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Mission: The UCLA Journal of Religion is a student-run undergraduate journal dedicated to publishing papers on diverse topics in religious studies. We aim to engage and familiarize students with the process of journal publication--a cornerstone of academic life--and provide an opportunity for them to display their research in this fascinating field. We welcome submissions incorporating all methodological and theoretical approaches, and highly encourage interdisciplinary papers. Our goal is to publish superior work regarding the academic study of religion.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Greetings, and welcome to the second volume of the *UCLA Journal of Religion*. It has been my pleasure to serve this student-run publication since its inaugural volume, and I am delighted to see the progress our team has made in growing the esteem and reach of this journal in such a short time. The Board of Editors and I had the privilege of reading some of the best undergraduate research in the field this year, with work spanning from three continents. We are incredibly grateful to the scholars who gifted us with their manuscripts and provided us with ample opportunities to discuss and learn more about the diverse topics within the study of religion.

As is often the case when obliged to selectivity, the bounty of high-quality submissions posed a challenge for us. While maintaining our commitment to the journal's mission to incorporate a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches, we were also compelled to ask ourselves very serious questions. What counts as religion? What counts as academic research within the field? How do we situate ourselves as scholars, and our publication, within the study of religion? These questions, answers to which might easily be taken for granted, were brought to surface invariably throughout the selection process. As much as I wish I could provide answers for the reader, these questions seem to be perennial within the study of religion, and the difficulty answering any one of them is what makes it one of the most fascinating fields of inquiry. For our part, the goal of this publication is to contribute to this conversation by representing original research findings, fresh analyses, and thought-provoking theories. It is our sincere hope that, by providing a platform for a diversity of narratives within the field, we can ignite curiosity in future scholars and

provide the opportunity to explore some of the most important and exciting questions of human life.

In this issue we have selected nine outstanding works in which we hope to encapsulate the inherent interdisciplinary nature of the field as well as a diversity of beliefs. The manuscripts selected cover a broad range of topics and methodologies, including philosophical, sociological, political, and institutional analyses. The authors represented in this volume clearly have scholarly potential and provide a valuable insight into the future of the field. I humbly thank them for their time and dedication to their research and the publication process.

Special thanks to Dr. Carol Bakhos and the Center for the Study of Religion at UCLA for continued support and encouragement. Thank you to the Editorial Board for their time and commitment to the journal and their enthusiasm for the entire process. Thank you to Elianna Bernstein, Danny Golde, and Shannon Liao for their outreach efforts; Jack Bastian and Ashley Mettias for marketing materials and cover design; Ashley and Zarina Wong for their work in formatting; and finally, to Danny and Zarina for copy and line editing. I also express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Ryan Gillespie for his unending support of this publication and his dedication to providing students the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the process of academic publication.

I hope you enjoy the read. Please see the final page for details regarding future call dates and publication requirements. We look forward to receiving your submissions next year!

Alicia Newman

When the Absolute is Not the Ultimate: The Mystical Experience of *Akṣarabrahman* as the Guru in the Swaminarayan Tradition

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INTRODUCTION

There are, if simplified greatly, two approaches to the study of mysticism. The first has the experience at the core and assesses various individual experiences in order to determine whether they would be considered mystical. The second approach is with the tradition at the core and would assess the theology and ontology of a tradition in order to determine whether there was a valid theoretical space for mystical experiences.

The present study is not an anthropological or ethnographical study of mysticism within the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swarminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) Swaminarayan tradition, whereby one would survey a number of individuals in India and the diaspora in order to understand the particular mystical experience of the followers. Rather, this study aims to explore the theological and ontological basis for a mystical experience within the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition, and by understanding the caveats and nuances of the tradition and its relation to the mystical, we shall be able to assess and adjust our conceptualization of the mystical in accordance with our findings. We shall explore three particular features of the tradition, for the purpose of firstly understanding whether these

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features align with the mystical, and if they do not, help to determine the boundaries of the mystical.

We shall divide this study into several sections. We shall first gain an understanding of the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition and their conception of the ontological levels of various entities. From this we shall examine our first caveat, where we shall examine whether followers of the tradition can still have a mystical experience if the experience is of an ontological being that is not the Ultimate, and we will argue that this indeed is a mystical experience within this tradition. Then we shall examine the nature of the knowledge itself, as well as its transmission, and will also determine a mystical quality to these. Finally, we shall also examine whether having this ontological being manifest in human form on Earth affects whether the experience can be considered mystical and acknowledge that the thought-process and state of understanding of the follower determines whether the interaction, on a human level, can be considered mystical, which will challenge and develop our notion of the mystical.

This study will largely refer to two texts. The first text is the *Vacanāmṛt* – a Gujarati record of the discourses of the tradition's founder, Swaminarayan, which expound the basic philosophy of the tradition. It is in question-answer format, rather than commentarial format, and contains 273 dialogues between Swaminarayan and his followers, and in the present day 'his answers provide the texts for regular discourses given in the temples and for… philosophical and theological work.'[2] This text, then, is ideally suited for this investigation due to its theological nature, and its regular usage by the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition today. The second is the *Upaniṣat-Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhāṣyam*, a Sanskrit-language commentary of the Upanishads written in a medieval-Sanskritic style by

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[2] Raymond Brady Williams, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 187.

Sadhu Bhadreshdas[3], which interprets BAPS Swaminarayan ontology in the words of the Upanishads.[4] Though this text is more nuanced and specialized (it is written in Sanskrit, therefore the majority of the lay following of the tradition are unable to access it), the text is based upon the theological and ontological interpretation provided in the *Vacanāmṛt*[5], and it links these teachings to wider Hindu literature, which allows us to compare the mystical nature of the tradition with the larger context of Hinduism as well.

INTRODUCTION TO BAPS SWAMINARAYAN ONTOLOGY

Before exploring the mystical experience within the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition, we must first understand the ontology of the tradition. There are some similarities of this ontology with Viśiṣṭādvaita (qualified non-dualism) of Rāmānujācārya, most notably the notion that during the process of attaining *mokṣa* (liberation) the *jiva* (also seen as *ātman* and similar to the Abrahamic concept of the 'soul') becomes Brahman (*brahmarūpa*) itself. However, unlike the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānujācārya, the BAPS Swaminarayan ontology contains five distinct ontological categories (*jīva* [akin to soul], *īśvara* [powerful beings], *māyā* [the illusory layer], *brahman* [here it is also called *Akṣarabrahman* or simply *Akṣara*] and *parabrahman* [the highest entity, also called *Puruṣottama*]), whereas Rāmānujācārya only describes three ontological categories (*ātman, māya* and *brahman*). Moreover, the BAPS Swaminarayan ontology gives *Akṣarabrahman* four distinct forms, which are: *Cidākāśa* (conscious space); *Akṣardhām* (the abode of *parabrahman*); *Akṣardhāmmā Sevak*

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[3] Arun Brahmbhatt, 'The Swaminarayan Commentarial Tradition,' in *Swaminarayan Hinduism: Tradition, Adaptation, Modernity,* ed. Raymond Brady Williams, Yogi Trivedi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 143.
[4] I will assess, in particular, the comments upon the Mundaka Upanishad, where the ontology of the tradition is seen particularly prevalently.
[5] Translations of both of these texts, in the present study, are my own.

(servant in the abode); and *Pragaṭa* (manifest on earth in human form).[6] The form of *Akṣarabrahman* which the Abrahamic mystical understanding most closely aligns with is that of the *cidākāśa* (conscious space). The Vacanāmṛt, a Gujarati scripture which is held in high regard by the followers of the BAPS Swaminarayan Tradition, states in Gadhada 1.21 that '*ek to nirākār ekras caitanya che tene cidākāśa kahie,*'[7] ([One form of Akṣara] is formless and purely *caitanya* [consciousness], it is called *cidākāśa* [conscious space]). The form of *Akṣaradhām* is akin to notions of a heavenly realm or paradise. These two can be considered easily within current constructions of mysticism, as they resemble forms that we can see in other traditions such as Christianity and Islam. The *Akṣardhāmmā Sevaka* is a physical form of *Akṣarabrahman* in this heavenly realm. However, the fourth form, the *pragata* (manifest) form challenges our current construction of mysticism greatly, as the notion of a mystical experience suggests a removal or a distance from the human state or the physical realm. Therefore, it is this aspect which will be explored in greater detail within this study.

MYSTICISM AND SWAMINARAYAN

Mysticism continues to be a contentious term to define and is in itself encapsulated within intricacies of language and power. It is also a largely descriptive definition, rather than prescriptive, and is informed by the constructions of Christian Mysticism, where the study of it originated in the seventeenth century[8]. Developing upon this, William James states four conditions for the mystical experience, which are: ineffability (direct experience), noetic quality (a state of knowledge), transiency (experiences

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[6] Smit Ghadia, "Akshara and Its Four Forms in Swaminarayan's Doctrine," in *Swaminarayan Hinduism: Tradition, Adaptation, and Modernity,* ed. Raymond Williams, Yogi Trivedi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 162-163.
[7] *Vacanāmṛt* (Ahmedabad: Swaminarayan Aksharpith, 2001), 33.
[8] Michael Stoeber, "The Comparative Study of Mysticism," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 3.

are temporary), and passivity (though the individual can will it, the control of the event is held by the higher power).[9] These four qualities largely frame the modern construction of mysticism, however there are certain implied distinctions which James alludes to, but neglects to specifically mention. One of these is the quality of intangibility, where the mystic practitioner interacts with a higher power that is not ordinarily tangible unless in a higher state of consciousness. The BAPS Swaminarayan interpretation of the *Akṣarabrahman* guru, conversely, implies a form that is always tangible and manifest. Moreover, it cannot simply be any interaction which is "union with the Absolute, and nothing else,"[10] as Evelyn Underhill argues, because any mundane action between the *Akṣarbrahman* Guru and an individual would be classified as mystical. Rudolf Otto compares the concept of Mysticism in the Hindu tradition through the lenses of Eckhart and Śaṅkara. Otto demonstrates the similarities between the two lenses in order to suggest a commonality between all mystical experiences, though he does offer some slight difference on the semantic level between the Śaṅkara concept of *brahman* and Eckhart's concept of God, which manifests as a difference between the two mystical experiences.[11] Otto comments upon the nature of the experience being informed by its unity in the case of Śaṅkara, arguing that the knowledge is not one that can be learnt through logical means (*tarka*) and therefore its proof only exists within the experience of it, an aspect which we can attempt to find in the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition. Most significantly, Otto's work also determines that an experience of unity with *brahman* can be considered a mystical experience.[12] This unity with *brahman* also constitutes the mystical experience of the follower of the

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[9] William James, *The Varieties of Mystical Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 380-381.

[10] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1911), 71.

[11] Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West* (London: Theosophical Publishing House, 1932), 84.

[12] Ibid.*,* 77.

BAPS Swaminarayan tradition, as the mystical experience occurs between the individual and an *Akṣarbrahman* form.

Additionally, John Carman conceptualizes "Hindu 'Bhakti' as Theistic Mysticism,"[13] which is useful as the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition being a *Bhakti sampradāya* (tradition of *bhakti* – devotion). He offers three categories which are common to definitions of mysticism and argues that mystical traditions 'tend to stress'[14] one or more of these features, namely, "a particular ontology… an immediacy or intensity of experience… [and/or] a separation from the physical,"[15] and these features are common to both Hindu conceptions of mysticism as well as Abrahamic ones. However, this model explores the mystical relationship between the personal deity (akin to *Parabrahman* in the BAPS Swaminarayan ontology) and the individual (ātman) through *bhakti,* as opposed to the relationship between the individual (*ātman*) and the Guru who is *Akṣarabrahman.* Therefore, this model too has its flaws. Indeed, the introduction of the manifest form of *Akṣarabrahman* as the Guru adds its own intricacies and nuances to the nature of the mystical experience, and as such, these will have to be evaluated largely on their own terms, through the scriptures of the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition itself.

WHAT IF BRAHMAN IS NOT ULTIMATE?

Where the Abrahamic mystical experience would explore the union between the soul and God or the Ultimate absolute, the BAPS Swaminarayan experience would explore the union between the *ātman* and *brahman,* where *brahman* is not the highest or most powerful entity within the ontology. Here we find our first juncture, as models provided by previous academic study of mysticism tend not to encounter this issue. For

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[13] John Carman, "Conceiving Hindu "Bhakti" as Theistic Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Religious Traditions,* ed. Stephen Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 191-225.
[14] Ibid., 192.
[15] Ibid.

instance, Otto's work on Śaṅkara does not distinguish between *parabrahman* and *brahman* in the same way as the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition does. The commentary of Sadhu Bhadreshdas remarks upon the following verse of the Mundaka Upanishad:

> *Divyo hyamūrtaḥ puruṣaḥ sa bāhyābhyantaro hyajaḥ. Aprāṇo hyamanāḥ śubhro hyakṣarātparataḥ paraḥ* (Mundaka Upanishad 2.1.2)

> Puruṣottama [Parabrahman] is divine, above *māyā* [the illusory layer], pervasive inside all, and unborn. It is breathless, without worldly desires, pure, and is higher than the high, the *Akṣara*.

In his evaluation of the last clause of this statement (*hyakṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ* - it is higher than the high, the *Akṣara*), Bhadreshdas makes the case that *Akṣarabrahman* is not the highest ontological entity. This would challenge the notion of a mystical experience, as an experience of *brahman* is not necessarily with the highest ontological power, therefore it has the possibility of being considered as a non-mystical union by Underhill. However, *Vacanāmṛt* Gadhada I-37 argues '*ane je evā yatharth bhagavānnā bhakta che teṇu darśan to bhagavānnā darśan tulya che*,'[16] (and the sight of this bhakta [*brahman*] is equal to the sight of *parabrahman* himself) suggesting that it is possible to consider an experience with *Akṣarabrahman* as equivalent to an experience of *parabrahman*. Furthermore, Sadhu Bhadreshdas elaborates that this *Akṣarabrahman* is the bridge by which the aspirant reaches *parabrahman* (*teṣu… mumukṣubhaḥ… paramātma-sahajānanda-paramānanda-prapta…*)[17] as *Akṣarbrahman*, though not the Ultimate absolute, can still only be perceived in that way by human minds, therefore this would be akin to a mystical union.

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[16] *Vacanāmṛt*, 66.

[17] Sadhu Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhāṣyam: Īśādyaṣṭopaniṣatsvāminārāyaṇabhāṣyam*. Ahmedabad: Swaminarayan Aksharpith, (2009), 251.

IS THE KNOWLEDGE MYSTICAL?

Having determined that the mystical experience of the *ātman* meeting the non-ultimate *brahman* can be considered mystical, we need to evaluate whether the nature of the knowledge of the itself can be considered mystical, and therefore fulfils the criteria of the noetic quality argued by James[18]. In comparison to early Biblical and Greek mystical traditions, there is a notion of *mysteria* contained within the knowledge, something secret which was only supposed to be "known to the initiated (*mystes*)… which though not necessarily difficult to understand, should not be revealed."[19] We shall see that the BAPS Swaminarayan Tradition holds a very similar idea to this knowledge of the *mysteria,* however, with the small caveat that though the knowledge can be revealed or seen, it can only be understood (and experienced) by the grace of the Guru who is *Akṣarbrahman,* fulfilling James' quality of passivity.

We see this distinction between the scriptural knowledge of the Vedas and the knowledge of *mysteria* alluded to by the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition in the following verse of the Mundaka Upanishad. It states:

> *Tasmai sa hovāca. Dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yadbrahmavido vadanti parā caivā'parā ca* (Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.4)

> [Angirasa] said to [Shaunaka]: 'There are two 'knowledges' to be known,' say the knowers of Brahman. 'The higher, and the non-higher.'

Here, we can see a specific distinction between scriptural wisdom and this other, more hidden knowledge. The commentary of Bhadreshdas argues

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[18] James, *Varieties of Mystical Experience*, 380.
[19] Geoffrey Parrinder, *Mysticism in the World's Religions* (London: Sheldon Press, 1976), 9.

that '*parā*' (higher) refers to the knowledge which the best and relates to liberation. It is on the subject of *Akṣar* (Brahman) and *Puruṣottama* (Parabrahman) which is in the form of *aparokṣa* (made unhidden) knowledge which is produced by the words of the *Śāstra* (scriptures) which are explained by the Guru (*parā guru-tad-upadiṣṭa-śāstra-vacana-janyā'parokṣa-jñāna-rūpā'kṣara-puruṣottama-viṣayiṇī sākṣān-mokṣa-karīti*)[20]. In the glossing of *parā*, we see that there are several features of the knowledge which give an appearance of the mystical. Firstly, there is reference to the knowledge being of a higher nature. Secondly, the knowledge is hidden, or imperceptible to those who do not have the understanding. The third apparent feature is that the knowledge is passed down by a teacher *(guru)* to his student, which builds an idea of a tradition and a lineage, similar to that of the Mahāsaṅgica school of Buddhism[21]. Finally, we see that the knowledge is contained within *śāstra* (scripture) but it is not immediately perceptible, suggesting that the knowledge is present only in the subtext of the larger Vedic corpus, and exists above it.

The nature of the knowledge is further explained in the following verse:

> *Tatrā'parā ṛgvedo Yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'tharvavedaḥ śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṃ chando jyotiṣamiti. Atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate.* (Mundaka Upanishad 1.1.5)

> There the non-higher is the Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva Vedas as well as articulation, rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody and astrology. Thus the higher is that by which Akṣara (brahman) is understood.

Here, the distinction between scriptural and mystical knowledge is made even clearer, as the higher knowledge is that which leads to the understanding and the experiencing of Akṣarbrahman. The first part of the statement is explicit in categorising the vast corpus of the four Vedas and

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[20] Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhāṣyam*, 234.
[21] Sadhu Santideva, *Mysticism in Jainism and Buddhism* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2000), 64.

the six Vedāṅgas, which themselves compromise the basis of 'Vedic' knowledge, as being of the lower kind in relation to the knowledge of Akṣara. Certainly, in light of this statement, we are able to see the inklings of a mystical knowledge in this tradition, as there is this element of a hidden knowledge which exists within, but, is positioned above the core scriptures of the larger tradition (in this case the Vedas and their Vedāṅgas). However, the last statement in the verse is where the greater links to a mystical tradition lie. Bhadreshdas states that '*parā*' (higher) here is that which is the main objective of teachings of the Upanishads. It is that of *brahmavidyā* (knowledge of Brahman) which is comprised of knowing both *Akṣara* and *Puruṣottama* (*parabrahman*). '*Yayā*' refers to that *vidyā* (knowledge) which is obtained by the contact and the teachings etc. of the Guru who is the form of Brahman ('*brahmasvarūpa-guru-dṛḍhatama-prasaṅg-opadeśādi-prāpta-vidyayā*'[22]). Here we see even more clearly that the knowledge can only be obtained (*prāpta*) by the contact (*prasaṅga*) with the Guru, which again suggests the need for a lineage and a tradition, in order to pass the knowledge forward, and for it to be understood in the first place.

The notion of a lineage is alluded to again in a later verse, which states:

> *Tasmai sa vidvān upasannāya samyak praśāntacittāya śamānvitāya. Yenākṣaram puruṣam veda satyaṃ provāca taṃ tattvato brahmavidyām* (Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.13)

> He [the Guru], knowing it, teaches it to that student, who takes refuge in him, who is joined with restraint, who does not have any worldly attachments or flaws. *Brahmavidyā is* that by which *Akṣara* and *Puruṣa* (*Puruṣottama*) are truly known.

Again, we see the importance of lineage within the transmission of this mystical knowledge. The only way in which the knowledge can be truly (*satyaṃ*) known is through the Guru, or teacher. Therefore, we can argue

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that the knowledge of *brahmavidyā* [knowledge of *brahman*] does appear to have similarities with a mystical notion of knowledge, and therefore we can consider this knowledge mystical, both in its nature and its transmission. Furthermore, this also suggests that the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition is a mystical tradition as the knowledge of both *Akṣarabrahman* and *Parabrahman* being distinct entities can be found within the Vedic corpus, however it appears hidden to those outside of the tradition, and therefore can only be experienced fully by those within the tradition.

THE GURU AS AKṢARABRAHMAN

Having now established that the mystical can be experienced in a non-ultimate entity (*Akṣarabrahman*) and that the knowledge of this *Akṣarabrahman* can be considered mystical due to its hidden nature and its method of transmission via a Guru, we must now align the two concepts. We see this conflation in the commentary of Sadhu Bhadreshdas, who references the twelfth verse of the second part of the first book of the Mundaka Upanishad:

> *Parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirvedamāyānnāstyakṛtaḥ kṛtena. Tadvijñānārthaṃ sa gurumevābhigacchetsamitpāṇiḥ śrotriyaṃ brahma niṣṭham* (Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12)

> Examining the world as being obtained by karma, the knowers of Brahma find that which is unmade [*brahman*] cannot be attained. For the sake of that knowledge, he goes to that Guru, who knows the scriptures, is Brahman, and is fixed, with gifted hands.

We are relayed the notion that only the Guru is able to give mystical knowledge. But the verse elaborates upon this by suggesting that the aspirant seeks the refuge (*abhigacchet*) of the Guru and resorts to him totally. Furthermore, the aspirant goes to the Guru *samitpāṇiḥ* (with a gift in his hand, traditionally wood for his fire. The notion here is of sacrifice,

according to the commentary).[23] Additionally, the commentary qualifies the Guru with three adjectives: the Guru is '*śrotriyaṃ*' (he knows the scriptures well) and therefore is able to give the mystical knowledge which is hidden within the scriptures; the Guru is also *niṣṭham* (he is fixed, non-moving, non-perishing etc.) and this is by virtue of him being *brahman;* here, the commentator takes '*brahma*' to mean *sākśādakṣaraṃ brahma* (he is the *Akṣara* who is manifest/direct/in front of the eyes).[24] Bhadreshdas suggests that the Guru is the manifest (*pragaṭa*), human form of *brahman*. This marks the knowledge given by *brahman* as direct knowledge, as it is not mediated through a scripture or a book, but from the source itself. But more significantly, the explanation suggests a direct experience of *brahman* itself on behalf of the aspirant, which fulfils another qualification of James' definition: ineffability.

