my Lord and His Message). So, I fled from you when I feared you. But my Lord has granted me Hukman (i.e. religious knowledge, right judgement of the affairs and Prophethood), and appointed me as one of the Messengers. And this is the past favour with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved the Children of Israel. Fir'aun (Pharaoh)

said: "And what is the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists) Musa (Moses) said: "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty." Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said to those around: "Do you not hear (what he says)? Musa (Moses) said: "*Your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers!* Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "Verily, your Messenger who has been sent to you is a madman! Musa (Moses) said: "Lord of the east and the west, and all that is between them if you did but understand! Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "*If you choose an ilah (god) other than me, I will certainly put you among the prisoners.* Musa (Moses) said: "Even if I bring you something manifest (and convincing)? Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "Bring it forth then if you are of the truthful!

Inferring from the above dialogue, the purpose of Prophet Musa's message in Egypt was to save the children of Israel and invite Fir'aun to the Oneness of Allah. This marks a significant renaissance in North Africa, specifically in Egypt. However, Fir'aun did not accept Musa's call; he arrogated to himself the qualities of God, calling himself a deity. His arrogance led to his destruction, as documented in the Quran. Allah says: "*But We will this day deliver you with your body that you may be a sign to those after you, and most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our communications.*" (Q: 10:92)

Therefore, the meeting between Musa and Fir'aun can be seen as a meeting of two civilizations. Fir'aun's civilization was characterized by misguidance, while Musa's was founded on Divine Guidance. This resulted in a clash of civilizations between Musa and Fir'aun because historically, humanity has not easily abandoned its established civilizations. It often takes significant upheaval or conflict before a civilization based on Divine Guidance can replace one that is misguided. A similar scenario occurred with Prophet Muhammad and the Makkans. Thus, the major renaissance began during the time of Prophet Musa in Egypt, although its roots can be traced back to the time of Prophet Yusuf.

Period of the conquest of Egypt by 'Amr bn Āṣ under the Caliph Umar bn Khaṭṭāb

This section investigates the conquest of Egypt by 'Amr bn Āṣ under the Caliph of Umar bn. Khaṭṭāb. It should be noted that this period witnessed the completion of the revelation and the detailed explanation of the Islamic law, therefore it is referred to as the period of *Tajdid--revivalism*. In other words, it is worthy of note that what comes after the Message of Muhammad is known as revivalism. Hence, revivalism is the major characteristic during the time of 'Amr bn Āṣ, not the Renaissance.

Before the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Islam had spread to all parts of Arabia under his leadership, and the Byzantine begin to feel concerned about the emergence of Islamic political power in Arabia. Under the leadership of Abubakar and Umar hostilities developed in the full-scale war and the Arabs, fired with faith and confidence in their mission as the standard bearers of Islam, scored significant victories to the North in Palestine, Syria and Iraq and in the North-east into Persia and central Asia. The Islamic State soon became a major power. Meanwhile, there was a great opening up of trade and commerce between Arabia and surrounding regions, reflecting the new prosperity. Amr bn Al-As was an early Muslim trader who frequently visited North Africa for trading activities and a long side introduced Islam to the people of the region. Some articles of trade from Arabia include horses, camels and cowries in exchange for some articles like gold, salt and swords. He later becomes the governor of Egypt. (Ahmad, 2000).

Moving on, the Romans did not give up hope of recovering Syria-Palestine from the Arabs. They made Egypt as their base and frequently invaded Syria and Arabia. The Arabs rulers felt that their territories could not be made safe unless the Roman base in Egypt was destroyed and

that neighboring country was brought under their authority (Ibn Kathir, 2014). Meanwhile, under the rule of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab 'Amr was highly interested in conquering Egypt. In another account, Amr b. al-as chose his initiative without consulting Umar ibn al-Khattab, the Caliph, while al-Baladhuri suggests that the Caliph may have given the order. So, he encouraged 'Umar to do so and requested? Him to allow him to march there, for he had known. The land well before Islam when he was a trader, 'Umar permitted him to conquer Egypt and sent, An army of four thousand fighters under his Command. He paid him farewell with the following Words:

“March under the blessing of Allah. I will Pray to Allah to make my choice rightful, and I Will inform you of my final decision. If you receive orders from me to divert attention from Egypt before you go into the land, do as I order you. However, if you receive no orders as such go on with the support and help of Allah”(Ahmad, 2000).

In a short time, 'Amr conquered Egypt and established Al-Fustat, an old Islamic city situated south of Cairo today, as his base of rule. He continued his mission by marching to Alexandria and Dumat and conquered both cities. He expelled the Romans, who treated the people of Egypt unjustly, out of Egypt forever. 'Amr established justice and equality among the people of Egypt and treated them kindly. These acts made most of the people of Egypt accept Islam and help the Muslims against the Romans. 'Umar the Caliph, order 'Amr to rule Egypt and to be kind to the people of the country.(Ahmad, 2000).

Under the instructions of Umar,' Amr bn Āṣ reorganized the administration of Egypt and introduced measures to the improvement of agriculture (Algammal, 2010), trade, and commerce, lands were measured, and a fair system of taxation was introduced. Security of life, property, and religion was guaranteed (Maqāṣidu-sh-Shariah) to all peoples and communities. (Ibn Kathir, 2014) As a result, Egypt became a land of peace and prosperity. For the facility of communication, trade, and irrigation, 'Amr dug a canal connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. This canal is the forerunner of the Suez Canal (Ibn Kathir, 2014). Historians document that the 'Amr bn 'Āṣ conquest of Egypt was unprecedented, leaving a lasting mark on the country's language, religion, and arts. He established a unique civilization (Algammal, 2010).

4. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, this paper has attempted to trace the renaissance of Islam in North Africa. It also established the fact that the message of Islam has always been the same since its inception. However, during the periods of Prophets Yusuf and Musa, Islamic Law was not as detailed, marking these periods as times of Islamic Renaissance, since the law was not complete. Therefore, any significant reformation in Islam after the death of Prophet Muhammad is known as Tajdīd—Revivalism, which entails revisiting and reviving the laws of Allah that people have forgotten or lost contact with. The Muslim conquest of Egypt represents such revivalism. Prophets Musa and Yusuf were sent to Egypt, and the laws of Allah they taught had been forgotten and fallen into oblivion. The Muslims subdued Egypt to revive these lost laws nearly nine years after the death of Prophet Muhammad. This revivalism was significant as it marked the detailed reestablishment of Islamic Law.

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