THE *MANUSHYABHAV-DIVYABHAV* PARADIGM

With the contentions of a non-ultimate absolute, the nature of the knowledge and the transmission of the knowledge being addressed, we can conclude that there are somewhat mystical tendencies to be found within all of these. Ultimately, when viewed from a *laukika* (worldly perspective), we are met with a unique contention: with the Guru as *Akṣarbrahman* being manifest upon earth today, does every meeting (mundane or sacred) between any individual (*ātman*) and the *Akṣarbrahman* Guru necessarily count as a mystical experience? If a mystical experience is taken *only* to suggest a union between the Absolute and the individual, then, in all circumstances, every meeting of the *ātman* and the *Akṣarbrahman* Guru can be considered mystical. However, the reality is that, at least outwardly, these interactions do not appear mystical in every case. Therefore, there must be some indicator or differentiator between the mystical and the

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[23] Bhadreshdas, *Upaniṣat-Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhashyam*, 254.
[24] Ibid.

non-mystical experiences. Hanna Kim argues that "Swaminarayan *bhakti* rests on appreciating the relationship of devotees to guru and to God and on recognizing that each is also a distinct ontological entity."[25] Her explanation suggests this difference in the Guru, the Guru being *Akṣarabrahman* and therefore ontologically higher than human, but also suggests that the relationship between the Guru and the follower is the differentiator between the types of experiences one may have with the Guru. She continues, arguing that as "'the means,' *sādhan bhakti* serves to help Swaminarayan devotees achieve the desired ontological state, known as *brahmarūpa,* that will make possible an eternal offering of devotion, *sādhya bhakti,* to God."[26] The distinction being made here is that the aspirant performs *bhakti* towards the Guru until they become *brahmarūpa* (literally, with the ontological form of *brahman*). This, arguably, is the mystical experience of the devotee, as their ontological state is literally being merged with that of *brahman,* a higher ontological being. The transformation, or the union, of the individual with *brahman* is the result of mystical knowledge, but it is also the mystical experience in itself. Once this state and experience has been achieved, the action of bhakti changes from being *sādhan* (a means of having this experience of *brahman*) into *sādhya* (for the experiencing of *brahman* and *parabrahman* by devotion to *parabrahman* as *brahman*), which suggests a continuation of the mystical experience perpetually, which breaks the final feature of James' argument.

I believe that the moment of distinction argued by Kim is sufficient in demonstrating that there is a potential for mystical experience with the manifest form of *Akṣarabrahman* as the Guru. However, the perception of the mystical experience is also marked by another significant factor. In the

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[25] Hanna Kim, "Svāminārāyaṇa: *Bhaktiyoga* and the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru," in *Gurus of Modern Yoga,* ed. Mark Singleton, Ellen Goldberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 239.
[26] Ibid.

Vacanāmṛt, in Pancāḷā 4, we are given a description of *manuṣyabhāv* (human characteristics) and *divyabhāv* (divine characteristics) which can be seen within *Parabrahman,* and by extension of this, in *Akṣarabrahman.* The text argues "*Ane e bhagvān manuṣyanā dehane dhāraṇ kare che tyāre manuṣyanā jevī ja krīya kare che,*"[27] (and when that God takes a human form, he performs actions like a human), suggesting that the manifest form of *Akṣarabrahman* not only has a human form, but also performs actions like a human. However, the text also argues that "*ene darśane karīne manuṣyane potānā kalyāṇano niścay nathi thato je, 'marū kalyāṇ thayu,'*"[28] (merely by the sight of [*akṣarabrahman/ parabrahman*] the human is not convinced that her liberation is fixed, or thinks "my liberation has been achieved"). This suggests that merely seeing *Akṣarabrahman* in the form of the Guru is not enough to have the complete mystical experience, and nor would any mundane interactions such as speaking to or touching *Akṣarabrahman.* In short, when the interactions are characterised by an understanding of the manifest form of *Akṣarabrahman* having *manuṣyabhāv* (with human characteristics), the experience of contact with this Guru is a mundane experience. However, when the interaction is characterised by the understanding of *divyabhāv* (divine characteristics) within the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru, then the experience appears to manifest itself as a more mystical experience. The same Vacanāmṛt passage argues, "*emā kāik divyabhāv che te buddhivānanā jāṇyāmā āve che; teṇe karīne bhagavānpaṇāno niśchay kare che.*" (The intelligent one believes that there are some divine characteristics in [the manifest forms of *Parabrahman* and *Akṣarabrahman*] and in doing this he develops conviction in [*Parabrahman* and *Akṣarabrahman*]). This is where I argue the true distinction between mystical interaction of the individual and the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru, and ordinary interaction lies. When the individual

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[27] *Vacanāmṛt*, 336.
[28] Ibid., 338.

is both conscious of the true nature of the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru and also sees *divyabhāv* within him, the interaction between the two has the potential to be considered mystical. Of course, the caveat explored earlier still stands: it is at the discretion or the compassion of the Guru to grant the experience and the knowledge in the first place, however, without the understanding of a *divyabhāv* nature, the interaction of an aspirant and the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru might not be considered mystical, as the individual would not have the ability to obtain the ontological state of *brahmarūpa* required to have this mystical experience in the manner explained by the tradition. Therefore, in this way, we are able to include the caveat of the particular perspective of the individual in defining whether their interactions with a manifest form of *Akṣarabrahman* can be considered mystical or not.

From the nuance demonstrated by the perspective of the individual in this case, we can argue that perhaps our definition of the mystical may need to be adjusted in order to account for this notion. While on the surface, a *manuṣyabhāv* and *divyabhāv* experience of *brahman* may appear the same, they differ greatly in their reception by the individual, and also differ on an ontological and theological level. By extension of this feature in the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition, we may also argue that the perspective of any individual is a significant factor in determining the mystical nature of an experience in a tradition, as without the appropriate thought-process and understanding, an experience or interaction with a higher being may either be categorized as ordinary by the individual or may be understood as something else. Furthermore, it could be argued that without the right understanding in the first place, the mystical experience of an individual may never occur at all. Therefore, we may argue that the nuance of understanding of an individual is a significant factor in any mystical experience.

The nature of mystical experience of the manifest form of *Akṣarbrahman* within BAPS Swaminarayan tradition also allows us to expand the notion of the mystical to that which can be seen physically on the Earth, and not one that merely exists outside of the physical realm. Because the *Akṣarabrahman* Guru is physically present in a human form on Earth, according to the tradition, and the Guru walks, talks, and eats, we cannot simply limit our understanding of the mystical to that which is otherworldly or occurs only in separation to the physical body as alluded by Carman earlier, as the mystical experience of the follower in the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition can and does occur in the physical realm, and is experienced by the physical body at the seemingly ordinary level of consciousness. Indeed, because of this distinction, we must further expand our definition of the mystical to encompass these physical interactions, and not simply refer to them as occurring totally separate to and outside of ordinary interactions and experiences.

Through the examination of the nuanced ontology of the BAPS Swaminarayan tradition, we are able to find new criteria upon which we can critique and adapt the academic construction of mysticism and its particular understanding of the mystical experience. And through the understanding of a non-ultimate *brahman*, the notion of a mystical experience being limited to the union with an ultimate absolute has been challenged and critiqued to a certain extent, though we still find that within the ontological conception and understanding of the tradition, this experience is still akin to the experience of the ultimate *parabrahman*. From this provision, we are able to determine that the nature of the mystical knowledge of *Akṣarabrahman* and *parabrahman* can be considered mystical, even though the two can be seen in the Vedic corpus, as the mystical experience with *Akṣarbrahman* can only be experienced by followers of the tradition who have been given the understanding and experience by the Guru. Furthermore, the nature of the direct experience

given by the Guru suggests that the method of transmission of the knowledge is of a mystical variety as well. The significant contention to the implicit notion of the mystical experience being of an ethereal or intangible nature is challenged by the tradition's conception of the *Akṣarbrahman* Guru as being manifest on Earth in human form. Here we have seen that due to this tangibility, the mere interaction of an individual and the manifest form of *Akṣarbrahman* is not enough to constitute a mystical experience in itself. However, by examining these constructions through the lenses of *manuṣyabhāv* (human attributes) and *divyabhāv* (divine attributes) we are able to acknowledge that the state of consciousness and thought-process of the individual within the experience is also a factor in determining the nature of an experience, and is a factor in its quality, as a mystical experience.

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Belief-In and Belief-That as a Solution to the Problem of Evil

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INTRODUCTION

Anthony Flew and Basil Mitchell's discussion in "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium" has captured intuitive responses held by individuals on both sides of the religious debate concerning the nature of theistic belief. Flew and Mitchell's dialogue concerns the Christian God; hence, I focus on a defense of the *internal coherency* of Christianity and utilize Christian theology. According to Flew, Christian responses to the Problem of Evil (POE) are contradictory and unsatisfactory. Mitchell, on the other hand, believes that Christianity is able to respond to the POE affectively and that Flew has an incorrect understanding of the nature of Christian belief. In this paper, I will consider the distinction between belief-in and belief-that as a response to the POE and to better understand the discussion of Flew and Mitchell. Flew seems to think that religious belief is belief-that; it is fully reducible to a determinate set of propositions, leaving it vulnerable to contradiction. Mitchell believes that religious belief is belief-in and adheres to a more complex view of the development and response of Christianity to the POE.

I will first present some distinctions between belief-in and belief-that. Then, I will discuss Flew's argument. I argue that because Flew fails to take the nuances of evaluative belief-in into consideration in his argument,

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his argument mischaracterizes Christianity and thus fails to criticize it. I will discuss how Mitchell's objection correctly captures Christianity through the underlying assumptions about evaluative belief-in and belief-that in his argument. I will build my own objections to Flew upon Mitchell's objection, and finally I will consider an objection to my view and respond to it. I conclude that the rational basis for making qualifications, the "God-centered" nature of Christianity, the fully unknowable nature of God, and the Christian's trust in God make it such that Christians do not need to provide an explanation for specific instances of suffering. In addition, Christian belief embodies the structure and characteristics of belief-in and accurately captures how the Christian engages in her relationship with God. Such a perspective is necessary for non-Christians to consider when arguing against the internal coherence of Christianity and for Christians to consider to better understand the nature of their faith.

2. BELIEF-IN AND BELIEF-THAT

My goal in this section is to explain the differences between belief-in (more specifically, evaluative belief-in) and belief-that. I will use the same terminology used by H. H. Price in "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'." The Book of James (2:19) describes an intuitively appealing case of belief-that: the demons believe the *proposition* that there is one God, and they shudder. This example implies that there is a difference between belief-that and belief-in, as the demons only possess the former. Belief-in takes as its objects personal or non-personal entities and, according to Price, necessarily involves attitudes of esteem and trust.[2] Belief-that is directed towards a proposition or something "essentially proposition-like."[3] For example, I believe that UCLA is located in Southern California. Since the

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[2] H. H. Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," *Religious Studies* 1, no. 1 (1965): 15.
[3] Michelle Montague, "Against Propositionalism," *Nous* 41, no. 3, (2007): 503.

demons only have belief-that and no belief-in, the belief that the Christian God exists is compatible with their attitude of hatred and fear towards God.

It is important to note a further distinction within belief-in. There is factual belief-in and evaluative belief-in. Factual belief-in can be reduced to belief-that—one believes in something in the factual sense.[4] For example, if I say I believe in Abraham Lincoln, I am just expressing my belief that there was such a person who does possess the characteristics commonly attributed to him. On the other hand, evaluative belief-in cannot be reduced to belief-that because reductive analyses fail to render the nuances of evaluative belief-in—namely the characteristic of trust—into propositions.[5] Also, I argue that evaluative belief-in is not factitive— just because someone believes in something does not make it true. I agree with Price's view that evaluative belief-in cannot be reduced to belief-that, and I will use Price's characterization of evaluative belief-in and belief-that when explaining Flew and Mitchell's arguments. From now on, when I use "belief-in," I am referring to evaluative belief-in.

When Price's framework of belief-in is applied to belief in God, it is clear that belief in God cannot be reduced to a finite set of propositions. Flew fails to take this into consideration in his argument, and I will later show how such a mistake is fatal to his argument. The important characteristics in belief in God that I wish to apply to the POE include esteeming God, trust, and prospectiveness (these are all Price's terms). According to Price, esteeming God can be reduced to a set of propositions by using the phrases "good at…" and "good thing that…." For example, one can say that God is good at loving humans (perhaps even that, compared to all other personal entities that exist, he is the best at loving us) and it is a good thing that

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[4] Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," 10.
[5] Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," 25.

God is good at loving humans. However, this shows that only a certain aspect of evaluative belief-in can be reduced to belief-that. Price claims trust, however, is not reducible to belief-that because although believing certain propositions is necessary condition for trust (namely that the trustee has characteristics that indicate it can be trusted), that does not mean they are sufficient for trust. Just because I accept a certain number of propositions about God does not guarantee that I trust him. These propositional beliefs play a certain role in one's belief in God, but they are not constitutive of belief-in. Furthermore, belief-in God is prospective: it has a reference to the future.[6] In other words, when I believe in God, I not only believe that he his good, but that he will continue to be good.

Finally, I argue that the proper name "God" is not a description but rather a rigid designator in the Kripkean sense, which has important implications for the relationship between belief-that and belief-in. One can talk about an object (i.e. use a name) without associating a description with it.[7] This is especially important with regards to Christianity, since it involves a textual tradition that uses the name "God" but also connects Him to different descriptions at different times (e.g. pre-Messianic era and post-Messianic era).[8] Thus, belief-in does not necessitate that there be descriptive content associated with a name. So the question then becomes: what is the importance of belief-that (propositional and/or descriptive content) in Christian belief? Since non-Christians and Christians alike can talk about God without needing any descriptive or propositional content, why should belief-in be any different?

One can *talk* about something (e.g. hold belief-that statements) without having a conception of what it is, but one cannot *believe in* something (the

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[6] Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," 19.

[7] See Kripke's arguments in "Lecture 2" against Theses 2-4 of the Cluster Theory in Saul A Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[8] I thank Professor Calvin Normore for this particularly helpful point.

object of belief is not restricted to God only) without having a correct conception of what it is. Certain descriptive belief-that statements are necessary in having a correct conception of God. This not only prevents the Christian from unknowingly worshipping something that is not God but also provides a foundation for doctrinal and spiritual development. A correct conception of God leads one to the right object, and the more the conception deviates from the conventional conception, the more reason there is to call one's belief in God into doubt. For example, I believe in my mother. Although I have a different relationship with her than I do with God, my belief-in has all the important components. Suppose I say, "I believe in my mother. Even though she is often busy with her duties in the Oval Office, I appreciate that she makes time for me." The intuitive reaction would be, "are you sure you are talking about your mother?" The description I used, which indicated how I conceive of her, is incorrect. If I insist upon my claim, it seems that I do not understand who my mother is. I can still believe in her, but my belief-in is shallow, easily proven false, and misguided because of my improper conception of her. It would be equally, if not more concerning and nonsensical, if I said, "I believe in my mother, but I have no idea what she is like and I do not care." Likewise, the Christian believes that an improper conception of God deeply impacts the coherency of Christianity, argumentative power, and their personal relationship with God. In other words, in order to believe in God in the evaluative sense one must also believe certain things about God in the factual sense.[9] A correct conception of the Christian God consists in believing that (1) He exists and (2) He is triune (God eternally exists in three co-equal Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Thus, even as Christians become divided on complex doctrinal issues, a correct conception of God ensures that they have fundamental union in terms of their belief. This view also easily clarifies whether one believes in the

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[9] Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," 14.

Christian God; if one rejects (1) and/or (2) then that is evidence against the claim that the person believes in the Christian God.

However, since belief-in God is not reducible to a set of propositions, having a correct conception of God is necessary but not sufficient for belief-in God. Just because I believe that God exists and that He is triune does not mean I believe in him (e.g. the demons in James 2:19). The role of descriptive content in Christian belief is not that it picks out the right object for us to talk about but rather that it ensures we have a proper understanding of the object we claim to believe in. The difference between belief-in and belief-that seems to concern whether the type of belief in question is wholly reducible to propositions and the components involved in the belief (e.g. trust and a proper conception of the entity).

3. FLEW

I interpret Flew's main argument in "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium" as stating that when the Christian is faced with what seems to be defeaters to their belief in God (namely the existence of evil), they qualify their belief in God in to the point where their belief statement seems to contradict other belief statements in their belief system. This makes Christianity appear internally contradictory because it cannot account for the existence of evil without contradiction. I think Flew does capture an intuitive response some may have when interacting with Christianity—especially in the context of a skeptical debate. This is illustrated by the Gardener Parable, where two explorers disagree about whether a gardener tends a clearing in a jungle. After conducting several tests that each turned out to be unable to prove the gardener's existence, the explorer who believes in the gardener's existence continues to qualify his belief that the gardener exists in the face of defeaters. He begins with belief-in the proposition that "some gardener must tend this plot" and qualifies his belief until he arrives at the proposition "there is a gardener,

invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves." To this, the skeptic explorer, who represents many individuals' intuitive response, claims that the other explorer has qualified his belief so much that it seems he has contradicted his original statement that "some gardener must tend this plot."[10] The skeptic explorer claims, "'how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?'" The believer-explorer qualifies rather than specifies his belief because as seen by the empirical tests the explorers conduct to determine the gardener's existence (e.g. an electric fence and bloodhounds); they make assumptions about what the gardener is like. After this, the believer-explorer revises them in light of the data from the investigations. This is a subtle dis-analogy to the Christian faith, where the Christian is not on a journey to find God—she at least has some basic knowledge concerning what He is like (e.g. statements (1) and (2) from Section 2). But for the sake of the argument I will concur that Christians are qualifying their belief.

To Flew, religious belief seems to be analogous to this phenomenon of qualification in the Parable, where Christians qualify their belief-that statements concerning God to the point where it seems like their belief-that statements concerning God are formed arbitrarily and contradict other belief-that statements in their system. Furthermore, Flew believes that, like the believer explorer's belief-that concerning the gardener, Christianity is irrational because its proponents seem to avoid seriously considering what seems to be counter-evidence for their belief-that statements concerning God. Instead, they qualify their belief that God exists in an attempt to maintain it in light of counter-evidence. Although Flew's argument seems to be compelling at first, a closer examination of

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[10] Antony Flew, R.M. Hare, and Basil Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium," in *The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Basil Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1.

Flew's assumptions indicates that he views religious belief as belief-that, not belief-in, an assumption that I argue overlooks what occurs when Christians make qualifications.

The reason why Flew believes Christianity is arbitrary and irrational is because he holds the assumption that Christians must be able to formulate a finite set of belief-that reasons at any time and that, in the face of what appears to be defeating evidence (the existence of evil), they must admit their belief to be wrong. Furthermore, instead of doing this, Flew assumes that Christians qualify their beliefs to the point where the propositions they hold seem to contradict their belief that God is good. Flew's assumption that religious belief is just belief-that is embedded in the Gardener Parable, which I will later show is a false analogy to religious belief. The believer explorer originally held the view that "some gardener must tend this plot" and continues to construct a finite set of propositions that he believes in, but the qualifications he made to his original set of belief-that statements is so severe that it appears to contradict his original claim that "some gardener must tend this plot."[11] If Flew is correct in thinking that religious belief was only belief-that, then religious belief would indeed be irrational assuming that objections to Christianity were, in fact, correct.

The example that Flew believes is analogous to the Gardener Parable is one where someone believes (that) the initial proposition (P) "God loves us as a father loves his children." When they see a child dying of inoperable cancer of the throat, they make the qualification to their original belief set and hold the additional belief, "God's love is 'not merely a human love'." Although the additional belief is compatible with the original assertion, when the skeptic asks, "what does this appropriately qualified love really

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[11] Flew, Hare, and Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium," 1.

guarantee against" if it allows such tremendous suffering? Flew believes that the Christian would then have to continue qualifying their claim until it seems to contradict their original belief that "God loves us as a father loves his children." Here we can see that from Flew's perspective, it seems the Christian lacks the many characteristics of belief-in and only holds a finite set of propositions to be true. If it were true that religious belief was simply belief-that, then Flew is correct in demonstrating that religious belief is irrational. However, as we evaluate Mitchell's argument from the perspective that religious belief is belief-in, we will find that Flew's argument mischaracterizes Christianity.

4. MITCHELL

Mitchell's argument provides a better characterization of religious belief because he recognizes that belief-in and belief-that are both involved in Christian belief. According to Mitchell, Christians admit that suffering counts against their assertion that God loves humans, but they do not allow such evidence to count *decisively* against their assertion. This is because they are "committed by [their] faith to trust in God."[12] Here we can see that Mitchell assumes religious belief is not belief-that because of the component of trust. In fact, Mitchell describes religious belief as a "trial" because there is a tension the Christian must address between P (God loves us as a father loves his children) and the existence of suffering. However, it is precisely this trial that makes Christianity rational. Contrary to what Flew thinks, Christians do not ignore the seemingly defeating evidence against the propositions they hold, but because they trust God, they do not let such evidence successfully defeat their belief in him. Thus, to Mitchell, P is a significant article of faith. The Christian's belief in God, and more specifically the properties of belief-in, allow the Christian to reconcile the tension between the existence of evil and P. To Flew,

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[12] Flew, Hare, and Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium," 5.

however, Christians who hold such a proposition treat it as "vacuous formulae" without any bearing upon their life.[13] Whether or not P can be reconciled with the existence of evil hinges on whether religious belief is belief-in or belief-that.

5. THE STRANGER PARABLE AS AN ANALOGY TO RELIGIOUS BELIEF

Now I intend to show that because religious belief is belief-in, several of Flew's claims are incorrect. In this section, I will respond to Flew's claims that Christians must be able to form a finite statement of belief-that statements at any time. I will also respond to his claim that Christians must admit their belief to be wrong in the face of seemingly defeating evidence. My response will include an explanation of what happens when Christians qualify their claims. Then, I will discuss how such qualifications are rational due to the nature of trust that a Christian has in God. After that, I will respond to Flew's claim that the qualifications Christians make are contradictory. I will appeal to Flew's 'human-centric' perspective of religious belief and the God-centered nature of Christianity to argue that we do not need to provide a satisfactory explanation for specific instances of suffering.

Mitchell's Stranger Parable illustrates various aspects of belief-in mentioned in this section and is an analogy to belief in God.

> In time of war in an occupied country, a member of the resistance meets one-night a stranger who deeply impresses him. They spend that night together in conversation. The Stranger tells the partisan that he himself is on the side of the resistance—indeed that he is in command of it, and urges the partisan to have faith in him no matter what happens. The partisan is utterly convinced at that meeting of the Stranger's sincerity and constancy and undertakes to trust him.
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> They never meet in conditions of intimacy again. But sometimes the Stranger is seen helping members of the resistance, and the

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[13] Ibid., 6.

partisan is grateful and says to his friends, 'He is on our side.' Sometimes he is seen in the uniform of the police handing over patriots to the occupying power…the partisan still says, 'He is on our side.' He still believes that, in spite of appearances, the Stranger did not deceive him. Sometimes he asks the Stranger for help and receives it. He is ten thankful. Sometimes he asks and does not receive it. Then he says, 'the Stranger knows best.'…

The partisan of the parable does not allow anything to count decisively against the proposition 'the Stranger is on our side.' This is because he has committed himself to trust the Stranger. But he of course recognizes that the Stranger's ambiguous behavior does count against what he believes about him. It is precisely this situation which constitutes the trial of his faith.[14]

As seen from the Parable, there is no finite set of belief-that claims the partisan can generate about the Stranger at any given moment not only because belief-in is non-reducible, but also because the partisan generates belief-that claims based on the stranger's forthcoming actions. This is a product of trust and the prospective nature, or future-referencing nature, of belief-in mentioned in Section 2. The belief-that statements necessary for a correct conception of the Stranger are (Y) the Stranger is in command of the resistance and (Z) the Stranger is on the side of the resistance. Y and Z are not interchangeable since it is possible for the Stranger be a double agent, which makes Z false even if Y is true. These two propositions form the basis of a correct conception of the Stranger and the basis for further qualification. As stated in Section 2, one cannot believe in something or someone without having a conception of what it is. In this case, if the partisan believes in the Stranger, he will not only believe that Y and Z at a specific moment, but he will continue to believe that Y and Z. These two beliefs, combined with his trust in the Stranger, leads him to generate the belief-that claim "the Stranger knows best" (X) only after the Stranger is seen handing patriots over to the enemy (situation A), evidence against his belief in the Stranger. There would be no reason for the partisan to generate X without first experiencing situation A because until then, there

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[14] Flew, Hare, and Mitchell, "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium," 5.

was no evidence for ~Z. But when situation A is evidence for ~Z, the partisan then uses his belief in the Stranger (namely trust) and belief-that statements to develop a further belief-that statement to reconcile the tension between his belief-that Z and evidence for ~Z. Because the partisan is able to provide further explanations for Z, the partisan does not need to admit his belief to be wrong in the face of counterevidence as long as his qualifications are made on a rational basis.

Without the partisan's belief that Y and Z, he will be unable to generate X. If the partisan did not believe that the Stranger had the necessary intellectual and strategic abilities to lead a resistance, which is entailed by Y, or that the Stranger was, in fact, committed to the goal of the resistance, which is entailed by Z, there would be no reason for the partisan to generate X in response to situation A. Not only so, but without his belief in the Stranger—namely trust—he will not generate X. For even if the partisan believed that Y and Z were true, in the face of evidence for ~Z, such as situation A, the partisan would most likely abandon his original belief-that statements if he did not trust and believe in the Stranger. Thus, certain foundational belief-that statements (for a correct conception) and belief-in are necessary for the generation of further belief-that statements in response to counterevidence.

Similarly, Christians also generate additional belief-that claims based on what they perceive as God's actions. When the Christian is faced with the situation of a child dying of inoperable cancer of the throat (situation B), the process of reconciling situation B with the Christian's trust in God and belief that P (the proposition that "God loves us as a father loves his children") would, for example, lead her to generate the belief that "God works in the midst of suffering to achieve a greater purpose." Without the belief that P and the Christian's belief in God, she would not be able to generate the additional belief-that statement. Also, like the partisan, the Christian's generation of the new belief-that statement is in response to

situation B, or some other situation in that provided her with the evidence for ~P. Since religious belief and the partisan's belief-in the Stranger is forward-looking, qualification is to be expected. The mere existence of counter evidence does not count decisively against belief-in God and belief-that claims if further explanations can be given for why such counter evidence is not a defeater.

Now that I have given an account of the phenomena of qualification, I would like to focus on why such qualifications made in the face of counterevidence have a rational basis, which allows the Christian to maintain her belief that P. First, it is important to note that in the Stranger Parable and in Christianity, there is often evidence *for* belief-that statements as well. The Stranger sometimes helps the members of the resistance and sometimes the partisan receives the help he asks for. This part of the analogy is critical, since many Christians use experiences, facts, arguments, etc. to claim that there is evidence for God's existence, providence, and for P. Flew fails to consider this in his argument and assumes there is only evidence against P, as seen when he only mentioned instances of suffering. The Gardener Parable also does not mention any evidence for the Gardener's existence, presenting the explorer's belief that the Gardener exists as wholly untenable and irrational. In the Gardener Parable, the believer does not have any evidence for the gardener, whereas in the Stranger Parable and Christianity there is at least what is *plausibly* evidence (most notably, the life, death, and supposed resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as presumed Messianic prophetic fulfillment), even if it is evidence that the non-believer does not accept or see as significant. Thus, the Christian's trust and foundational 'belief-that' statements are supplemented by evidence, which then guides her in generating qualifications. More research is needed to understand the justification necessary for initial belief-in, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. This justification does not only apply to belief in God, but also belief in friends, family, lovers, etc. There may be things about trusting that are

unique to religious belief, but the issue of justification for trust and belief-in is not specific to Christians.

Although qualifications made on a rational basis show Flew's arguments that first, the Christian must formulate a finite set of belief-that statements at any time and, second, must admit her belief to be wrong in the face of counterevidence are incorrect, the unresolved objection of contradictory qualifications still seems to present an issue for the Christian. Since Flew does not clearly state what he takes the Christian's contradictory qualifications to be, I imagine that Flew thinks it contradictory for the Christian to hold P in the face of evil that she claims God detests. Perhaps something similar to the qualificatory claim (C) "God often takes advantage of evils and uses them for some greater good for our sake" is one thing Flew possibly takes to be contradictory with P. He might ask, "Is there a greater good than lack of human suffering, and how can God allow us to endure suffering out of love?" This is a "human-centric" view of religion. Both 'moral evils' (evil that is caused by humans) and 'natural evils' (evils with natural causes) fall under the umbrella of 'evil' and are the sources of human suffering.[15] I think C alludes to a broader claim that Christians often make—that they often do not know why God allows instances of suffering to occur. However, C, and the fact that Christians often cannot give an explanation for instances of suffering (i.e. reconcile P with evil), does not serve as proof that Christianity is inherently contradictory. For one, it shows that humans are what Christians believe they are—unable to fully grasp God's sovereign plan. In fact, the apparently contradictory claims, such as C, are accounted for in the Christian framework and are a necessary component of rational trust in God. This can be seen by comparing Flew's 'human-centric' view of religion and the 'God-centered' nature of Christianity.

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[15] Marilyn Adams and Robert Adams, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1.

While evil is and should be detestable to God and humans alike, it is important to understand that a comfortable life, free from suffering and evil, is not the ultimate good in Christianity. Christianity is not centered on humans and ways for us to minimize suffering in our lives. Rather, it concerns how we can have and maintain a relationship with God despite the evil in the world. Christianity is God-centered, meaning that even though "nothing could be more advantageous to us than the existence of God, if he is what Christians believe him to be," we also value him for his own sake.[16] The Christian is not guaranteed a life of physical, mental, or emotional comfort through belief-in God. Instead, through belief in God, the Christian enters into a relationship with God in this life and for eternity. Suffering and a relationship with God, as well as suffering and P, are not incompatible. In fact, suffering is often viewed as a way that one's relationship and belief-in God is strengthened. Since Christians value God for his own sake, they view a relationship with him as more important than the other aspects and experiences of human life, and this includes suffering. Because Flew mistakes religious belief to be assigning utmost importance to human comfort rather than God, it is understandable why evil and suffering appear to him to be blatantly contradictory with religious belief.

The general belief that a relationship with God is more important than human comfort, combined with the characteristics of trust, allow Christianity to be internally consistent despite the Christian's inability to give an explanation for instances of suffering and claim that C. This is because the Christian is in a relationship with a fully autonomous entity, which means God's actions are self-directed and thus bring uncertainties into the relationship due to our inability to fully comprehend his actions and reasons. If human beings were of the same intellectual level as God,

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[16] Price, "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'," 26.

then God would cease to be God. Victoria McGeer notes that trust is a sort of reliance that is marked essentially by recognition of the other's personhood as a source of self-determined action and self-consciousness.[17] And with the autonomous personhood and far superior intellect that God has, he is bound to do things that we fail to comprehend. Because of this, trust is also such that the 'truster' believes in the 'trusted' "despite challenges that might cause more 'neutral' individuals to be wary."[18] In addition, since Christians understand that God, rather than a comfortable life, is of the utmost importance, their trust in God is less likely to be damaged when they experience suffering. Thus, the nature of trust and God are such that the Christian can claim C (God often takes advantage of evils and uses them for some greater good for our sake) despite not giving an explanation for instances of suffering. The magnitude of who God is cannot be fully understood by humans, hence the need for analogies such as Heavenly Father, Shepherd, and Redeemer that give us only a glimpse into God's character. And if we cannot presume to fully know who God is, then it seems perfectly sensible to admit that we cannot fully know His plans either. God's fully unknowable nature, as well as the faith He demands in response, creates a balance for an internally consistent belief framework.

6. THE OBJECTION OF THE ABUSIVE HUSBAND AND MY RESPONSE

One objection to my argument would be to compare instances of suffering God allows humans to experience to a toxic relationship, such as spousal abuse. There are, it seems, some similarities between the two, but there are also significant disanalogies that ultimately prove the futility of pursuing this line of argument. Consider a scenario in which a husband

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[17] Victoria McGeer, "Developing Trust," *Philosophical Explorations* 5, no. 1 (2002): 34.
[18] McGeer, "Developing Trust," 30.

regularly abuses his wife, and yet (due to unfortunate psychological conditioning caused by the husband's abuse) the wife esteems her husband, trusts him, believes that "my husband is a good man" and "my husband has my best interests in mind," and believes that her husband will continue to possess such properties. Furthermore, she believes that the abuse serves to strengthen their marriage, their relationship, and her love for him. Every time she is abused, she qualifies her claims towards her view that her husband's abuse is for the greater good, and she sometimes admits that she cannot always provide an explanation for his abuse. The question then becomes how God's relationship to humans is different from the husband's relationship to the wife.

The most significant and fatal disanalogy between the objection and the Christian's relationship with God is that the husband is a human, which means we can use our understanding of human characteristics to conclude that the husband's abuse is not justified by or conducive to any greater good. As humans, we understand others based on our own reasons, rationale, motivations, etc. for pursuing actions. Thus, we know the limitations of human agents and what they are and are not able to accomplish through their actions. From our knowledge of human agents, we can conclude that abuse is never truly motivated by positive or virtuous intentions. It is always motivated by manipulative intentions, anger, hatred towards the victim, etc. Furthermore, we can conclude that abuse does not lead to any positive outcomes such as the ones the wife is conditioned to think. Even if it seems to the wife that her marriage is improving and her love for her husband is becoming stronger, psychological analyses show that what the wife feels is in fact not true—the perceived outcomes are just the effects of psychological manipulation, destructive coping mechanisms, etc. God, on the other hand, is largely beyond understanding and has infinitely more power and knowledge than human beings. Thus, as previously stated, we cannot fully understand God based on knowledge of human agents. Furthermore, we cannot claim that

when God allows humans to suffer, his actions are not motivated by positive or virtuous intentions. Christians and non-Christians alike may notice that for many Christians, the sufferings they experience are conducive towards a stronger relationship with God and the development of positive virtues such as courage, kindness, compassion, etc.

In other words, suffering helps achieve or refine one of the most important goods from a Christian standpoint—a relationship with God. The ultimate good in the (secular) context of marriage is, loosely speaking, a good marriage. However, abuse is not conducive towards a good marriage unless by 'good marriage' one means a marriage laden with abuse, emotional turmoil, physical and mental suffering, and psychological destruction caused by one or both parties in the marriage. When the wife in the abusive marriage is presented with such a definition, it is unlikely that she would agree with it given her rationalization for her husband's abuse. However, if God did in fact accomplish what Christians deem as best for humanity—reconciliation to a relationship with God (which was done, of course, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross)—then perhaps there is a satisfactory answer to why God allows evil to exist.

7. CONCLUSION

The distinction between belief-in and belief-that as a framework is important to properly understand Antony Flew and Basil Mitchell's discussion in "Theology and Falsification: A Symposium." Although seemingly plausible, Flew's approach to the POE from a belief-that perspective is deeply flawed. The nuances in the belief-in framework better account for the complexities of religious belief. Such a perspective should be considered when moving forward in discussions about religious belief. Finally, it is important to note that I have aimed to demonstrate the *internal coherency* of Christianity in this paper, not whether this internal

coherency translates into external plausibility. That is an issue for another realm of literature and scholars in an array of fields.

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Living Liberation in Opposing Theologies: The End Shapes the Means

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INTRODUCTION

The quest for immortality has been a vital and pervasive feature of human life throughout history, from the dark recesses of humanity's earliest cultures, to modern society with all its technologically advanced trappings. The notion of 'liberation' and 'salvation' has, unsurprisingly then, occupied the heart of theological enquiry for millennia. Religious traditions, ranging from Christianity to Buddhism, Islam to Hinduism, have been intrigued and gripped by the possibility of transcending the finite to reach the infinite.

My enquiry is based on the idea of being able to experience the infinite and attain liberation whilst alive. Within Hinduism, this is called *jīvan-mukti*, meaning 'living liberation', which stands in contrast to the idea of *videha-mukti*, literally meaning 'liberation devoid of a body.' In order to carry out this study on *jīvan-mukti,'* I will call upon two thinkers of Hinduism's Vedānta tradition: 1) Śaṅkara, the prolific eighth-century theologian who established the Advaita (non-dualism) school of thought; and 2) Svāminārāyaṇa, an early-nineteenth-century theologian, revered as God by his followers, who founded the eponymous Svāminārāyaṇa tradition.

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Śaṅkara's theology is radically different to that of Svāminārāyaṇa's. Despite this polarity in their theologies and doctrinal beliefs, Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa both agree on the existence of the *jīvan-mukti* state as a part of their soteriologies, albeit with different conceptualizations of it. This paper shall explore how these variations in the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* in two opposing theologies lead to significant differences in *sādhanā*. *Sādhanā*, otherwise known as praxis, is the full gamut of means by which one can rise above or break through bondage in order to achieve *mukti* (liberation). The enquiry thus focuses on how the end shapes the means, and how theory dictates practice.

TERMINOLOGY: SALVATION OR LIBERATION?

First, very briefly, it is important for us to distinguish between 'liberation' and 'salvation.' While the notion of salvation in Christian theology is the comparative concept to liberation in Hindu theology, there is an important difference in the meaning and implications of the two terms. The former implies being 'saved,' whereas the latter implies being 'freed.' Although the difference is subtle, this difference in the terms reflects fundamental doctrinal differences in the points of departure within each theology. Within Christianity, all humans are bound in original sin. Irenaeus of Lyon summarizes the human condition for Christian theology by stating, "For we were tied and bound in sin, we were born in sin, and we live under the dominion of death."[2] In contrast, within Hinduism, the soul is innately pure and eternal, therefore rather than being *saved* from 'damnation' it is being *freed* from a perpetual cycle of life and death. This discussion of comparative theology would require another study in itself. For the purposes of this study, however, I will be using the term 'liberation' as a translation for *mukti* or *mokṣa*, but will continue using the word 'soteriology' when looking at the field of 'liberation.'

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[2] Alister E. McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine* (Michigan: Zondervan, 1997), 332.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Let us now justify the significance of this essay for Religious Studies, which is firstly based on the importance of the concept of *mukti* and, more specifically, *jīvan-mukti*. The idea of *mokṣa* or *mukti* is present in most Hindu traditions, however, there is no consensus on the conceptualization of liberation. Nonetheless, across these traditions, the notion of *mukti* certainly holds a significant position. Deussen, in describing Indian philosophy writes, "No people on earth took religion so seriously, none toiled on the way to salvation as they did,"[3] whilst Dasgupta has declared it as "the pivot on which all systems of Indian philosophy revolve."[4]

Within Hindu soteriology, and perhaps in theological discussion more generally, the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* is one of even greater theological and religious significance because it suggests that a human can have one foot in time and one foot in eternity. The prospect itself is gripping. Who would not be captivated by the idea of experiencing the infinite within the borders of the finite? In addition to the inherent attraction of the concept, because the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* has deep roots within foundational Hindu texts such as the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and *Brahma-sūtras*, it provides us with a fascinating topic of theological discussion to further understand Hindu thought.

The selection of the two figures, although based around our key thesis question, also adds considerably to the theological merit of this study. Śaṅkara has written extensively on *jīvan-mukti*, consequently the Advaita view on it has dominated the discussion within modern scholarship. Svāminārāyaṇa's conception of *jīvan-mukti*, provides an interesting comparison because his theology is significantly different to that of

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[3]   Paul Deussen, *The Systems of Vedānta* (Chicago: KB Classics, 2015), 49.
[4]   Surdendranath Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1930), 316.

Śaṅkara's Advaita, whilst he is in agreement with Śaṅkara on the existence of *jīvan-mukti*. Since no such specific study has been conducted on Svāminārāyaṇa's position on *jīvan-mukti* this work can serve as a fresh contribution to this field within the wider Hindu religious discourse.

In her chapter on "Living Liberation in Comparative Perspective," Patricia Mumme provides a typology of strong, medium, and weak *jīvan-mukti* positions within different Hindu traditions. She concludes her chapter by writing, "Modern Hindu philosophers and recent devotional movements started by contemporary Gurus would also be fertile ground to test the extensibility of the body of theory presented here."[5] Thus, through this study I respond to her call for further scholarship. The Svāminārāyaṇa Sampradāya is a popular and rapidly growing Hindu tradition in both India and the diaspora, with large, traditional stone temples in Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Robbinsville, and London. Rachel Dwyer describes it as the "dominant form of British Hinduism."[6] This study will thus also help make sense of this new popular religious tradition and its less-known theological system by situating it amidst and comparing it to another popular traditional school of Hinduism.

SOURCES OF STUDY

To conduct this study, I shall be drawing upon the primary works of our two thinkers. For Śaṅkara, I will use his commentaries on the *Prasthānatrayī*. The *Prasthānatrayī* are the canonical texts of the Vedanta school, namely the *Brahma-sūtras, Upaniṣads, and Bhagavad-gītā*. Svāminārāyaṇa himself did not write a commentary on the

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[5] Patricia Y. Mumme, "Living Liberation in Comparative Perspective," in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, eds. Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Mumme (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 268.

[6] Rachel Dwyer, "The Swaminarayan Movement," in *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions*, eds. K.A. Jacobsen and P. Kumar (Boston: Brill, 2003), 180.

Prasthānatrayī, but in his discourses and letters he extensively refers to and provides his own interpretations of several of the canonical texts' verses. The principal text I shall use to understand Svāminārāyaṇa's theology is the *Vacanāmrut*, a collection of Svāminārāyaṇa's discourses compiled by his senior contemporary disciples. Sadhu Paramtattvadas explains, "the *Vacanāmrut* is the principal theologico-philosophical text of the Vedāntic tradition he propounded, and, in effect, constitutes a natural, albeit indirect, commentary on the [*Prasthānatrayī*] triad."[7] Whilst the study of Svāminārāyaṇa's theology presented here is principally based on Svāminārāyaṇa's primary works, there is debate amongst several denominations over how his texts are to be understood. The interpretations of his works in this essay will be based on the BAPS understanding of his texts.[8]

STRUCTURE

Having examined the theological significance of the project, it would be of value to briefly introduce the forthcoming three sections as a roadmap for the reader. In general, it splits the fundamental thesis question into three premises:

- Section 1 will focus on theology. It will substantiate the first premise of the fundamental thesis question: "Śaṅkara's theology is radically different to that of Svāminārāyaṇa's" and will provide a context for the forthcoming discussion on liberation.

- Section 2 will explore our second premise: "Despite such a polarity in their theologies, Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa agree on the notion of *jīvan-mukti*, albeit with different conceptualizations of it."

- Section 3 is where the study reaches its climax, asking the key question of how the different conceptions of living liberation impact

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[7]   Swami Paramtattvadas, *"The Ontological Distinction between Brahman and Parabrahman in the Svāminārāyaṇa Vedanta Tradition"* (Master's diss., University of Oxford, 2007), 27.

[8]   Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (commonly abbreviated to BAPS), is a denomination within the Svāminārāyaṇa tradition that propounds the 'Akṣara-Puruṣottama' theology.

the way *sādhanā* (praxis) is crafted in the two theologies. In other words, how does the end craft the means? This final section will aim to unearth the deeper conceptual continuities.

Having thus built the foundation of our study and clarified the issues at stake, we can now begin our study in earnest.

1) JUXTAPOSING DOCTRINES

We begin with our first topic, theology. In this section, I will provide a brief overview of the theologies of the two thinkers under study and display how they oppose each other. Considering the enormity of their theological thought, emphasis will be placed on the elements that will prove to be most relevant to our forthcoming discussion of *jīvan-mukti* and praxis.

Śaṅkara

Śaṅkara propounds the 'Advaita' system, an ultimate ontological non-duality. His theology can be epitomized in the famous statement from the *Vivekacudāmaṇi*, "*Brahma satyam jagat mithyā,*" meaning "Brahman is truth, the world is unreal."[9] Brahman refers to the ultimate reality. It is the most appropriate analogue to the word God, as it encompasses the full gamut of study on the ultimate existential reality. Śaṅkara asserts the existence of only one singular entity, Brahman. As he writes in the *Vivekacūdāmani*, Brahman is "one without a second."[10] This Brahman is *nirguṇa*, meaning it possesses no attributes or form. As Śaṅkara states, Brahman "is devoid of all form, colour and so on, and does not in any way

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[9] Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūdāmani* 20, trans. Swāmi Mādhavānanda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 2000), 7.

[10] Śaṅkara, Upadeśa-saḥasrī 19.13-24, quoted in Sudhakshina Rangaswami, *The Roots of Vedanta: Selections from Sankara's Writings* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2012), 257.

possess form."[11] It is an absolute, non-dual reality that transcends space and time.

Such a belief in the ultimate non-dual reality of Brahman means Śaṅkara is not a realist. He plainly declares, "this universe is unreal."[12] The multiplicity of individual selves is simply an illusion. He writes, "unity alone is the highest truth and all that multiplicity is conjured by false ignorance."[13] Śaṅkara holds that the objective of the *Upaniṣads* is to show the identity of the *ātman* (the individual soul) as Brahman. Śaṅkara writes, the *Upaniṣads* reveal "the supreme self [Brahman] as non-separate from the [individual] soul."[14] He prioritizes verses such as "That you art" [*tat tvam asi*] in his reading of the Vedānta canon. For Śaṅkara, the *ātman* is not 'like' Brahman, nor is it a 'reflection' of Brahman, and nor is it 'one' with Brahman; it simply *is* Brahman.

If Śaṅkara takes such an anti-realist stance in not according the world or the individual souls any ontological existence, it raises the question as to why we experience such a multiplicity and plurality. The answer lies in Śaṅkara's explanation of 'superimposition' and *avidyā* (ignorance). He gives an example of someone mistakenly perceiving a rope to be a snake. Because of ignorance, the snake has erroneously been 'superimposed' on to the rope.[15] Similarly, the world is unreal; it has been superimposed on to Brahman. Śaṅkara writes that people "owing to the false notion in their minds, superimpose the ideas of existence, non-existence, etc. on the Self [Brahman], which is not Itself superimposed and is… without a second."[16] We have mistaken temporal elements for Brahman. The cause of such a

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11 Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya 3.2.14, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 120.
12 Upadeśa-sāhasrī 17.13-21, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 259.
13 Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* 2.1.14, translated by Swami Gambhirananda, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 2000), 329.
14 Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 4.4.4, 898.
15 Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani* 197, 77.
16 Upadeśa-sāhasrī 19.13-24, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 257.

superimposition is *avidyā*, primordial ignorance. *Avidyā* is not simply a lack of knowledge; rather, it is possessing erroneous knowledge. Śaṅkara explains, "the nature of ignorance proves to be this: it represents that which is infinite as finite; presents things other than the Self that are non-existent; and makes the Self appear as limited."[17]

Svāminārāyaṇa

Svāminārāyaṇa posits five eternal entities. He plainly states, "From the Vedas, the Purāṇas, the Itihāsa and the Smṛtis, I have formed the principle that *jīva* [the soul/*ātman*], *māyā*, *īśvara*, [Akṣara]Brahman and Parabrahman are all eternal."[18] Svāminārāyaṇa asserts his position as a realist by writing, "The *jīva* is real, *māyā* is real, *īśvara* is real, Brahman is real, Parabrahman is real."[19] This realism proves that Svāminārāyaṇa's theological system is diametrically opposed to Śaṅkara's non-dualistic theology.

Parabrahman is the term for God in Svāminārāyaṇa's theology. In contrast to Śaṅkara's *nirguṇa* Brahman, Svāminārāyaṇa posits a personal, theistic conception of God with divine attributes. Svāminārāyaṇa states, "Shankarāchārya has propounded that God is formless, whereas Rāmānujāchārya and other *āchāryas* have propounded that God has a form," before going on to say that he agrees with the view that God has a form.[20]

Svāminārāyaṇa introduces an ontological entity called "Akṣarabrahman," which is distinct from Parabrahman. He uses the term Brahman

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[17] Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya 4.3.20, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 87.
[18] Svāminārāyaṇa, *Vacanāmrut*, trans. BAPS Sadhus (Ahmedabad: Swaminarayan Aksharpith, 2010), Gaḍhadā 3.10 (henceforth referred to as 'Svāminārāyaṇa, *Vacanāmrut*'; all translations are from this edition, unless otherwise stated).
[19] Svāminārāyaṇa, *Vedarasa* (Ahmedabad: Swaminarayan Aksharpith, 1978), 1770
[20] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.71.

interchangeably with Akṣarabrahman throughout his texts, but when he refers to God he uses the term Parabrahman, literally meaning 'higher or superior Brahman.' Akṣarabrahman is a feature of Svāminārāyaṇa's metaphysical structure that does not have an analogue in Śaṅkara's theology. Explaining the distinction between Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman, Svāminārāyaṇa writes, "Transcending that [Akṣara]Brahman is Parabrahman, Purushottam Nārāyan, who is distinct from Brahman, and is the cause, the supporter and the inspirer of Brahman."[21] Only Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman transcend *māyā*, and therefore are the only two entities capable of granting liberation. *Māyā*, for Svāminārāyaṇa, is the force of Parabrahman that keeps all *jīva*s in bondage.[22] Svāminārāyaṇa writes that Parabrahman "is greater than even *Akshar*, which is greater than everything."[23] 'Everything' is to be understood as the three entities of *jīva, iśvara* and *māyā*. Therefore, the Akṣarabrahman entity is part of the divine reality because it transcends *māyā*, although it is still subordinate to Parabrahman. Akṣarabrahman is considered to have four forms, of which two are relevant for this essay.[24] The first form of Akṣarabrahman is Akṣaradhāma, the divine abode of Parabrahman wherein all liberated souls reside for eternity.[25] The second form is the human form as the Guru who is presently manifest on the earth. The Guru *is* Akṣarabrahman. Currently, the Akṣarabrahman Guru is accepted by believers of the tradition to be a sadhu named 'Mahant Swami Maharaj.'

In summation, from the above theological outlines we have been able to grasp the basic positions of the two thinkers. This brief doctrinal overview

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21 Ibid., Gaḍhadā 2.3.
22 Ibid., Gaḍhadā 1.12.
23 Ibid., Gaḍhadā 1.64.
24 Smit Gadhia, "Akshara and Its Four Forms in Svāminārāyaṇa's Doctrine," in *Swaminarayan Hinduism: Tradition, Adaptation and Identity*, eds. Raymond Brady Williams and Yogi Trivedi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 156-71.
25 Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Pancāḷā 1.

has also shown that Śaṅkara's and Svāminārāyaṇa's theological systems are radically different. Yet, as we shall see next, Svāminārāyaṇa and Śaṅkara agree in their acceptance of *jīvan-mukti*.

2) JĪVAN-MUKTI – THE END

We now move to soteriology. More specifically, in this section, we shall exposit Śaṅkara's and Svāminārāyaṇa's views on *jīvan-mukti*.

Before delving into their specific understandings of *jīvan-mukti*, it is essential we understand the soteriological environment surrounding their beliefs on *jīvan-mukti* and thus gain a conceptual handle on their beliefs on *mukti* in general.

NATURE OF MUKTI

Śaṅkara

In Śaṅkara's soteriology, liberation is 1) *nitya* (eternal), 2) *nityāpta* (eternally attained), 3) *anārabhya* (beginning-less), and 4) *nitya-siddha* (eternally accomplished).[26] The spiritual *ātman* [soul] is always liberated, therefore talking of liberation is only an epistemological awareness, because ontologically it is always liberated. Śaṅkara writes, "Liberation comes to be considered as a fruit merely from the point of view of the cessation of bondage, and not from the standpoint of production of any fresh result."[27] *Mokṣa* is thus recognizing one's true nature as Brahman; it is not an 'attainment', but rather a change in perception. Liberation is to be absorbed in Brahman, like the river merges into the ocean,[28]

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[26]   Lance E. Nelson, "Living Liberation in Śaṅkara's and Classical Advaita: Sharing the Holy Waiting of God," in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, eds. Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Mumme (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 19.
[27]   Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 4.4.4, 897.
[28]   Ibid.

extinguishing all individuality. "Having [thus] attained identity with the supreme immortality, they discard individuality; like a lamp blown out."[29] Simply put, for Śaṅkara, "Liberation is the same as Brahman."[30] This conceptualization of liberation is a clear corollary of his theological understanding of the non-dual, *nirguṇa* Brahman.

Svāminārāyaṇa

For Svāminārāyaṇa, upon death, liberated souls will "go to Akshardhām [Parabrahaman's divine abode] to forever remain in the service of God."[31] As seen in section one, Akṣaradhāma is a form of the Akṣarabrahman entity. It is the divine abode in which Parabrahman eternally resides with other liberated souls. Svāminārāyaṇa states, "God, who possesses a definite form, is always present in His abode."[32] For liberation to occur, a *jīva* must become *brahmarūpa*. What does it mean to be *brahmarūpa*? Svāminārāyaṇa explains: "When the *jīva* attains a likeness to that [Akṣara]Brahman…, then that *jīva* can also be said to be *brahmarūpa*."[33] As learned in section one, Svāminārāyaṇa uses the term Brahman interchangeably with Akṣarabrahman throughout his texts. To become *brahmarūpa* is for the *jīva* to receive the qualities of the Akṣarabrahman guru and thus become like Akṣarabrahman. Therefore, liberation within Svāminārāyaṇa theology is more than just a return to the original state of the soul; it is conceived as the attainment of the highest spiritual state.[34] *Bhakti* and communion with God are crucial to Svāminārāyaṇa's concept of liberation. Liberation, both in Akṣaradhāma [Parabrahaman's divine abode] and on earth, is attended by unconditional, pure, selfless *bhakti*.

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[29] Śaṅkara, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 3.2.6-9, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 435.
[30] Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 1.1.4, 8.
[31] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.21.
[32] Ibid., Gaḍhadā 3.7.
[33] Ibid., Gaḍhadā 2.20.
[34] Swami Paramtattvadas, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 275.

Through this brief analysis, we are able to catch a conceptual glimpse of our thinkers' core beliefs on *mukti*. We can now begin to understand their positions more specifically on *jīvan-mukti*, which forms the thrust of this essay.

ŚANKARA'S JĪVAN-MUKTI

Śankara's chief role is that of an exegete, and at numerous instances in his works he displays his belief in *jīvan-mukti*. Verse 5.23 of the *Bhagavad-gītā* states: "He who is able to endure verily here [*iha eva*], before liberation from the body, the agitation that arises from desire and anger, is disciplined [*yukta*]; he is a happy man."[35] The key words here are '*iha eva*,' which mean 'verily here.' Śankara, in his *Bhagavad-gītā Bhāṣya* (his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*), takes this to literally mean "here whilst living." He writes that the *jīva* is liberated "before the body falls." He further clarifies his acceptance of *jīvan-mukti* by using the word '*āmaraṇānta.*' The 'ā' prefixing '*maraṇānta*' signifies that death is the limit, but is not included, therefore one becomes a '*yukta*' before death. Śankara interprets '*yukta*' to mean one who is a yogi, who is accomplished, who is liberated, and not just a practitioner of yoga (spiritual discipline).[36]

The essential question that arises when discussing *jīvan-mukti* is the continued existence of the body; if *mukti* has been realized, why does the body remain? The primary reason, which Svāminārāyaṇa also cites, is *prārabdha karma* (*karma* that has already manifested). This form of *karma* is the stock of past *karma*s that have been initiated. *Prārabdha karma* is responsible for the form and sustenance of the body. Once these

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[35] *Bhagavad Gītā*, 5.23, translation adapted from Sargeant Winthrop (Albany: State University of New York, 2009), 265.

[36] Śankara, *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya* 5.23, in *Complete Works of Sri Sankaracharya in the Original Sanskrit*, Vol. 6 (Chennai: Samata Books, 1999), 172-73. (Author's translation).

*karma*s are exhausted, the individual dies. Śaṅkara explains, only *sañcita karma*s (accumulated stock of past *karma*s that are yet to manifest) are extinguished for the *jīvan-mukta*. The *prārabdha karma*s are already in motion, therefore cannot be halted. Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* says: "The fire of knowledge reduces all actions (*karma*s) to ashes."[37] Śaṅkara in interpreting this statement clarifies his belief in *jīvan-mukti*. He writes:

> Since the result of actions owing to which the present body has been born has already become effective, therefore it gets exhausted only through experiencing it. Hence, Knowledge reduces to ashes only all those actions that were done [in this life] prior to the rise of Knowledge and that have not become effective....[38]

Śaṅkara clarifies that knowledge is unable to eradicate *prārabdha karma*. Several analogies are employed to explain this idea. First, Śaṅkara gives the example of a potter's wheel. He writes that once a potter ceases to push the wheel, it continues spinning due to the momentum.[39] Similarly, when an archer releases an arrow from its bow, the arrow continues to fly until its momentum is terminated. Through these illustrations Śaṅkara is explaining that *prārabdha karma* must run its course, which is why the physical body persists.

However, does the existence of the body and the effect of *prārabdha karma* lead to any limitation on the *jīvan-mukta's* part? Is *videha-mukti* (post-mortem liberation) a soteriological advance for Śaṅkara? There does not seem be a clear answer. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.14.2 states: "There is a delay for me here only until I am freed; but then I will arrive!"[40] Śaṅkara commentating on the verse explains that this 'delay' is caused by *prārabdha karma*. The implication is that liberation is not truly attained whilst *prārabdha karma* remains. Śaṅkara comments, "[The delay is] in

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[37] *Bhagavad-gītā*, verse 4.37, 237.

[38] Śaṅkara, *Bhagavad-gītā Bhāṣya* 4.37, translation by Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1991), 226.

[39] Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 4.1.15, 840.

[40] Patrick Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, Chāndogya Upaniṣad verse 6.14.2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 257.

attaining the essence of the Self which is Being…. Until the fall of the body caused by the exhaustion of the *karma* by which the body is commenced, this is the meaning. At that very time, he attains Being."[41] In contrast, he emphatically states, "This knower is Brahman in this very life, though he appears to have a body."[42] There is an evident contradiction. On the one hand, he seems to say *jīvan-mukti* is a stage *prior* to *videha-mukti*, and on the other hand he suggests *jīvan-mukti* as the *ultimate mukti*.[43] Having said this, Śaṅkara firmly states there are no stages or grades in *mukti*. He writes, "the state of liberation is determined to be uniform in nature, the state of liberation being nothing but Brahman Itself…. [I]n liberation there can be no superiority."[44] Therefore, while it is unclear as to whether *videha-mukti* is a soteriological advance, we can assert from Śaṅkara's writing and general beliefs that there is no qualitative difference between the *jīvan-mukta* and the *videha-mukta*. Another way to harmonize the two poles could be to concede that the ultimate experience of the *mukta* (liberated person) in post-mortem and living liberation is the same; the notions of *prārabdha karma* and the intellectual debates on it are merely to satisfy the external onlooker. As the famous Advaita mystic Ramana Maharshi puts it, "For those who ask it is said that a Realized Man with a body is a *jīvan-mukta* and that he attains *videha-mukti* when he sheds the body, but this difference exists only for the onlooker, not for him. His state is the same before shedding the body and after."[45]

This leads us to explore what the experience of a *jīvan-mukta* is for Śaṅkara. The primary feature of a *jīvan-mukta* is the extinguishing of any identification with his/her body and mind. Śaṅkara, alluding to an analogy in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,[46] writes that the *jīvan-mukta* "rests

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41 Chāndogya Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya 6.14.2, quoted in Nelson, "Living Liberation," 29.
42 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 4.4.6, quoted in Nelson, "Living Liberation," 29.
43 Nelson, "Living Liberation in Śaṅkara's and Classical Advaita," 29.
44 Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* verse 3.4.52, 810-11.
45 Arthur Osborne, *The Teachings of Bhagavan Shri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1978), 192.
46 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.7.

discarding the body, like snake its slough."[47] A *jīvan-mukta* "lives unmoved in the body like a witness, free from mental oscillations."[48] The *jīvan-mukta* continues to observe and live in the world even though he or she knows that it is *mithyā* (unreal) and rooted in *avidyā*. As Nelson effectively puts it, for a *jīvan-mukta*, empirical existence is "a magical phantom at best, but one that is ontologically hollow, exhausted, a mere husk or shadow."[49]

Whilst the above addresses the bodily existence of a *jīvan-mukti*, Jacqueline Suthren-Hirst raises an interesting question with regard to the 'mental experiences' of a *jīvan-mukta*. She argues that aversion and attachment can still be observed in *jīvan-muktas*. In her thought-provoking article, she writes that Śaṅkara believes that such 'worldly attributes' being seen in the mental makeup of a *jīvan-mukta* is "simply the result of memory traces, which did themselves originate in false cognitions prior to realisation, but are now conserved as *saṃskāras*, or impressions, in the [subtle] body which continues to operate until its momentum is exhausted."[50] Hirst states that such 'impressions' and 'traces' are a vehicle for the *prārabdha karma* and "part of the mechanism through which these already initiated results are being worked out."[51] Ultimately, however, such 'impressions' also have no effect on the *jīvan-mukta*. Hirst writes, "They no longer cause grief or delusion; the realisation of the knower remains uncompromised, for all misconception about their nature has ceased."[52] Therefore, although the gross body remains due to the *prārabdha karma*, and some 'impressions' remain in the subtle body, the *jīvan-mukta* is influenced by neither.

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[47] Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani* 549, 204.
[48] Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani* 551, 205.
[49] Nelson, "Living Liberation in Śaṅkara's and Classical Advaita," 46.
[50] Jacqueline Suthren Hirst, "When the Body Does Not Fall: Śaṅkara, Sureśvara and Ānandagiri on Living While Liberated," *The Journal of Hindu Studies* 9, no.1 (2016): 14.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

In summary, Śaṅkara lays out a detailed and robust conception of *jīvan-mukti*. The answer to whether *videha-mukti* is a soteriological advance to *jīvan-mukti* remains unclear. However, from Śaṅkara's writings, it can be deduced that although he does not fully substantiate it, he does believe that the core experience in *jīvan-mukti* is the same as in *videha-mukti*.

SVĀMINĀRĀYAṆA'S JĪVAN-MUKTI

Svāminārāyaṇa has a clear and strong position on *jīvan-mukti* that holds a significant place in his overall theology. He unequivocally states his belief in *jīvan-mukti* several times in the *Vacanāmrut*. For example, in Gaḍhadā 3.2, he clearly states that it is possible to attain "the highest state of enlightenment, or liberation, while in this body."[53]

Elsewhere, Svāminārāyaṇa states: "If one practices satsaṅga[54] with absolute sincerity… one will become *brahmarup* while in this body."[55] The key word in this phrase for our purposes is '*brahmarūpa*.' As seen above, to become *brahmarūpa* is for the *jīva* to become like the Akṣarabrahman Guru, by receiving and imbibing the qualities of Akṣarabrahman. It is this *brahmarūpa* state that distinguishes a *siddha* (accomplished) from a *sādhaka* (spiritual practitioner), or a *jīvan-mukta* from an ordinary *jīva*. To be *brahmarūpa* is to transcend *māyā* (bondage) and attain liberation. Svāminārāyaṇa writes: "becoming *aksharrup* [*brahmarūpa*] and serving Shri Purushottam Nārayan is in itself liberation."[56] As we read earlier, Svāminārāyaṇa asserts that offering *bhakti* is integral to liberation. To become *brahmarūpa* is essential for this. Svāminārāyaṇa states: "Only one

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[53] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 3.2. (Author's translation).
[54] Literal meaning is 'associating with the truth,' but refers more generally to practicing within the religious fellowship.
[55] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Sāraṅgpur 9.
[56] Svāminārāyaṇa, Ashlali.

who is *brahmarup* has the right to offer *bhakti* to *Purushottam* [God]."[57]
To attain *videha-mukti* and go to Akṣaradhāma (Parabrahaman's divine
abode) once the body has fallen, one must be *brahmarūpa*, and to attain
jīvan-mukti, one must also be *brahmarūpa*. This is the pre-eminent
brahmic state for Svāminārāyaṇa.[58]

As mentioned earlier, *mukti* is "not only for personal spiritual fulfilment
and safety… but also to be able to fully devote oneself to Parabrahman."[59]
Explaining the centrality of *bhakti* to *jīvan-mukti*, Svāminārāyaṇa writes,
"When the devotee has kept his mind at the holy feet of God in this
manner, he does not have to die to attain the abode of God; he has attained
it while still alive."[60]

Having gained an understanding of the theoretical basis of
Svāminārāyaṇa's *jīvan-mukti*, we can briefly survey the features of a *jīvan-
mukta* for Svāminārāyaṇa. He describes a *jīvan-mukta* as one
characterised by equanimity amid all dualities (Vacanāmrut Loyā.16), and
independence from the body, senses, faculties and all other *māyic* or
karmic influences (Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.62). Most importantly, it is a
state of complete self- and God-realization, wherein the *jīvan-mukta* has a
direct experience of Parabrahman in all his resplendent glory (Vacanāmrut
Gaḍhadā 1.20), both within his/her own soul (Vacanāmrut Sārangpur 10)
and wherever he/she turns (Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.26), as if
Parabrahman or his abode are not even an atom away (Vacanāmrut
Sārangpur 10). The *mukta*'s senses and mind are now totally engrossed in
Parabrahman (Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.51). Nothing else remains

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[57] Svāminārāyaṇa, Loya 7.
[58] Paramtattvadas, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology,* 275.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 3.7.

noticeable (Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 1.24); he/she experiences God in everyone and in everything (Vacanāmrut Kāryani 7).[61]

As mentioned in the introduction, we can now see where Svāminārāyaṇa fits into Patricia Mumme's typology of strong, medium, and weak *jīvan-mukti* positions. She puts Śaṅkara in the strong category. Where would Svāminārāyaṇa fit in? Mumme states that a 'strong' *jīvan-mukti* position entails several features: 1) the state of living liberation is shown to be a clearly defined and discrete state, stressing its difference from previous states;[62] 2) the *jīvan-mukti* state is shown to have virtual equivalence to post-mortem liberation; and 3) the *jīvan-mukta* state is demarcated by a threshold experience.[63] Svāminārāyaṇa fulfils the first two of these criteria. The *brahmarūpa* state is a clearly defined and discrete state and Svāminārāyaṇa on numerous occasions equates it with post-mortem liberation. However, he does not talk of a clear 'threshold experience;' *sādhanā* is a gradual process which culminates in *jīvan-mukti*.

A COMPARISON OF ŚAṄKARA'S AND SVĀMINĀRĀYAṆA'S CONCEPTIONS OF JĪVAN-MUKTI

Both Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa hold strong, clearly defined positions on *jīvan-mukti*. But how do they compare to each other?

a) Similarities
Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa both agree that *prārabdha karma* is the fundamental reason behind the liberated *ātman* still occupying a corporeal body, both the gross and subtle elements of it. Furthermore, they both agree that in the state of *jīvan-mukti*, the body and mind hold no sway whatsoever over the *mukta*. In a similar fashion to Śaṅkara's

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[61] Paramtattvadas, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology,* 283.
[62] Mumme, "Living Liberation in Comparative Perspective," 248.
[63] Ibid., 250.

analogies we saw earlier, Svāminārāyaṇa explains that the soul is distinctly separate from within the body, like a sword in its scabbard or a seed within a dried mango.[64] Therefore, there is clear agreement on what I perceive to be some foundational and theoretical beliefs behind the notion of *jīvan-mukti*.

b) Differences

Although the theoretical foundations are the same for Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa, as seen above, the way they craft their respective *jīvan-mukti* doctrines are considerably different. We return here to the *brahmarūpa* state mentioned by Svāminārāyaṇa. We must make a clear distinction here between 'becoming *like* Brahman' (becoming *brahmarūpa*) and '*becoming* Brahman.' The former is the belief of Svāminārāyaṇa, and the latter the belief of Śaṅkara. For Śaṅkara, the soul *is* Brahman; they are one and the same. However, for Svāminārāyaṇa, the *brahmarūpa* state is "not a substantial union but a qualitative similarity with Akṣarabrahman."[65] Unlike in Śaṅkara's system, the *jīva* (soul) always remains ontologically distinct from Akṣarabrahman and Parabrahman.

In summary, the *jīvan-mukti* state for Śaṅkara is a change of perspective whereby the soul identifies itself with Brahman, whereas the Svāminārāyaṇa conception of *jīvan-mukti* involves devotion with a sense of servitude in an exalted spiritual state of being *brahmarūpa*. Thus, while there are basic similarities in their approaches, there are important distinctions between their conceptualizations of *jīvan-mukti*.

3) SĀDHANĀ – THE PRACTICE, THE MEANS

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[64] Svāminārāyaṇa, *Vedarasa*, 149.

[65] Paramtattvadas, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology,* 277.

Sādhanā, otherwise known as praxis, is the means by which one endeavours to overcome bondage to attain liberation. It can take various forms and includes the full gamut of theological praxis. Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa have written extensively on *sādhanā* and provided their own elaborate interpretations and views on the means to liberation. We shall limit ourselves to exploring the facets in their explanations of *sādhanā* which prove to be relevant to our investigation on how their conception of living liberation shapes their views on praxis.

Śaṅkara

For Śaṅkara, *avidyā* (erroneous knowledge) is the source of bondage and the state of being freed from this bondage is conceptualized as a matter of awareness. Therefore, we can see conceptual continuity in Śaṅkara's placing *jñāna* (knowledge) at the heart of his *sādhanā*. For Śaṅkara, "Brahma-*jñāna*, the knowledge of Brahman… this right knowledge alone forms the direct means of attaining *mokṣa*."[66] Thus, it is only through Brahma-*jñāna* that one can attain liberation. Such knowledge sublates the superimposition and erroneous view of reality with the true non-dual vision of reality. Śaṅkara writes, "When this (false) notion that the embodied soul is the real Self is removed, all those activities become sublated which are based on that assumption, which are created by ignorance."[67] The liberated soul veiled by *avidyā* needs true knowledge for the sublation of the false superimposition to occur and for it to realize its true identity as Brahman. His belief in *jñāna* as the sole component of practice thus follows from his theory on *jīvan-mukti*.

Commenting on verse 2.1.10 from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara writes that through *'vijñāna'* (knowledge), all of one's knots of ignorance are destroyed. He adds that this happens *'jīvan eva'* (whilst living), with the

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[66] Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya verse 9.1-3, in Rangaswami, *Roots of Vedanta*, 355.
[67] Śaṅkara, *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 2.1.14, 328.

'eva' providing additional emphasis, meaning 'assuredly,' to indicate that ignorance is indeed certainly eradicated whilst alive. To further consolidate his position on knowledge leading to the attainment of *jīvan-mukti*, he includes the converse *'na mṛtaḥ san,'* literally, 'not while dead.'[68]

Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is particularly enlightening in this respect.[69] He explains that a particular phenomenon can be destroyed only by its opposite.[70] For instance, only light can dispel darkness. In the same way, only knowledge can remove ignorance, and because ignorance is the key condition for bondage, once ignorance is removed with knowledge, then even if *prārabdha karma* remains, one is a *jīvan-mukta*. In order to further explicate the connection between Śaṅkara's *sādhanā* and his position on *jīvan-mukti*, we can allude to an analogy used by Śaṅkara about ten people crossing a river and counting nine in the headcount. They felt they were missing an individual until a woodcutter nearby told the person counting that he had failed to count himself. When the woodcutter told the leader this, the result was instant; the 'lost' tenth person was immediately 'found.'[71] Rambachan writes, "Knowledge was direct and the results were immediate."[72] Śaṅkara, explaining the instantaneous nature of liberation on the experience of *jñāna*, writes, "at that time, one becomes identified with Brahman."[73] In other words, as soon as one realizes one's true identity as Brahman from Brahma-*jñāna* (knowledge of Brahman), ignorance is overcome, and one is liberated, here and now. Therefore, his conception of the state of *jīvan-*

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[68] Śaṅkara, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya, *Complete Works of Sri Sankaracharya in the original Sanskrit*, Vol. 8 (Chennai: Samata Books, 1999), 350-51. (Author's translation).

[69] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.10.

[70] Kim Skoog, "Is the Jīvanmukti State Possible? Rāmānuja's Perspective," in *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*, eds. Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Mumme, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 73.

[71] Anantanand Rambachan, *The Advaita Worldview: God, World, and Humanity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 51.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Śaṅkara, *Bhagavad-gītā Bhāṣya* 13.30, 562.

mukti can be seen to have conceptual continuity with his belief in knowledge being the key and only part of praxis that leads to living liberation.

Svāminārāyaṇa

As seen in section two, *mukti* – both pre- and post-mortem – is twofold for Svāminārāyaṇa: 1) to become *brahmarūpa*, i.e. to become like Akṣarabrahman; and 2) to offer devotion to Parabrahaman. In this section, I shall explore how Svāminārāyaṇa's belief in *jīvan-mukti* shapes his process of *sādhanā*. As seen in section one, Svāminārāyaṇa adds the entity of Akṣarabrahman to his metaphysical system, which is fundamental to both Svāminārāyaṇa's *sādhanā* and *mukti*. The living guru on earth is a form of Akṣarabrahman, and Svāminārāyaṇa considers this individual to be the granter of *mokṣa*. Svāminārāyaṇa emphatically states the main principle of liberation to be that "the manifest form of God before the eyes and the manifest form of the Sant before the eyes as being the only grantors of liberation."[74] The key words here, for our purposes, are 'manifest form... before the eyes.' The gateway to liberation is always here and now through either God or the Sant (Akṣarabrahman Guru), therefore, *mukti* is also available here and now.

Next, we consider the process of becoming *brahmarūpa,* the state of being liberated in Svāminārāyaṇa soteriology. We saw in section two that becoming *brahmarūpa* is literally becoming like the Akṣarabrahman Guru, to imbibe his virtues. How is this possible? Svāminārāyaṇa explains, "If one associates with Brahman through continuous contemplation in this manner, the *jīva* acquires the virtues of that Brahman."[75] As we have seen

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[74] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 2.21.
[75] Ibid., Gaḍhadā 2.31.

in section one, Svāminārāyaṇa often uses the term Brahman to mean Akṣarabrahman. Association with the living Akṣarabrahman Guru is therefore indispensable for one who aspires to become *brahmarūpa*, i.e a *jīvan-mukta*. The importance of the association of the Akṣarabrahman Guru for *jīvan-mukti* can be seen when Svāminārāyaṇa states: "If one has the association of God and the Bhakta of God (Akṣarabrahman Guru), and God is pleased upon him, then even though he is in on earth, he is still in the abode of God."[76] In section two, we had seen that Svāminārāyaṇa states that by practicing *satsaṅga* one can become *brahmarūpa* 'here.'[77] What is *satsaṅga*? Paramtattvadas explains, "While the literal meaning of 'satsaṅga' is simply 'association with the truth or real', it is a richly complex term to define. It invokes the full gamut of theological belief and praxis practised within the religious community of devotees and, most essentially, under the guidance of the Brahmasvarūpa Guru."[78] A primary feature of Svāminārāyaṇa's *sādhanā* to attain *jīvan-mukti* is to have '*ātmābuddhi*' (literally 'self-perception') with the manifest Akṣarabrahman guru. This is to say, because of intense love and association, one perceives the guru to be one's self. Svāminārāyaṇa in a letter to his disciples writes, "One should develop *ātmabuddhi* with him [Akṣarabrahman Guru], and with that thought, become a *jīvan-mukta*."[79]

Therefore, it can be seen from the above explanations of *sādhanā* by Svāminārāyaṇa that *jīvan-mukti* is a real possibility through 'oneness' with and 'association' of the manifest Akṣarabrahman Guru. Thus, we can assert that the Akṣarabrahman Guru plays a hugely significant role in achieving *jīvan-mukti*.

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[76] Ibid., Gaḍhadā 2.28. (Author's translation).
[77] Ibid., Sārangpur 9.
[78] Paramtattvadas, *An Introduction to Swaminarayan Hindu Theology,* 281.
[79] Svāminārāyaṇa, *Vedarasa*, 166.

However, this only covers the first half of *mukti*, i.e. becoming *brahmarūpa*, leaving the second element of 'worshipping' Parabrahman left to be explored. Svāminārāyaṇa establishes that through the Akṣarabrahman Guru one has attained Parabrahman himself. He writes, "when he [the *jīva*] attains the association of such a Sant [the Akṣarabrahman Guru], he has, while still alive, attained he who was to be attained after death [i.e. Parabrahman]. That is to say, he has attained that which is called the highest state of enlightenment, or liberation, while in this very body."[80] Having attained Parabrahman on this earth in the form of the Akṣarabrahman Guru, Svāminārāyaṇa instructs his devotees to worship him. Svāminārāyaṇa states, "Those who are eager to secure their liberation should thus serve such a Sant …. Why? Because… such a Sant should not be thought to be like a human nor should he be thought to be like even a deva… Such a Sant, even though he is human [in form], is worthy of being served like God."[81] Here, Svāminārāyaṇa states that serving the guru is equivalent to serving God. In fact, Svāminārāyaṇa instructs his devotees to serve the guru "like God."[82] Raymond Williams also writes, the "Guru/disciple relationship is heightened because it is placed in a new context in which the Guru is thought to be the body of Parabrahman through whom he reveals all his powers for the salvation of individuals."[83] Therefore, worshipping the guru is equivalent to worshipping Parabrahman, not because they are ontologically identical, but because the Guru is considered to be the form or vessel of God, holding him in every part of his body. A holistic textual study of the *Vacanāmrut* text shows that key references to the term 'Bhakta' or 'Sant' are referring to the Akṣarabrahman Guru.

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[80] Svāminārāyaṇa, Vacanāmrut Gaḍhadā 3.2. (Author's translation).

[81] Ibid., Gaḍhadā 3.26.

[82] Ibid., Vartāl 5.

[83] Raymond B. Williams, "The Holy Man as the Abode of God in the Swaminarayan Religion," in *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India*, eds. Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Norman Cutler, Vasudha Narayanan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 153.

Thus, from my aforementioned analysis of Svāminārāyaṇa's *sādhanā*, it is apparent that the presently manifest Akṣarabrahman Guru plays a significant soteriological role in Svāminārāyaṇa's acceptance of *jīvan-mukti*. The Akṣarabrahman Guru is considered to be the gateway to liberation, the crux of the *sādhanā*, and also the medium through which to offer *bhakti* to Parabrahman whilst in the *jīvan-mukti* state. Furthermore, Akṣaradhāma (Parabrahaman's divine abode for *videha-mukti*) and the manifest guru are one and the same entity, Akṣarabrahman. *Videha-mukti* is residing within the Akṣarabrahman abode, and *jīvan-mukti* is becoming one with the Akṣarabrahman living Guru. Therefore, in Svāminārāyaṇa theology, the Akṣarabrahman entity is central to the theory of living liberation. The *sādhanā* is centred around the Akṣarabrahman Guru, as he is the means here, and the end here. Thus, the praxis outlined above is a clear corollary of Svāminārāyaṇa's conception of *jīvan-mukti*: in order to become like Akṣarabrahman (*brahmarūpa*) and worship Parabrahman, which is the characteristic of *mukti*, one has to develop oneness with the Akṣarabrahman Guru, who beholds Parabrahman.

CONCLUSION

JĪVAN-MUKTI

This study, whilst analysing the doctrinal base of *jīvan-mukti*, has shed light on the specific beliefs of *jīvan-mukti* of Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa. Taking a step back from our individual thinkers, *jīvan-mukti* has proved to be a fascinating topic of study. The fact that it is not accepted by many Hindu schools, and that its conceptualizations are so different, shows that it is indeed a radical and complex idea. I have simply considered two theologians of one specific strand of Hindu thought, Vedānta. If the study were to expand to include other schools, the arguments would certainly multiply. My research and analysis on *jīvan-mukti* has been focused on

the theological and doctrinal aspects of the subject, however, it is certainly not a topic that is confined to theory or 'orthodoxy.' The traditions we have talked about are lived traditions, and *jīvan-mukti* plays a profoundly practical role in those that accept it. *Jīvan-mukti* is a meeting point between time and eternity, between humanity and divinity, and between 'theories' of religion and *lived* religion. It places the abstract concept of *mokṣa* (liberation) into a tangible reality. For millions of adherents of religious traditions who believe in *jīvan-mukti*, the purpose of their spiritual praxis no longer remains a distant and abstract concept; it is transferred into the here and now, invigorating one's daily praxis – indeed, one's whole lifestyle – and intensifying one's religious convictions.

The notion of *jīvan-mukti* also reveals the potential of a human and therefore touches on theological anthropology. Svāminārāyaṇa's and Śankara's belief in *jīvan-mukti* implies that in the modern world, such a spiritually exalted state is possible within human cognition and in an actionable sense. The existence of such *jīvan-muktas* in these traditions means that there are supposedly infallible, divine figures roaming this earth today. On a practical level, this can also lead to religious hierarchies within such traditions determined by the spiritual state of an individual. While this study has explored the doctrinal and theological foundations of the notion of *jīvan-mukti* in relation to praxis, a fruitful outcome of this essay would be to pursue ethnographic research on *jīvan-mukti* within the Advaita and Svāminārāyaṇa traditions to see how this plays out practically.

CONNECTIONAL THEOLOGY

Through this exploration of the doctrine of *jīvan-mukti* and the corresponding praxis to achieve such a state, we have been able to uncover the diverse, coherent, and connectional nature of theology. Although both

theologians propound a belief in *jīvan-mukti*, both have diverse conceptions of this state. These differences arguably lie in their fundamental differences in theology and belief in God. Śaṅkara believes in a *nirguṇa* Brahman as a singular, all-pervading ontological category, whereas Svāminārāyaṇa posits a personal, theistic Parabrahman and another divine entity called Akṣarabrahman who serves as the cornerstone of Svāminārāyaṇa's conception of liberation. The way Śaṅkara and Svāminārāyaṇa conceptualize their theory of *jīvan-mukti*, and their belief about the 'end,' can be seen to be coherent with their beliefs on praxis, the 'means.' Śaṅkara's knowledge-based epistemological state of living liberation leads to a praxis solely based on attaining sublating knowledge. Svāminārāyaṇa's conception of *jīvan-mukti* as becoming '*brahmarup*' and worshipping Parabrahman means that his praxis centres around attaining oneness with the living Akṣarabrahman guru.

Finally, from a macro perspective, this coherence between the end and the means reflects a key theme of the very nature of theology and religion. My study has been, in a sense, an exercise in Hindu systematic theology; an attempt to *systematically* understand the notion of *jīvan-mukti* in relation to the theology, doctrines, and praxis of the two theologians. Systematic theology is connectional theology. Theology and Religion cannot be perceived as a stack of isolated doctrines, like separate draws of a cupboard. Rather, it is like an interconnected web of doctrines and beliefs, interlocked both directly and indirectly. My study has shown the way in which multiple doctrines engage with and shape one another. With the respective views of Brahman at the base, the ideas of bondage, the self, and *sādhanā* all tug at and jostle against one another, feeding off each other to provide coherence between the end and the means, the theory and the practice.

This exploration could be compared to cutting a cake. The cake represents the entire spectrum of theological and doctrinal thought. By slicing at the point of *jīvan-mukti*, one can see all the underlying layers of doctrine and theology that underpin it. In doing so, this study has revealed the clear interconnectedness of doctrine, like cogs in a machine. Wolfhart Pannenberg explains that we can only see history in all its totality from its end point; we can only understand the historical process when viewed from the culmination.[84] In the same way, *jīvan-mukti* has served as an end point, as the culmination of theology. Through it, we have been able to look back and explore the theological process, engage with the multiple doctrines of our two thinkers, and ultimately deepen our understanding of their theologies, conceptualizations of *jīvan-mukti*, and indeed their beliefs on daily striving towards it.

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Pascal's Wager: Rejecting Atheism

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PASCAL: REJECTING ATHEISM[2]

Does God exist? Should I believe in God? Should I open myself to the possibility of God? These are all distinctly different questions. One does not need to irrefutably know of God's existence in order to have faith nor does one need to believe in order to perform ritual practice, rendering themselves open to the Divine. Blaise Pascal, in his *Pensées*, brings forward these distinctions in his pragmatic argument for faith. Knowledge of God's existence is not necessary for faith to be prudential. The outline of his argument runs as follows:

1. "God is, or He is not"

2. Irrefutable knowledge of God's existence or inexistence is an impossibility
    a. Therefore, the probability of God's existence is a non-zero number

3. One must pick between belief or disbelief
    a. Belief, disbelief, and ambivalence or openness are the three possible options
    b. Time passes on and death is an inevitability
    c. Lifelong openness to belief is akin to disbelief at death—belief never actualized
    d. Thus, eventually belief or disbelief are the only two options
4. Belief in God results in either infinite reward (God is real) or a loss of nothing

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[2] This argument does not reflect the beliefs of the author, instead it is an intellectual pursuit intended to add to the field of Philosophy of Religion.

5. Disbelief in God results in finite gain or loss
    a. (4) and (5) describe this faith matrix where f_1, f_2, and f_3 are finite numbers

	God	No God
Belief	∞	f_2
Disbelief	f_1	f_3

6. Rationality dictates one will select the option with the highest expected utility

7. Thus, because the probability of God's existence is higher than a non-zero chance (1), one is forced to decide between belief or disbelief (3), and belief in God has the highest expected utility, then one should choose to believe in God.[3]

Interestingly, Pascal does not ultimately hold that this logic is sufficient to bring one to faith. Belief in God requires more. Instead, Pascal's intent with the argument is to demonstrate the rationality of faith and religious practice, inspiring folk to follow the way of past religious believers in hopes of finding God.

Criticisms of Pascal's Wager are plentiful. Most notably, critiques center around Pascal's faulty use of infinity in probability theory, the decision matrix created by premises (4) & (5), and his forced decision argument in premise (3). In this paper, after outlining these complaints surrounding Pascal's Wager, I will defend and modify Pascal's argument, ultimately concluding that the Wager should not be understood as a rational push towards faith, but instead as a rejection of the rationality of atheism. First, in establishing new parameters for the Wager, I will remove the need to invoke infinity or to consider probability. Finally, during a discussion of rationality I will concede that Pascal's Wager, even modified to solve the problems raised by premises (3), (4), and (5), provides no evidence for

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[3] Pascal, Blaise. "The Wager." *Philosophy of Religion*, Faith and Reason III.

faith, but instead is a persuasive argument against closing oneself off to God.

CRITICISM

Pascal's invocation of infinity as reward for belief in God in a world with the Divine is objected to on both theological and mathematical accounts. The theological dispute questions infinite reward as the result of belief: heaven (Pascal's assumption) may not exist, or belief may not be sufficient grounds to arrive in heaven, or heaven may not be a realm of infinite reward. Mathematically, infinity presents itself as an infections concern, potentially creating a jarring disunity between Pascal's math and reality. Infinite reward for faith can bleed out and infect all parts of life that can lead one to faith. Almost all actions can then be assigned infinite utility. For example, if eating cereal nourishes Valentina's body and allows her to realize the supremacy of God this simple action can be imbued with infinite utility. However, *Fruit Loops* are just *Fruit Loops*, not a transcendent experience.

Criticisms surrounding the decision matrix call for recognition of potential gods beyond Pascal's Catholic God. This expansion is known as the "many gods" refute. There are many different ways to conceive of God or religion in general, none of which seem to have clear supremacy. This worry poses a problem for Pascal's Wager by decreasing the expected utility of each individual "belief" option in the decision matrix by lowering the probability of each one, especially if infinite utility is removed as the reward for each of the God situations. The more Gods or religious options, the lower the probability of each of the options in the matrix.

DOMINANT STRATEGY AND PARAMETERS

Game theory in Pascal's Wager hinges upon an infinite-finite distinction. In order to guarantee that the expected utility, $utility \cdot probability = expected\ utility$, of faith remains higher than the other options in the decision matrix, Pascal ascribes belief with infinite utility when God exist and all other options with finite utility. This finite-infinite matrix guarantees no matter how low the probability of God's existence or how high the utility of belief, faith retains its position as the option with the highest expected utility. In this manner, Pascal sidesteps the need to provide any evidence for God's existence in order to articulate a practical argument for faith. No matter how low the probability of God's existence the expected utility will be infinite—much higher than the finite options. Belief always has the highest expected utility.

	A	**B**
α	Aα	Bα
β	Aβ	Bβ
γ	Aγ	Bγ

Pascal's dominant strategy can function upon another distinction. Instead of wagering on a dubious infinite reward over finite results, the Wager can be established as one for positive over negative utility. The positive-negative dominant strategy like the infinite-finite strategy also avoids the need to evoke probability; the expected utility of the positive option will always be higher than that of the negative or zero option. Irrefutable, positive numbers are larger than their counterparts, even with diminishing (but positive) multipliers or coefficients. If all options under **A** are positive and all options under **B** are zero or negative, then **A** is the clear

dominant strategy. Regardless of the probabilities of A_α, A_β, and A_γ occurring they not only have higher expected utility, but also the only chance of gain—if you select option **B** you are selecting no reward at best and negative utility at worst. In applying this to Pascal's Wager, **A** represents faith and **B** represents disbelief.

In practical terms this dominant strategy would not have universal applicability; it would only apply to those living under conditions such that there are available religious options with net-positive utilities[4] and disbelief in general provides no special utility. The probability for truth of beliefs, no matter how low, becomes irrelevant with these parameters. I would argue that there are many regions of the world like this today. In a suburb of Los Angeles, for example, buy-in and defection costs from religious communities may be low and adherence to atheism could offer no special benefits.[5] You risk nothing by Wagering on faith, you only open yourself up to gain. I have shifted Pascal's argument from a discussion of finite and infinite to positive and negative utility. The selection of faith remains the clear dominant strategy. Moreover, this shift to discussing positive and negative utility, abandoning the need to consider probability of outcomes, dismisses the many Gods objections to Pascal's Wager. I do not argue for Pascal's Catholic faith nor do I argue for the Protestant faith of my neighbor. My Wager argues for any faith with a net-positive gain. It differentiates between faiths only in that those with net-positive utility are considered. Additions to the faith matrix lower the probability of each outcome, but this is irrelevant. Faith is the only option available with positive utility. Faith is the better option.

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[4] The new Wager would only be for faiths with net-positive utility. Those with net-negative utility would not be a dominant strategy and are not considered here.
[5] This argument rests largely on these conditions; the secular costs and benefits of staunch atheism cannot significantly outweigh those of religious adherence.

The problem that remains I will nickname the malevolent/benevolent God. The malevolent God punishes believers for selecting faith and the benevolent God rewards believers and non-believers alike. Neither of these Gods concern me: the malevolent God does not appear to be a Being worthy of worship. One should not concern themselves with pleasing a malevolent God. The benevolent God on the other hand is currently a popular conception of the Divine; however, this does not pose a problem to this argument. If the benevolent God treats believers and non-believers the same then he should not be considered on a pragmatic matrix about belief. The matrix is about picking between different possible outcomes.

RATIONALITY

Rationalism does not go hand in hand with maximum utility. A rationally held belief is not necessarily the belief that will potentially deliver one to the best possible future. Even if genuinely believing that I am the son of a unicorn makes me much happier day after day and gives me more utility than the belief that I am the son of two humans, belief in my unicorn ancestry would still not be a rational belief. Pascal himself saw this dilemma while writing his *Pensées*. After reviewing the modified Wager, one still should not be delivered to faith in God. Faith may maximize utility, but utility does not track with reality. Rational belief is belief founded on logic, founded on decent certainty. Individuals cannot be said to have rational faith in God without reason and logic, outside of Pascal's argument, guiding them to faith.

The Wager still holds value and meaning. If one was sitting in a room with two ajar doors—door R, religion, and door A, atheism—Pascal's argument does not offer a rational reason to enter into the religious door. Without outside evidence for God's existence one cannot rationally find the faith which would enable them to enter door R. But, the modified Wager offers a convincing case for those whose lives and situations parody the

parameters established to never select door A. Atheism would never accrue benefits for its followers. The rational choice is to sit waiting for a reason to enter door R, waiting to gain utility. One can sit in the room, wait and hope a reason to enter the door to faith becomes evident. Living day to day life does not require a forced decision on faith, however, rationally one should not close themselves off to faith.[6] It would be irrational to shut oneself off from potential gain. Openness to faith is a cost-free action. Moreover, as little evidence one may have for the truth of religion(s), irrefutable proof against faith does not exist. The probability of faith turning out to be veridical is non-zero, therefore openness to faith is not irrational. The Wager may not push one into entering the door to religion, but it does demonstrate that entering into atheism would be irrational.

Premise (3) of Pascal's argument rejects the metaphor of a room with two doors. In Pascal's estimation, faith and disbelief have no intermediate. We have "embarked" on our journeys in life and cannot pause, wait, sit in the room. We must select belief or disbelief because death will come. Death will come and "openness" will become disbelief. After waiting in the metaphorical room, one will have never entered the threshold into belief. Pascal would hold that there is a room with one door. You start in the room of disbelief and may enter into the world of religion. In this situation, if disbelief as shown by the Wager is irrational, then there is only one option left. Belief. The rational option.

Death is inevitable, but Pascal is incorrect in assuming that this creates a forced decision. Pascal envisions life having two stages: embarking and disembarking. This creates a forced decision. But there is a third stage to life: life itself. Moreover, Pascal's Wager talks about a way to live, not a

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[6] I am assuming the parameters for faith as outlined above in my new decision matrix (net-positive religious experiences).

way to die. Pascal original argument talks of a life of faith, yet it then ignores that life itself. Pascal only thinks of heaven, the afterlife, the hypothetical reward. But, for the bulk of one's life there is no forced decision. Tomorrow will always come. Every day of man's life, besides one, he can sit undecided on faith and a tomorrow will come where he can make the decision. My modified Wager talks about these days. Each and every one should be spent open to God, never is it rational for one to turn to atheism if their situation parodies the parameters set in my Wager. One day death will come. The decision becomes forced at the end and potentially wagering on faith soon before death may not be enough—one may have needed to have lived an entire life of faith to receive the reward Pascal discusses. This, however, is not the concern of Pascal's Wager. My modified Wager talks of rationality in life, not the rationality of death. On a day to day basis, Pascal's Wager tells man to reject atheism, to hope for a revelation of faith. The modified Wager informs us how to live.

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Scarred and Silenced by Her Spouses: Domestic Violence in *The Life of Dorothea von Montau*

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INTRODUCTION

Adalbert returns home and sees the fresh fish uncleaned. Impatient with his wife's incompetence, he beats her so hard that her upper lip bleeds and her mouth swells shut. She looks up and smiles pleasantly as the onlookers marvel at her patience. Dorothea von Montau (1347-1394 CE), a fourteenth-century saint, experienced domestic violence just as women in abusive relationships do today. Domestic violence was common in the Middle Ages and in female saints' lives but has gone unnoticed until the 1960s.[2] However, unlike virgin martyrs and mystics before the fourteenth century, Dorothea von Montau is abused by her holy and earthly spouses: God and Adalbert.

Until recently, scholars have focused on political or criminal conflict instead of domestic disputes in female hagiography.[3] For centuries, domestic violence against women and children has been ignored and justified as "approved corporal punishment."[4] Domestic violence was socially and legally acceptable prior to the mid-1800s; "the actions we now understand to be in this category often signified normative behavior in a

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[1] Eva Chang, UCLA Class of 2017, majored in English Literature. In Professor Arvind Thomas' course on holy women, she became fascinated with how domestic violence is used as a device in female hagiography written in the Late Middle Ages. This paper was adapted from her English 145 research paper and the research poster she presented at UCLA Undergraduate Research Week Poster Day 2017.

[2] Eve Salisbury et al., *Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts* (University Press of Florida, 2002), 2.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 6.

medieval context."[5] The terms domestic violence, domestic abuse, and familial violence are contemporary versions of medieval discipline which was divided into "charitable beatings" that maintained social and familial structures and "sinful beatings" that destroyed it.[6] The father or the husband had the authority and right to discipline household members, anyone from servants to his wife.[7] Supported by scriptural archetypes, edicts, and proverbial wisdom, "the meting out of household justice" was widely accepted and practiced while abused wives who retaliated or murdered their husbands in self-defense were burned at the stake for homicide and treason.[8] Civil and ecclesiastical courts worked to reunite couples, silencing abused women and locking them in a cycle of abuse.[9]

Medieval readers and hagiographers generally accepted the necessity of moderate and controlled violence, believing in redemption for the victims' souls and the need to help their abusers redeem themselves.[10] Like the violence perpetuated in medieval households and brushed aside by ecclesiastical and legal courts, battered women in hagiography have been silenced by their confessors and readers. Their stories of obedience and endurance of marital rape and beatings are transformed into lessons of patience, humility, and constancy—Christian virtues that lead to a life in heaven.[11] Interactions between saints and God in hagiographical lives have changed since physical suffering and wounds gradually became avenues of direct communication with God and spiritual freedom.[12] Vitae

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[5] Ibid., 3.
[6] Ibid., 3, 9, 6.
[7] Ibid., 6.
[8] Ibid., 3.
Margaret Schaus, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge, 2006), 219-220.
[9] Salisbury, 22.
[10] Ibid., 9, 12.
[11] Ibid., 12.
[12] Albrecht Classen, "Wounding the body and freeing the spirit: Dorothea von Montau's bloody quest for Christ, a late-medieval phenomenon of the extraordinary kind," *In Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture* (Vol. 1, pp. 417-447), (Brill, 2015), 424-427.

written in the Early Middle Ages depict God as a spectator, confidant, and ally as female virgin martyrs are abused by their families and spouses psychologically, physically, emotionally, and sexually. By the Late Middle Ages, God's role in female hagiography had expanded. He became an active participant, inflicting "his own marks" on Saint Dorothea von Montau.[13]

Dorothea von Montau, a Prussian mystic and anchoress, castigates herself for twenty-six years and is regularly abused by her husband Adalbert and God.[14] She performs these "holy exercises" from eleven years of age—a year away from experiencing puberty and being of marriageable age—until she becomes an anchoress and is told to stop by God.[15] She continues these flagellations secretly while married to Adalbert, hiding her wounds and visions until God orders her to share them with her confessor. Like many hagiographers, Johannes von Marienwerder, Dorothea's scribe and confessor, recasts domestic violence as another trial to sanctity in *The Life of Dorothea von Montau* for political and financial reasons.[16] Although hagiographers' use of domestic violence to demonstrate a woman's virtue and justify her sanctity is not unique in medieval hagiography, Marienwerder's descriptions of wounds, wife-beating, and Dorothea's abusive spouses are uniquely troubling.

This essay will examine the abusive behavior Dorothea suffers at the hands of her earthly spouse Adalbert and her holy spouse. By comparing and contrasting the control each has over her body and God's reactions to

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[13] Johannes von Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, A Fourteenth-Century Recluse*, trans. Ute Stargardt (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1997), 49.

[14] Ibid., 48.

[15] Ibid., 61.

[16] Ute Stargardt, "The Political and Social Backgrounds of the Canonization of Dorothea Von Montau," *Mystics Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1985): 107-122, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20716687, 111-120.
Ute Stargardt, "Seeing and Being Seen: The Wallpaintings at Marienwerder Cathedral and the Portraits of St. Dorothea von Montau," *Magistra* 17, no. 1 (Summer, 2011): 46-88, https://search.proquest.com/docview/880068175?accountid=14512, 48-63.

scenes of her suffering, I will argue that Johannes Marienwerder's portrayal of God normalizes domestic violence in *The Life of Dorothea von Montau*. Marienwerder glorifies domestic violence in the German vernacular vita to justify Dorothea's sanctity, turning a common problem in medieval households into another necessary trial Dorothea must overcome.

OPEN WOUNDS AND SPIRITUAL VISIONS

Recent scholarship has explored the violence Saint Dorothea suffers and the heavenly rewards she receives in exchange for her faith and obedience. In Albrecht Classen's essay "Wounding the Body and Freeing the Spirit: Dorothea von Montau's Bloody Quest for Christ, a Late-Medieval Phenomenon of the Extraordinary Kind," Classen argues that Dorothea no longer needed to hurt herself because years of self-castigations and domestic violence have liberated her soul from its bodily prison.[17] Her open wounds have broken "the protective skin" which acts as "a skein that threatens to suffocate the soul" and prevents access to the Godhead.[18] Therefore, "healing appears as a threat to her endless efforts to experience a spiritual transformation through her body."[19] The cause or method of breaking the skin and keeping wounds bloody does not matter. Access to God and visions does: "the pain resulting from her wounds made it possible for Dorothea to return to the Godhead whenever she desired."[20] Classen does not make a distinction between Dorothea's self-castigations and the wounds her spouses created.

In "Violence, Isolation, and Anchoritic Preparation: Dorothy of Montau, Anchoress of Marienwerder," Michelle M. Sauer addresses domestic abuse

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[17] Classen, 436.
[18] Classen., 437.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

prevalent during Dorothea's sexually active years and explains how Dorothea is conditioned to accept abuse.[21] Sauer argues that "since [Dorothea] has come to associate physical abuse with spously affection, she recognizes God as her true spouse only through such behavior."[22] Although Dorothea may have unconsciously accepted physical abuse as a sign of spousal affection, God wounds Dorothea before Adalbert ever lays his hands on her.

Classen's essay demonstrates how Dorothea experiences visions and bliss after she smiles through Adalbert's abuse. Therefore, Dorothea's husband Adalbert is another "painful exercise" in her pursuit of sanctity.[23] Adalbert's abusive ways are supposed to be tolerated since they create new wounds on Dorothea's skin. Dorothea also must face his blows because God wanted her to:

> God the Lord drove and commanded her like a laboring beast is driven to torment herself in this manner and in so doing without tarrying should move ahead to traverse the road towards eternal bliss from one painful exercise to the next... so that she would enjoy little respite. And whenever she desired to rest for a moment and refresh her tired limbs or ease her wounds, the Lord seemed to manifest himself to her by driving her with blows, admonishing her to return to work, castigations, and vigils.[24]

Dorothea interprets the physical and sexual abuse she experiences as another "painful exercise" or "labor."[25] Not only is it a problematic and overly simple interpretation of the physical abuse and marital rape for the lay audience Marienwerder is writing to, Dorothea's obedience and servitude to Adalbert are approved by God. He pushes her to react and not act in the face of danger. With little choice or will, Dorothea is driven like a

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[21] Michelle M. Sauer, "Violence, Isolation, and Anchoritic Preparation: Dorothy of Montau, Anchoress of Marienwerder," *Magistra* 21 (1): 2015, 142-144.
[22] Ibid., 143.
[23] Marienwerder, 63.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

"laboring beast" and reprimanded with blows from God.[26] Because
Dorothea is supposed to test her patience, virtue, and obedience, the end
justifies the means. An uncanny mirror of Adalbert's treatment, God's
behavior and involvement in Dorothea's trials normalize Dorothea's
passivity and Adalbert's unjustified aggression. Minimized and celebrated,
violence in Dorothea's marriage becomes a model of expected behavior
from one's spouse.

Adalbert is depicted as another tool for Dorothea to reach heaven.
Marienwerder argues that Dorothea remained a chaste virgin in spirit and
excuses her temporal marriage: "Therefore it is well to consider that not
through blind circumstance but through God's ordinance the beloved
bride of God Dorothea was betrothed to a human bridegroom."[27] Openly
trying to excuse Dorothea's marriage, Marienwerder is trying to "overcome
the drawbacks of Dorothy's case for sainthood: she was married, she was
an accused heretic, and she was (supposedly) insolent."[28] Although it is a
political maneuver by Marienwerder, abusive husbands recast as projects
meant to be reformed and saved are not unique in the Middle Ages or the
modern world.[29] This manipulated portrait of Adalbert and Dorothea's
marriage leads to other lies with equally disastrous consequences.
"Furthermore, married life was helpful to the blessed Dorothea insofar as
she became all the more humble through the heavy load of conjugal
burdens, and God was praised even more highly in the fruit her married
life brought forth."[30] Marienwerder turns another drawback into a
necessary obstacle: by showing how Dorothea never submits to lust
despite paying the conjugal debt, he aligns her spiritual virginity to that of
virgin martyrs. Because she is tested by the devil every time Adalbert
expects her to fulfill her marital obligations, her fortitude is supposedly

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Marienwerder, 57.
[28] Sauer, 137.
[29] Schaus, 221.
[30] Marienwerder, 57.

stronger than virgin martyrs who were not tested regularly and under no pressure to please their husbands in bed. However, this depiction means the marital rape and abuse in Dorothea and Adalbert's marriage are also "helpful" to Dorothea. Her predictable acceptance of Adalbert's unjustified violence is praised by Marienwerder: "Even if someone offered her something evil instead of something good, she received it without sadness or sorrow, as she certainly demonstrated during her marriage."[31] Marienwerder presents Dorothea as a faithful, virtuous wife to Adalbert, yet she seems to be aware of her pending sainthood and the exchange she has with God.

In addition to pressuring Dorothea to submit to an abusive husband, God forces Dorothea to laugh and lose one of the few chances she had to leave her earthly spouse. Instead of supporting her and helping her escape, God makes her stay and suffer longer. Adalbert and Dorothea originally agreed that Dorothea would remain in Finsterwald while he and their daughter would return to Prussia. Seconds before she secures her freedom in a letter from the priest, God inspires laughter, effectively ruining her hopes of staying and begging for bread:

> While they were waiting for him to arrive, Dorothea was at her prayers, and it was most pleasing to her that she should remain there in misery, far from her worldly friends. Then God granted her such overflowing spiritual desire that she could not contain herself; she had to laugh out loud for joy and happiness... At that moment she thought that she had never before felt such inexpressible joy and desire for divine grace. But while her husband waited for the priest and she was so richly showered with God's gifts, he changed his mind and regretted having granted her this freedom.[32]

Of all the times God could have comforted Dorothea, He chooses the worst moment to make her laugh. Adalbert then misunderstands Dorothea's laughter and changes his mind. This sequence of events proves that God is

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[31] Marienwerder , 43.
[32] Marienwerder, 96.

unsatisfied with Dorothea's level of suffering and extends it. His direct manipulation is telling. Dorothea remains pure through her faithfulness and obedience to Adalbert while God—not the devil—redirects his petty involvement as a "gift" to Dorothea but inspires jealousy from Adalbert. This intervention serves to further isolate Dorothea from the world and prove her worthiness as an anchoress and saint during her marriage.

Similarly, Adalbert's unremarkable death is glossed over even though it frees Dorothea from her legal marriage. Physically and socially isolated long before she is locked into a cell, Dorothea is allowed to become an anchoress due to his timely death. Marienwerder foreshadows her limitations and freedom before the exchange of hearts in Book 2: "The sanctity of marriage, which means the impossibility of separation, was evident in their union, for no human being but God himself severed the bond of matrimony between them through death."[33] Because Marienwerder reminds his lay audience of this well-known fact, it appears that Adalbert died because he is no longer useful to God. His death proves that Dorothea has already proved herself to God. Therefore, Adalbert had to die for Dorothea to move into a cell and live only to serve God. It is only when she decides to move into a cell that God promises, "When you move into your cell, I will remove much of your misery."[34] This demonstrates how God not only approves of the wounds Adalbert inflicts upon Dorothea, He uses Adalbert to wound Dorothea.

God insists that she obey Adalbert yet later claims her as His possession. Married to God long before Adalbert's death, Dorothea obeys her earthly husband as long as it does not interfere with the few moments she has with her holy spouse. Whenever she gets lost in visions, bliss, rapture, or ecstasy she forgets to do her chores and is then punished by Adalbert for

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[33] Marienwerder, 60.
[34] Marienwerder, 148.

her negligence. This cycle becomes repetitive in the German vita, but God breaks it once for Dorothea's sake.

> She was removed from external things and filled internally with intense love and sweetness through the grace of Our Lord and therefore refused to alight the wagon when her husband called and ordered her to do so for she thought it more appropriate to listen to what God said to her than to extricate herself from God's dalliance at the behest of her earthly husband and be encumbered with external matters. As she hesitated, her husband became grimly infuriated and threw a tantrum over her disobedience. She became frightened by this and begged God to advise her whether or not it would be permissible for her to remain with him and to defy her husband's command. Thereupon Our sweet Jesus answered her, saying: 'Extricate yourself at once from my delightful dalliance and be obedient to your husband's wishes.' When she heard this, she climbed down from the wagon, despondent because she had to forego her delightful dalliance with Our God. And this she had to do often, both before and afterwards, to obey her husband, serve him faithfully, and receive hard knocks while serving his needs, for well-observed obedience is more pleasing to God than sacrifices.[35]

While God breaks this cycle of abuse to protect Dorothea, she is usually forgetful and negligent in household matters thanks to His untimely visions and ecstasy. He orders her to extricate herself as if she has the choice and power to ignore His presence and "delightful dalliance." Caught between two spouses, Dorothea refuses to listen to Adalbert and asks God for permission to be defiant. Dorothea's submission to Adalbert pleases Him because it is ultimately a demonstration of her humility and obedience to Him and not to Adalbert.[36]

The language and tantrum used to describe Adalbert's insecurity reappear when God reprimands Dorothea for breaking His rules for anchorites. Dorothea is ignored by Mary and her child for "having conversed without asking their permission."[37] The Lord teaches her: "'How could you talk to people without my permission? ... I have drawn you to me, away from the

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[35] Marienwerder, 104-105.
[36] Marienwerder, 174.
[37] Marienwerder, 158.

world. Do you now want to draw the world to you and speak to all sorts of people?'"[38] He sounds extremely possessive and focuses on what He has done for her, suggesting that she prefers the world over Him. The limitations imposed on Dorothea's speech as an anchoress are very similar to those as Adalbert's wife. "'You shall live chastely in your cell, busy day and night to please no one but me. You shall live as a wife who has a strict, harsh husband because of whom she never dares to leave their house.'"[39] The language God uses mirrors Adalbert's beatings and verbal abuse: both sound like jealous lovers competing for attention. This may be a deliberate attempt by Marienwerder to downplay Adalbert's abuse, yet it backfires and draws attention to Dorothea's ready submission to all the men in her life.

In contrast, Dorothea is silent or unconscious through most of her beatings by Adalbert and wound creation by God. Her holy spouse renews and opens wounds on her body as "symbols of their inseparable love": "As she fell asleep, he impressed one, two, four, six, or eight wounds at once and so rapidly that she herself was unable to state the number of the wounds with which Christ had endowed her body."[40] Because this occurs before her marriage, Dorothea may have learned to accept wounds regardless of how they were created. It is strange that He takes advantage of her while she is semi-unconscious and vulnerable. Waking up to see innumerable wounds may have warped her acceptance of violence from loved ones. These wounds from her holy bridegroom limited her mobility and sometimes confined her to bed, drawing her away from the world and to Him.[41]

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[38] Marienwerder, 159.
[39] Marienwerder, 151.
[40] Marienwerder, 49.
[41] Marienwerder, 49, 51.

Unlike the Lord's precise but secretive wounds, Adalbert's physical abuse is more chaotic and originates from his external needs not being met. Since she refuses to sleep with him, Adalbert beats Dorothea for the first time.

> For three days he kept the honorable housewife Dorothea fettered and in chains, a prisoner in his house. But she interposed the spiritual shield of patience and thus deflected the grim volleys, strokes of anger, and curses and endured them without complaint or counter argument so that her husband, mistaking her holy patience and silence for defiance and arrogance, severely beat her on the head with a chair.[42]

Although her holy patience and silence are signs of her humility and obedience, Dorothea is beaten for being virtuous. Here, she chooses to be silent. In later episodes of domestic abuse, Adalbert's beatings forcefully silence Dorothea. After she gets lost in contemplation and forgets to prepare fish quickly, Adalbert "beat her so severely on the mouth that her upper lip was cut badly by the teeth. Her mouth swelled shut hideously, which disfigured her greatly… [she] smiled at him pleasantly and affectionately."[43] Lost in ecstasy, she forgets to buy straw and returns home from the market.[44] Adalbert "hit her so hard on the chest that blood shot out of her mouth and she kept spitting blood with her saliva for many days afterwards."[45] Because he hits her on the head, face, and chest, his anger is very personal yet publicly displayed on her face. Adalbert does not care that everyone can see signs of his abuse. However, Dorothea needs people to see these marks; their witness accounts and approval of her patience all contribute to her reputation as a virtuous wife. Her silence and "disfigured" face highlight Adalbert's freedom and power to speak in his household.

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[42] Marienwerder, 66.
[43] Marienwerder, 100-101.
[44] Marienwerder, 101.
[45] Marienwerder, 101.

Although she is "so greatly preoccupied with the Lord that she was unmindful and forgetful of external things," the Lord does not appear or assist Dorothea as Adalbert beats her in Gdansk.[46] He chooses to be silent but later claims to have protected her. In the last two years of her life, Dorothea, with permission from the Lord, tells Marienwerder about Adalbert's abusive behavior in Gdansk. The Lord immediately wounds her "with many arrows of love and ignited her with hot, burning love" and says:

> You must love me greatly, for I have so often pulled you away from your husband; while he was still alive and thought he possessed you, I drew you and possessed you. It is appropriate for you to speak highly of me for I have helped you, often without your knowing it, and have come to your assistance throughout your life, which was full of pain and torment. Now weep heartily and thank me profusely.[47]

Since Dorothea already loves her holy bridegroom and is about to pass away from heartbreaking divine love, His orders seem unnecessary and selfishly human. He owns up to creating conflict in her marriage but exaggerates his assistance. After all, He allows Adalbert to control Dorothea for over twenty years. Dorothea's silence is not only forced upon her, she is expected to be silent and therefore, submissive throughout her life. Like her marriage with Adalbert, she rarely speaks her mind as an anchoress. Even though she shares her past, Dorothea's present feelings and opinions are rarely shared with her confessors. Dorothea seems to have associated silence with obedience and humility. Instead, she acts as a messenger between God and her two confessors, relaying His messages and His interpretations of her life.

CONCLUSION

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[46] Marienwerder, 101-102.
[47] Marienwerder, 102.

Through these examples of ownership, silence, and possessive behavior, it has been contended that Marienwerder's depiction of God normalizes domestic violence. Because Dorothea is socially isolated and rewarded with bliss or divine communication after these episodes, abusive, dominating husbands are essential to Dorothea's spiritual journey. Marienwerder justifies her temporal marriage by portraying scenes of domestic violence as necessary obstacles for a married mystic like Dorothea. After all, she learns to be silent and accepting of wounds from Him. These repetitive cycles of abuse—drawn out for hundreds of pages in a popular vernacular vita—may have lasting social implications for lay audience in the Late Middle Ages and beyond: they reinforce patriarchal views of women's bodies, voices, and virtue by exemplifying what acceptable corporal punishment is and how men should teach their wives and daughters. Understanding how Dorothea is recast as a patient and virtuous wife by Marienwerder allows us to think about domestic violence in the Middle Ages as a powerful yet oppressive narrative tool in late medieval texts, how domestic violence has been ingrained in the Catholic church, and its enduring influence on the modern world.

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Kapparot (Ritual Slaughter) in Hasidic Communities: A Test Case of Competing Comprehensive Doctrines

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Every year before the Jewish New Year, Hasidic Jews around the world practice a ritual where they swing a live chicken around their heads, eventually sacrificing it, symbolically eradicating their year's worth of sins. This ritual, called *kapparot*, is controversial both within Judaism and within the wider public sphere. This past year an animal rights group in Los Angeles County has attempted to bring Chabad (a Hasidic group) to court, arguing that they should not be able to carry out this act of ritual sacrifice.[2] This paper will focus on three different, but intrinsically connected, aspects of the *kapparot* lawsuit which illustrates and elucidates many of the inherent difficulties and tensions between religion and the public sphere. The first section of this paper will discuss the purely legal details surrounding this case. Then, once a legal precedence is set, the idea of public reason will be discussed as it corresponds to our case. Finally, the moral underpinnings of both sides will be evaluated with some critiques appearing when necessary.

The first issue that must be discussed regarding the *kapparot* ban is that of pure legality. Does Chabad have a legal right to continue this ritual? The baseline case that Chabad's attorneys used to launch their defense is a

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[2] Josh Blackman, "Chabad's Ritual Is a Clear Example of the Free Exercise of Religion." Los Angeles Times. October 20, 2016. http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-blackman-kapparot-first-amendment-20161020-snap-story.html.

Supreme Court case known as *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah*.[3] In this case, the city of Hialeah, FL passed a law which stated that any sacrifice done in public or private, for non-consumption purposes was completely unnecessary and therefore illegal. However, this law stymied the worship of the Church of Lukimi Babalu Aye, an Afro-American religion with ritual slaughter at the center of their religious practice. The Church felt that they were being unfairly discriminated against given that other organizations were able to freely kill animals whether it be for food, clothing, or research. After passing through the court system, in 1993 the Supreme Court unanimously agreed that this law was unconstitutional on the grounds that it did not allow religious groups the same freedoms as other organizations. The *kapparot* case in Los Angeles had a very similar conclusion to the Florida case.[4] The court agreed that Chabad was able to continue their *kapparot* ritual, as long as they agreed to be bound by the same laws that restrict the food industry (such as basic human animal treatment and cleanliness).

Once it is determined that there is technically nothing wrong with *kapparot* on the legal level, the idea of public reason as it relates to this case must be discussed. The difficulty in this case stems from the fact that the prosecution is trying to convince the Hasidic group that they should rethink their actions due to various public reasons, specifically those that pertain to animals' rights. John Rawls, the prolific political philosopher, understood that one of the most difficult parts of political liberalism is that there is no easy or sure way to adjudicate conflicts between public and nonpublic reasons.[5] Why would Chabad, a fundamentalist religious group,

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[3] Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah, 508 U.S. 520 (1993).
[4] Louis Sahagun, "Federal Judge Lifts Temporary Ban on Ritual Slaughter of Chickens, Minutes before Start of Yom Kippur." Los Angeles Times. October 11, 2016. http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-slaughter-chickens-20161011-snap-story.html.
[5] Micah Schwartzman, "Reasoning from Conjecture: A Reply to Three Objections," in *Rawls and Religion*, ed. Tom Bailey and Valentina Gentile (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) 152-169.

forgo their deeply held private reasons for practicing *kapparot* to satisfy some public reason that is not, in some immediate way, a part of their own comprehensive doctrine? Rawls' general solution to this conflict, as elucidated by the legal scholar Micah Schwartzman, is to try and argue from within another's comprehensive doctrine via a form of reasoning called "reasoning from conjecture".[6] When one reasons from conjecture they must try to understand the comprehensive doctrine of the other in an attempt to come at a conclusion that is reasonable and internally consistent within the other's comprehensive doctrine. If reasoning from conjecture is carried out correctly, the hope is that both groups can come to a mutual understanding since they are both interested in the same end goal (even if their respective reasons for getting there are different).

One of the most blatant shortcomings in this case is the fact that the prosecution absolutely fails to try and understand the Hasidic group's side. The prosecution makes many unfounded statements and attacks that show their absolute failure to reason from conjecture. One argument that was used to challenge this ritual was to claim that it was a front for a money-making scheme set up by Hasidic organizations. The prosecution attorney, Bryan Pease, explicitly stated that "we believe that Rabbis' motivation is tremendous profit."[7] While it is true that in some synagogues there is either a small cost or customary donation expected during the course of the service, arguing that the goal of a religious ritual is centered around money is an offensive and shortsighted thing to say. Many religious organizations and groups require money to function and therefore must charge for various rituals that they perform. This fact has been true for thousands of years. To claim, without any serious evidence, that a religious ritual is actually a covert money-making scheme is to completely ignore the worldview of any religious individuals. It is one thing to challenge the

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[6] Ibid., 153.
[7] Sahagun, "Federal Judge Lifts."

moral acceptability, or even the objective truth of a religious act, but it is an entirely different thing to challenge the motives behind that act. In this sense, the prosecution has clearly failed to try to understand the other side, by attributing questionable motives behind their performance of the ritual that would have been unthinkable from within the comprehensive doctrine of Chabad.

A further indicator of the lack of effort to fully understand the *kapparot* ritual is evident by the claim that the use of chickens in the *kapparot* ritual is unnecessary. While anti-*kapparot* activists are quick to point out that this law is not codified in the primary source of Jewish law, the Talmud, this factor makes very little actual difference. Like all religions, Judaism has heavily evolved over the last 1,500 years since the codification of the Talmud and it seldom makes a difference to the religious Jewish mindset whether or not a law was conceived of in biblical times or by a great Jewish scholar in the seventeenth century. In this light, Pease again shows his lack of attempt to try to understand why any person would wish to participate in a ritual as seemingly abhorrent as *kapparot*. He states during the case that "killing chickens is not required for *kapparot* to take place, but is simply a preference."[8] Once again the abstract relationship between something being a preference versus it being a requirement has a vastly disparate nature and definition in the Orthodox Jewish realm than in the secular, and Pease shows no attempt to try to understand this distinction that has been the subject of thousands of articles over the course of Jewish legalistic history.

It becomes apparent that the prosecution does not understand the internal logic of the other side, which makes mutual understanding almost impossible. Reasoning from conjecture can only help alleviate conflicts

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[8] Sean Emery, "Attorneys Try to Save Chickens from Being Slaughtered in Jewish Ritual in Irvine." Orange County Register. October 05, 2016. Accessed May 29, 2018.

between public and private reason if groups are presented with "good reasons, as evaluated from within their own comprehensive views."[9] In the case of *kapparot,* as with many other cases in Judaism, there are many arguments that may be used to stop the sacrifice of chickens and have, in fact, been made by many Jewish scholars throughout the ages. If one truly wanted to understand and argue from within the Hasidic view one would probably begin by quoting the many biblical injunctions against animal suffering (such as Exodus 23:5 or Deuteronomy 22:6). To come up with deceptive strawman arguments by saying that the Rabbis are engaged in a monetary scheme or to argue that the use of animals is only preferred is simply unhelpful and will only come to increase the friction between these two groups.

The failure to reason from conjecture leads directly into a discussion of morality in this case. This is a case where we have two vastly different comprehensive doctrines pitted against each other, with neither one attempting to or able to understand the other. The prosecution believes that the Hasidim are doing something morally wrong by slaughtering animals for ritual purposes, while the Hasidim obviously feel like they are justified in their actions. To say it more explicitly, from the point of view of the animals' rights activists killing animals for ritual purposes is morally unacceptable, while from Chabad's point of view if they have the ability to cleanse someone of their sins (subsequently securing divine reward) by killing an animal it would be immoral to not do this act. When trying to debate the moral attributes of both sides, it is immediately apparent how difficult a task any discussion of morality entails.

It seems safe to posit that the animal rights group is using a form of Kantian reasoning to conclude that killing animals is "wrong". On the surface it seems like this conclusion may be backed up by ration and logic

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[9] Schwartzman, "Reasoning from Conjecture," 155.

since one can conceive of any number of well-constructed arguments to ultimately arrive at the conclusion that killing these chickens is morally unacceptable. However, this type of philosophical conclusion is extremely specious. The idea that reason has its limits is one that is duly noted by almost all contemporary philosophers, religious and secular alike. In their famous debate, the sociologist and philosopher Jurgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, better known as Pope Benedict XVI, both agree that some sort of non-reason based moral underpinning is necessary to run a society.[10] The obvious question then becomes what this pre-political basis will be, which is, of course, where the difficulty begins. If we chose to follows Rawls' basic construction of a liberal democracy, then we need to create a notion of mutual respect where groups with vastly different comprehensive doctrines can find common grounds, or an overlapping consensus, from which they can communicate. This would mean creating a space where the animal rights group and Chabad both speak in terms that are fully comprehensible to the other group.

On the surface it would seem difficult to defend the Hasidic desire for animal sacrifice via any sort of public reason. However, this changes when we consider the Habermasian idea that religious groups can maintain their religious values and beliefs as long as they "translate" their ideas into that of public reason. The idea that is the basis for much of our political underpinnings is the deeply religious idea that "all men are created equal", derived from the biblical line "God created mankind in his image" (Genesis 1:27). When we unpack this idea a bit further in the realm of public reason, one can argue that since humans are intrinsically important (translated from image of God), and the life of a human is infinitely more important than that of a nonhuman (who, according to the bible, were not created in the image of God). In this worldview, which is easily translated into public

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[10] Jürgen Habermas. *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion.* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

reason, there is no way to compare the life of an animal to that of a human. At this point one may push back and argue that there is still no way to translate an archaic ritual such as *kapparot* into terms accessible to all. What if one does not believe in God at all? It is at this point when the full extent of the difficulty of claiming that something is objectively immoral comes into broad view. Let us assume that *kapparot* is an absolutely ridiculous act that has no metaphysical effect whatsoever. Even if this is true it would still be valuable as a ritualistic placebo. If the person slaughtering this chicken truly believes that he is pacifying God, it will, at the very least, have a positive psychological effect on this man. If one views humans as infinitely more important than animals, then this positive psychological effect is easily worth the death of a chicken. At this point we have gone full circle. We can fully translate a religious ritual such as *kapparot* into the realm of public reason. If we assume that humans are infinitely more valuable than animals, then it is not only fully justified, but actually a moral imperative, to slaughter a chicken for a ritualistic placebo effect.

The difficulties in rationally arguing the supremacy of one comprehensive doctrine to another brings us to the true definition of what it means to be living in a secular age. Charles Taylor writes that "We live in a condition where we cannot help but be aware that there are a number of different construals, views which intelligent, reasonably undeluded people, of good will, can and do disagree on."[11] Questions regarding ethical treatment of animals is one area that definitely falls in the category of questions that reasonable people disagree on. As I have argued in the previous paragraph, one's view of animal treatment will, in many cases, directly hinge on one's view of the inherent value of humans compared to the

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[11] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 11.

inherent value of animals. This is not something that can be completely argued with via ration or reason. Rather, different comprehensive doctrines will start with different axiomatic premises and their subsequent views will follow accordingly.

The *kapparot* case is then a perfect example of a stalemate between different comprehensive doctrines. However, this case could have played out much better if both groups would have attempted to be a little more ecumenical in caring about the other's position. Habermas argues that one of the modern shortcomings of our liberal democracy is that we have lost our "democratic bonds" that bind citizens in our society together. In order to run an effective liberal democracy, groups with conflicting comprehensive doctrines must engage in mutual reciprocity and have the symmetrical burden of trying to explain their comprehensive doctrines to others. The *kapparot* case represents a missed opportunity for mutual learning. Both groups came into this situation viewing it as a zero sum game rather than an opportunity to build bridges between two vastly different communities. As Habermas laments, these groups tried to "brandish their individual rights as weapons against each other."[12] While it is understandable why these groups did not want to engage in a type of Hegelian dialectic or accept a philosophy such as Terry Eagleton's where they are constantly sacrificing their wants and desires for that of the "other",[13] there seems to have been little reason why a case as seemingly insignificant as ritually slaughtering a couple hundred chickens had to create a divide between communities.

This aforementioned idea brings me to my final point. As we attempt to live together in a pluralistic liberal democracy we must very careful pick

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[12] Philippe Portier, "Religion and Democracy in the Thought of Jürgen Habermas," *Society* 48, no. 5 (2011): 426-32.
[13] Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith, & Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (Yale University Press, 2010).

and choose which battles we feel necessary to fight. In other words, in our secular age where we live amongst a myriad of vastly different comprehensive doctrines, we must display a heavy sense of reservation. Any action or opinion that a group espouses in our country is almost guaranteed to have another group that is fundamentally opposed to it. If every group that has an issue with another group decides to make a big deal about it, then our liberal democratically based society will cease to function. The discussion that takes place between communities is crucial for our society to work. Even if various groups come to vastly different conclusions, the act of discussion itself will act as a bridge between different communities.

In conclusion, the kapparot case is a prime example of the friction that will inevitably arise in a liberal democracy. Two groups with vastly different comprehensive doctrines, each refusing to consider, or even understand, the reasoning of the other. While it is unlikely that these two groups would have been able to come up with a solution that would have made them both completely happy, friendly deliberation could have strengthened the bond between them. Instead, the failure to reason from conjecture, or consider the moral tenability of the other side led to a larger gap between these groups. As with most problems that arise in a democracy, both groups need to realize that ultimately the freedom and privileges of their own group is dependent on others having equal rights.

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Secularization of Mindfulness: Downfalls and Successes of Cross-Cultural Transmission

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INTRODUCTION

The spread of mindfulness to the West has seen a marked transition from its origins in Buddhist practice and philosophy to its secularized, fashionable form popular by the dawn of the second millennium of the common era. The question must be asked whether the American "mindfulness movement" accurately reflects the true purpose of mindfulness in the Buddhist context. Secularizing a religious tradition inherently entails a change in the basic framework through which the practice is understood. The issue of the mistranslation of mindfulness between cultures poses a concern for the intentions underlying individual practice. These misunderstandings could lead to a distortion of the practice that may be irrevocable in the West, especially regarding the goal of self-improvement, a tenet often central to Western mindfulness that is by and large counterproductive to the no-self-focused mindfulness of Buddhism. On the other hand, the potential for spreading the benefits of mindfulness to a wider audience may yield incredibly fruitful results, especially in psychotherapeutic, educational, and social change-driven contexts. While the "mindfulness movement" has taken on a secular, individualistic bend in Western culture that has often resulted in gross misinterpretations of the basic purpose of Buddhist mindfulness practice — to alleviate suffering and catalyze awakening — these original goals

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remain intact in variable contexts due to the function of mindfulness as a quasi-religious framework through which practitioners with myriad motivations all may gain a greater understanding of reality and the way to liberation. Through defining mindfulness, parsing the extraction of mindfulness from a Buddhist context, scrutinizing ideological mistranslations, and analyzing Buddhist reactions to the American mindfulness movement, the present paper will examine the mutual effects of mindfulness on the West, downfalls and triumphs of these effects, and the implications these may hold for the functions of Buddhism and mindfulness in the Western hemisphere.

BUDDHIST FOUNDATIONS

Buddhism arrived in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, approximately 2,300 years after the birth of the tradition in India. The religion did not gain popularity until after the second World War, when propagator D.T. Suzuki galvanized the "Zen boom" of the 1950s.[2] Following the spread of Zen Buddhism, a primarily East Asian religion stemming from China, Korea, and Japan, an influx of Southeast Asian immigrants brought Theravāda Buddhism to America in the 1970s through 1990s. The new Southeast and South Asian immigrants vastly outnumbered extant Asian American communities and thus "altered the shape of Buddhism in America" to be weighted more heavily in a Theravādan direction.[3] The constitution of Buddhist sects in America has been in flux since the advent of the religion in the West. Many ideas beholden to Buddhism, however, have become extracted from the Buddhist framework to adapt to a Western audience. Mindfulness, specifically, has become a tag-word in America that seems to appear everywhere, from magazine covers boasting the "mindfulness movement"

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[2] Peter Gregory, "Describing the Elephant: Buddhism in America," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 236.
[3] Gregory, 235.

to self-help seminars to psychotherapy. The concept of mindfulness in the West has stayed true to some aspects of the Buddhist tenet of "Right Mindfulness," but in many ways the process of cross-cultural translation has skewed the meaning of the term. It is of paramount importance that practitioners of mindfulness understand the original definition of the term, as well as its framework in the context of Buddhism, to truly adopt mindfulness as a means through which to alleviate suffering and realize the fullness of the present moment.

Mindfulness has held a central role in the Buddhist philosophical paradigm since the compilation of the Pāli Theravāda Canon around the turn of the common era. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, translated as the "*Scripture on the Foundations of Mindfulness*," elucidates the nuances of mindfulness, both as a concept and as a practice in Buddhism. The sutta defines mindfulness as both attending to present moment experiences and the ability to do so through recalling the Buddha's teachings.[4] This twofold character of present moment awareness and remembering what the Buddha taught shapes mindfulness as a "boundless" facilitator of memory and of direct moment-to-moment experience.[5] As monk Bhikkhu Anālayo writes in his rendering of the Sutta, "Direct experience constitutes the central epistemological tool in early Buddhism… it is in particular the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* that can lead to an undistorted direct experience of things as they truly are."[6] This direct momentary awareness holds critical importance in the overall framework of Buddhist practice. Seeing clearly the reality of the world as it is represents a core constituent of attaining enlightenment, the paramount goal of Buddhism. The reference to direct awareness as the early Buddhist "central epistemological tool"

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[4] Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization* (Cambridge: Windhorse Publications, 2010), 46-49.
[5] Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna* ,49.
[6] Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 46.

lends to the absolute importance of mindfulness in the religion, stemming back to the earliest times of Buddhism on earth.

The term *sati*, typically rendered as "mindfulness," can be seen as a means through which practitioners aim to attain enlightenment through presence and active engagement of memory. The Pāli word *sati* (Sanskrit: *smṛti*) was first translated as "mindfulness" by scholar T. W. Rhys Davids, a rendering that may lack a sufficient stress on components of memory and recollection but that does allude to the necessity of an active mind in full awareness of the present moment.[7] Theravādan Monk Bhikkhu Bodhi translates *sati* or mindfulness as "lucid awareness," which he believes "provides the connection between its two primary canonical meanings: as memory and as lucid awareness of present happenings."[8] Regardless of whether the term is rendered as mindfulness, lucid awareness, or an expression that further stresses the critical component of memory, *sati* represents a basis of Buddhist practice in myriad respects. In his discourse on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, Bhikkhu Anālayo explains:

> *Sati* not only forms part of the noble eightfold path — as right mindfulness *(sammā-sati)* — but also occupies a central position among the faculties *(indriya)* and powers *(bala)*, and constitutes the first member of the awakening factors *(bojjhaṅgā)*. In these contexts, the functions of *sati* cover both present moment awareness and memory.[9]

The amalgam of roles *sati* plays in the Buddhist framework, as presented by Anālayo, conveys the tremendous significance of mindfulness in Buddhism from the advent of its Pāli canon over 2,000 years ago. As a connecting factor between the eight facets of the Noble Eightfold Path, as a physical and sensory basis of ability, and as the fundamental base of the cultivation of enlightenment, mindfulness epitomizes the purpose of

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[7] Rupert Gethin, "On Some Definitions of Mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (2011): 263.

[8] Bhikkhu Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness Really Mean? A Canonical Perspective," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (June 2011): 23.

[9] Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna,* 49.

Buddhist practice and thus the means through which one may attain *nibbāna*, liberation.

Mindfulness in a Buddhist context espouses the purposes of alleviating suffering and catalyzing awakening, with an emphasis on overcoming separation between the relative, individual self and the ultimate, undifferentiated self in order to see clearly and achieve enlightenment. Buddhist mindfulness is thus meant to deconstruct notions of "self," to see the realities of no-self, interconnectedness, and all-pervasive *nibbāna*. The extraction of mindfulness from the Buddhist framework has seen the mistranslation of the original, intended purpose of *sati*, especially in the secular West. New mindfulness-based therapies developed in the West, such as MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) and MBCT (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy), aim to improve quality of life on a *relative-self* level. According to Doctor Lobsang Rapgay, these therapies are meant not to help one escape *saṃsāra*, the cycle of birth and death, but to help one become more *comfortable* in it.[10] This is entirely contrary to the Buddhist goal of mindfulness, which necessitates the release of clinging to relative-self and *saṃsāra* so that the practitioner may achieve awakening. The following paragraphs will parse the downfalls and potential benefits of transmitting mindfulness to a secular culture, investigating whether the original purpose has become warped beyond repair or whether it may remain intact through the quasi-religious framework mindfulness has come to adopt in the West.

WESTERN MINDFULNESS

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[10] Lobsang Rapgay, Ph.D., "The Clinical Application of Modern Mindfulness" (lecture, Buddhist Meditation Traditions, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, February 21, 2018).

Mindfulness without the conceptual context of Buddhism has taken on some divergent characteristics, especially regarding use in Western psychotherapies and secular education. In the absence of the trappings of a foreign religion, Westerners were able to accept mindfulness into their extant philosophies. The popularity of the practice boomed at the turn of the twenty- first century. In modern Western society, the primary route of transmission of mindfulness has taken on a markedly secular tone. Journalist Linda Heuman writes:

> The main delivery system for Buddhist meditation in the modern West isn't Buddhism; it is science, medicine, and schools. There is a tidal wave behind this movement. MBSR practitioners already account for the majority of new meditators and soon they are going to be the vast majority.[11]

The "McMindfulness" movement, as Heuman refers to this contemporary secularization phenomenon, has permeated Western culture through widely trusted settings such as education, medicine, and research. These guises have allowed mindfulness to enter the conversation to listeners with open minds, which has led to the widespread popularity of the practice today. Whether the cross-cultural translation was an accurate one, however, remains in question. In absence of its original framework — the religion of Buddhism — mindfulness has had to take on definitive characteristics of its own in the West. Some may argue that mindfulness, in fact, has its own conceptual framework that has permeated the West along with the spread of the practice.

Mindfulness, even when extracted from Buddhist terms, entails its own contextual backing and approach to practice and philosophy, one emphasizing present moment experiences and the alleviating of suffering without necessity for a "buddha." This framework has been conducive to a wider American audience, where the practice could blend with whatever

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[11] Linda Heuman, "Meditation Nation," *Tricycle*, June 27, 2014, 8.

spiritual or secular traditions the population already espoused. Author Jeff Wilson claims that if the practice is benefiting people, it is not a problem that myriad motivations bring people to mindfulness. He writes:

> Mindfulness can be used to provide an order to life that stabilizes, manages, labels, and assigns meaning to all possible activities and situations. Mindfulness is connected to a whole set of self-disciplinary lifestyle practices that are given moral weight by their promoters. Even if we accept the protestations of many advocates that mindfulness is not a religion per se, it is nonetheless doing the work of religions.[12]

Wilson points out that mindfulness is not necessarily stripped of its framework in the transition from Buddhism to the West; in fact, it carries its own philosophical background that champions the original objectives of Buddhist meditation through the myriad purposes mindfulness has adopted in the Western world. Namely, according to Wilson, the abilities to "alleviate suffering," "illuminate the truths of life," and provide "salvific improvement on the individual, national, and planetary levels" make mindfulness a universal healer, regardless of religious labels.[13]Although Western mindfulness has been changed substantially from the mindfulness of Buddhism, the common purpose of the alleviation of suffering enables the practice to maintain an underlying salvific similarity. Even though the Western practitioner may be drawn to the practice for self-improvement, Wilson argues, mindfulness has the power to transform perhaps "selfish" motivations to be of benefit to the greater good. The value distinction between the collectivistic nature of Buddhism and the individualistic culture of the West, then, may not hinder the effectiveness of mindfulness as a helping, healing agent. In Western therapeutic contexts, this possibility for transcultural benefit has seen the chance to blossom.

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[12] Jeff Wilson, *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 161.
[13] Wilson, *Mindful America*, 161.

Mindfulness-based psychotherapies originated in the United States in the 1980s and have experienced profound popularity in the West in the following decades. In 1979, American professor Jon Kabat-Zinn developed Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR).[14] Although adapted from Buddhist mindfulness, Kabat-Zinn extracted his curriculum from a Buddhist framework and instead bolstered the scientific applications of the program. Author Rupert Gethin writes, "In [MBSR], the Buddhist origins of mindfulness, although not exactly a secret, are often underplayed or even not mentioned at all."[15] This secularized characteristic of MBSR has given rise to a rapid acclimation and acceptance of the therapy in the United States. With religious trappings, however, a medical application of a foreign, spiritually-based practice would likely be disregarded in Western society. Gethin goes on, "The approach is practical and what is emphasised is the therapeutic usefulness of mindfulness rather than its Buddhist credentials, although these are sometimes alluded to."[16] The terms Gethin highlights here — practical, therapeutic, and usefulness — play a central role in why mindfulness-based psychotherapies have enjoyed so much success in the United States. Even the minimal mention of Buddhism in MBSR is used to provide further "credentials" for the benefits of the practice, to ensure the practitioner that the therapy holds high efficacy. Through downplaying the religious origins of MBSR and capitalizing on scientific psychotherapeutic outcomes, Kabat-Zinn brought a beneficial therapy to the West, where mindfulness under the guise of Buddhism may not have so readily been accepted.

Following the advent of MBSR, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), a combination of MBSR and extant Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), arose in the last decade of the twentieth century. This

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[14] Rapgay, "The Clinical."
[15] Gethin, "On Some," 268.
[16] Ibid.

therapeutic technique combines cognitive-behavioral approaches, which focus on reappraising maladaptive thought patterns to reduce recurrence of major depressive or negative emotional episodes, and mindfulness practices to effectively reduce rumination and attachment to thoughts.[17] This therapy has provided great benefit to many patients, but it must be questioned whether the application of Buddhist mindfulness to secular therapies has at all honored the original purpose of Buddhist meditation: the alleviation of suffering and achievement of *nibbāna*. The former goal, relief of suffering, has certainly been of central importance to MBSR and MBCT. Patients who undergo these psychotherapies have generally reported significant positive effects of mindfulness as experienced in the context of their treatments, especially for mental health-related outcomes. The latter goal, the release from attachment to the cycle of birth and death, has not so clearly been accomplished by mindfulness-based therapies; in fact, the reality may weigh heavily to the contrary.

MBSR and MBCT have experienced substantial success in the Western world, but the ways in which these therapies differ from the mindfulness of Buddhism may be of concern to the general perception of mindfulness in the West. While liberation from *saṃsāra* constitutes the goal of Buddhist mindfulness, MBSR and MBCT encourage practitioners to use mindfulness as a means of improving oneself on a relative, individual level. The idea of mindfulness in these psychotherapies relies on bettering one's *saṃsāra* rather than realizing *nibbāna*; in other words, Buddhist mindfulness with the goal of *nibbāna* frees the practitioner of the bonds of suffering, while psychotherapeutic mindfulness with the goal of self-improvement keeps the practitioner in these bonds, and even makes him more *comfortable* there. Despite this core contrast, MBSR and MBCT are

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[17] Marloes J. Huijbers et al., "Preventing Relapse in Recurrent Depression using Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, Antidepressant Medication Or the Combination: Trial Design and Protocol of the MOMENT Study," *BMC Psychiatry* 12 (August 27, 2012): 125.

notably consistent with Buddhist mindfulness in that they teach inhibition of distractions so that one may be present with what is. These therapies diverge from Buddhism, however, with the emphasis on non-judgment, a characteristic of Western mindfulness that Buddhist meditation does not embody; the basis on practice rather than on a conceptual framework; and the result in surface learning of the techniques rather than deep learning.[18] Despite these marked differences, mindfulness-based psychotherapies have brought mindfulness, and in some cases Buddhism, to a wide audience that may otherwise have not accepted these ideas and practices.

The incorporation of mindfulness-based therapies like MBSR and MBCT into Western psychology may be viewed as "skillful means" (*upāya*) that have adapted Buddhism to a modern, broader, secular audience. Through merely reaching this expansive demographic, mindfulness-based psychotherapies may have brought and may currently bring people to Buddhism by spreading awareness of the tradition in the West. The removal of the religious trappings to create an accessible therapy may have in turn generated an interest in the religion from which mindfulness came, bringing Buddhism to the forefront of American focus. Not everyone would be attracted to traditional Buddhist meditation, but many Westerners are attracted to inner peace and self-improvement.[19] Utilizing mindfulness-based therapies as a skillful means to bring meditation to the Western public, therefore, may actually result in more individuals revisiting the original Buddhist definition of mindfulness so that the fundamental purpose of this practice — relief of suffering through achieving liberation — may still hold a central light in mindfulness practice in America.

MISTRANSLATIONS: FROM BUDDHISM TO SECULAR WEST

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[18] Rapgay, "The Clinical."
[19] Ibid.

The transition of mindfulness practice from Buddhism to the secular West has seen some significant ideological and terminological mistranslations in the recent decades. These misinterpretations, especially those regarding purpose of the practice (non-judgment, focus on the self with no regard to Eightfold Path understanding, and insight into personal neuroses), and application of the practice (to sleep) have altered the shape of mindfulness in the Westernized context. Meditation in the United States now connotes characteristics that are not beholden to, and are in fact contrary of, much of the meditation taught in Buddhism. These factors continue to increasingly embody mindfulness practice in the West. It is of profound importance that the original Buddhist definition and practices of mindfulness reach the Western audience so that practitioners may see their undertaking in an accurate light, and so that the original goal of liberation from the constructs of separate self may become fundamental to Western mindfulness application.

The purpose of Buddhist meditation is unequivocally related to the alleviation of suffering through following the Noble Eightfold Path, which culminates in the realization of the universal-self and the achievement of liberation. The process of developing one's practice includes an active involvement in one's own thought processes, speech, and actions, which often involves evaluation so that one may act and speak in the most mindful, well-intended manner possible, in accordance with the Eightfold Path. Right Mindfulness, the seventh facet of the Eightfold Path, is said to be a "guarantor of the correct practice of all the other path factors."[20] Only with the application of Right Mindfulness can Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, and Right Concentration be exacted fully and correctly. One must judge one's own intentions, speech, actions, and livelihoods to implement the Eightfold

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[20] Bhikkhu Bodhi, "What Does," 26.

Path in its intended purpose. It has only been in a Western context, however, that the character of "non-judgment" has entered the equation. Regarding thoughts with no judgement holds a central role in psychotherapies like MBSR and MBCT, so non-judgment has become an assumed characteristic of mindfulness by many Westerners. Bhikkhu Bodhi explains the "problematic" nature of the misperception of mindfulness as a "type of awareness intrinsically devoid of judgment":

> To fulfill its role as an *integral* member of the eightfold path mindfulness has to work in unison with right view and right effort. This means that the practitioner of mindfulness must at times evaluate mental qualities and intended deeds, make judgments about them, and engage in purposeful action.[21]

Bhikkhu Bodhi demonstrates here that, in the context of mindfulness practice, non-judgment actually represents an unskillful trait, one that may enable deluded, mis-intended actions and speech. The practitioner who neglects to evaluate her own words and behaviors will be blind to the ways in which these words and acts may have harmed or may be harming people, including herself, and she will thus be unable to change, or "engage in purposeful action" to correct her actions and views. While non-judgment may be helpful to Western practitioners looking to foster greater acceptance of the extant, individual self, mindfulness practice as delineated by the Eightfold Path frees the practitioner of bonds to this individual self so that one may act out of the greatest good, for relative-self, others, and universal-self. This ideological clash between Buddhist mindfulness and Western mindfulness has resulted in a great misinterpretation of the focus of mindful meditation, namely with regards to whether the focus lies in relative-self- acceptance, or in cultivation of the Eightfold Path to the universal-self and the end of suffering.

In addition to the misattribution of "non-judgment" to mindfulness practice, the mistranslation of "insight" has given rise to further

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[21] Ibid.

ideological misunderstanding between the West and Buddhism. In Western mindfulness, insight has come to be interpreted as insight into personal neuroses rather than into the three marks of existence, as the term is intended in Buddhist philosophy. Linda Heuman writes, "The term 'insight,' instead of being insight into the three characteristics [suffering, impermanence, and non-self], is now insight into 'my own personal patterns of neurosis'... here, 'insight' is being used in a very personal way."[22] This personal application of insight on an individual, relative-self level may bring individuals to a better self-understanding, but insight in the traditional Buddhist context is meant to reflect a larger construct. Insight into the three marks of suffering, impermanence, and non-self lead the practitioner to a deeper understanding of reality as it is, and, consequently, into the alleviation of suffering that arises from seeing the truths of existence. In settings such as MBSR and MBCT, the focus on individual self has resulted in the misconception that Buddhist meditation is meant to be a tool of self-improvement, with the aim of making suffering more tolerable rather than eliminating suffering altogether. A greater understanding of the intended meaning of "insight" in the Buddhist context may help to repair the dissonance between the aims of Buddhist and secular mindfulness practice in the West.

Misinterpretations regarding the application of mindfulness practice have even further confused Westerners when attempting to implement mindful meditation into daily life. One such mistranslation revolves around using meditation to promote sleep. In the Buddhist tradition, meditation represents an active, engaged activity, in which one must stay alert and awake to present moment experiences. For many in the West, however, meditation has become a tool for sleep. Heuman writes, "In the buddhadharma, meditation is never used to promote sleep. It is

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[22] Heuman, "Meditation Nation," 7.

for waking up… [in the modern West], we are using meditation in ways basically the opposite of what Buddhists were using it for."[23] Heuman points out that contemporary Western uses for meditation starkly contrast the intended uses of mindful meditation according to Buddhist beliefs. Ideological misconceptions such as these warp the meaning of mindfulness in the West, even to the point that practitioners are handed the misinterpretation of meditation as an activity for sleep rather than for its intended use: waking up, both figuratively and literally.

The amalgam of misconceptions of Western mindfulness has resulted in variant purposes under which individual practitioners have chosen to undertake learning mindful meditation. The motive of those who come to the practice specifically for individual-self benefit differs significantly from the goal of a practitioner aiming to achieve a "larger social vision," but, according to Jeff Wilson, either motivating force may result in profound benefits to society. He writes:

> From the point of view of the socially engaged mindfulness faction, even relatively self-oriented pursuers of mindfulness will be of benefit to society as they naturally reduce their levels of stress, become more aware of their connections with others, and perhaps back their way into greater alignment with liberal political views, progressive values, and a more ecological outlook.[24]

Wilson here highlights the basic hope of the Western "market mindfulness" movement: that even self-oriented motivations may bring practitioners to realize greater truths of universal connection. From this viewpoint, any motivation that may bring one to mindfulness may result in great benefit to our world. Perhaps if all practitioners engage in a unified practice, however, where the ideological mistranslations previously discussed are rectified, then this tremendous benefit to society could be exacted. Otherwise, with misinterpretations dominating the Western

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Wilson, *Mindful America*, 186.

perception of mindfulness, the practice likely cannot work in the way it has been intended to, in Buddhism, for over 2,000 years.

BUDDHIST REACTIONS

Buddhist reactions to the Western mindfulness movement shed light on whether Wilson's ideas of universal benefit regardless of initial motivation hold water in a Buddhist context. Monk Bhikkhu Bodhi takes the stance that, even if mindfulness takes on secular purposes like stress-reduction, university education or psychotherapy, it is good to use the *Dhamma* (the teachings) as long as it is helping people. He thus agrees with Wilson in the respect that mindfulness works to alleviate suffering and should therefore be utilized in any context in which it can serve that purpose. Bhikkhu Bodhi writes:

> If such practices benefit those who do not accept the full framework of Buddhist teaching, I see no reason to grudge them the right to take what they need. To the contrary, I feel that those who adapt the *Dhamma* to these new purposes are to be admired for their pioneering courage and insight. As long as they act with prudence and a compassionate intent, let them make use of the *Dhamma* in any way they can to help others.[25]

The opinion Bhikkhu Bodhi advances here parallels Wilson's viewpoint on the issue of secularized mindfulness in many ways. Bodhi speaks highly of individuals who "pioneer" new purposes for the *Dhamma*, characterizing these practitioners as courageous and insightful and claiming that these people should be admired. The cases of Western psychotherapeutic applications and university mindfulness education programs highlight secular means through which the teachings have helped and continue to help people. These can be thought of as great successes of the transmission of mindfulness to the West. Bodhi goes on to caution, "At the same time, I also believe that it is our responsibility, as heirs of the *Dhamma*, to remind

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[25] Bhikkhu Bodhi, "What Does," 36.

such experimenters that they have entered a sanctuary deemed sacred by Buddhists."[26] Bodhi does not believe that caution should be thrown to the wind when adopting the *Dhamma* into new contexts; on the contrary, individuals who undertake applying the *Dhamma* to new settings must proceed with great respect, humility, and grace. Those who choose to use the *Dhamma* in new ways have a responsibility to propagate the original definition and purpose, so that mistranslations do not dominate public perception of the teachings and so that the framework is not lost entirely. In the context of mindfulness, specifically, the ancient wisdom underlying the Buddhist teaching of *sati* has great benefit to bring to practitioners, but misunderstandings of purpose and application hinder the efficacy of modern mindfulness in the West.

Returning to the source of mindful meditation, the Buddhist *Dhamma* or *Buddhadhamma*, may resolve concerning misinterpretations of the practice in the United States, but until this occurs on a wide scale, practitioners of Buddhism take variant stances on the prevalent, Western, secularized mindfulness movement. Many Buddhist individuals hold the perspective that mindfulness has become appropriated and distorted in its secularization, such that it has "lost sight of the Buddhist goal of rooting our greed, hatred, and delusion."[27] This concern certainly nods to the need to return to the *Dhamma* to clarify and essentially redefine the purpose of mindfulness in a Western setting. From another Buddhist practitioner perspective, the "mindfulness movement" can be seen as skillful means, *upāya*, of bringing Buddhism to a vast audience, providing the valence through which individuals may embark on the path to the end of suffering. MBSR and MBCT may be seen as examples of this *upāya* concept, giving students the opportunity to aspire to alleviation of suffering and, perhaps, to liberation. Finally, from a "modernist" Buddhist point of view, Western

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Gethin, "On Some," 268.

mindfulness could actually be seen as an effective means of removing "unnecessary historical and cultural baggage" to reveal the useful essence of Buddhist mindfulness practice.[28] This last stance may most reflect the perspective of secular Westerners, who do find mindfulness useful when freed of the perhaps hindering trappings of Buddhist culture and history. Unfortunately, extracting the practice from its cultural and conceptual framework isolates mindfulness from its critical original context, enabling the downfalls caused by the misinterpretations of the practice so prevalent in the West today.

CONCLUSION

Mindfulness, a way of practice and living beholden to Buddhism, has undergone tremendous processes of counter-influence to and from the Western world. The popularity of the "mindfulness movement" has successfully brought mindfulness, and in some cases Buddhism, to Westerners in search of new practices to alleviate suffering and pursue liberation. On the other hand, the West has shaped mindfulness into a secular, psychotherapeutic tool through which students may learn techniques to better themselves or their experiences in this life, a goal contrary to the Buddhist aim of detaching from the individual self to achieve enlightenment. Mistranslations and misinterpretations have led to a new form of mindfulness very different from that of Buddhism. It is of inexpressible importance that these misconceptions be brought to light in the West. The present, widespread misunderstanding of mindfulness is not irrevocable, but action must be taken now to rectify incorrect perceptions and applications of the Buddhist practice that has now become so secularized and decontextualized. Returning to the *Dhamma*, the Buddhist *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, and redefining Western mindfulness in terms consistent with its original meaning in the Buddhist context may

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[28] Ibid.

provide the antidote to the downfalls of secularization. At this point, once recontextualized and correctly understood, the successes of bringing true mindfulness to the West may be experienced in unparalleled, profound abundance.

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Faith and Medicine: How Two Pennsylvania Hospitals Navigated Religious Affiliation

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INTRODUCTION

The role that religion should play in healthcare, if any at all, has been controversial in contemporary American life. Some think it is imperative that healthcare decisions be made without religious influences. These folks would argue that, for example, the Catholic teaching against abortion often proves harmful to women's health and the fight for women's rights. Others argue that basic tenets of religion such as charity and respect for human life should be central components of any health care facility. These individuals argue that incorporating these religiously rooted values will elevate the level of care that poor and vulnerable patients receive at health care facilities. These are just two examples of the many conversations surrounding this contentious relationship.

Although there is much debate about the extent to which religion should influence medicine, there exist many examples of the two working together in modern America. Faith-based hospitals, hospitals that have been founded based on religious values, are an example of religion influencing healthcare and will be the focus of this paper. This paper seeks to evaluate how two hospitals in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania have forged and maintained relationships with specific religious communities and how those relationships, either current or historical, affect patients in these two hospitals.

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[1] Rachel Evans recently graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with two degrees in Neuroscience and Religious Studies and a minor in Chemistry. Rachel is most interested in the unique spaces where faith and medicine intersect and plans to earn her MD to pursue a career in medicine. This paper was adapted from her senior capstone project.

Pittsburgh institutions that were founded as independent, faith-based institutions, and are now owned by a secular health system are the focus of this paper. Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh's first Catholic hospital, and Montefiore Hospital, Pittsburgh's first Jewish hospital, are the subject of my study, as they have both been acquired by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Health System within the last thirty years. I will first define "faith-based" and trace the history of each hospital's implementation of its faith-based identity. I will then examine sale/merger documents and newspaper articles as well as speak to individuals associated with the merger to determine why and how the mergers occurred. Finally, I will assess the "faith-based" status of each hospital and discuss how the relationship each hospital had and still has with its respective faith community currently impacts patients' lives and treatment at these hospitals.

THE EMERGENCE OF MERCY AND MONTEFIORE

This section will briefly explain the founding of Mercy and Montefiore Hospitals and their initial status as faith-based institutions. The associated religious communities and each hospital's goals play important roles in the way that Mercy and Montefiore identified as "faith-based" in their early years. Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh's first permanent hospital, was founded by seven Sisters of Mercy in 1847.[2] In the mid-1800s, Pittsburgh was growing too rapidly as an industrial city to keep up with the changing environment and health concerns.[3] A thick chemical smog hung over Pittsburgh and the water was contaminated with chemical waste.[4] The city was also continuously afflicted with various disease outbreaks like cholera

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[2] Mary Brignano and C. Max McCullough Jr., *Pillar of Pittsburgh: The History of Mercy Hospital & The City It Serves* (Pittsburgh, PA, Mercy Hospital, 1989), 9.
[3] Barbara Burstin, *Steel City Jews: A History of Pittsburgh and its Jewish Community, 1840-1915* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2008), 8.
[4] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 10.

and scarlet fever, in part, because the sanitation needs of the city were far outpacing the city's ability to improve them.[5] In 1843, the seven Sisters of Mercy immigrated to Pittsburgh from Ireland at the request of Pittsburgh's newly appointed bishop, Bishop O'Connor, to address these concerns.[6]

Upon their arrival in Pittsburgh, the seven Sisters worked quickly to treat the unmet health needs of the community.[7] Sisters of Mercy take vows when they are initiated and among those vows is a commitment to serve the poor.[8] In line with this vow and unlike other area hospitals, the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh accepted every patient, regardless of the patient's financial situation.[9] From its very beginning, Mercy Hospital struggled financially, and because funding was so scarce, the Sisters were often the last to be cared for, sometimes skipping meals or begging on the street in order to raise money for their patients. As Mercy settled into its role as a health-care provider in downtown Pittsburgh, the community slowly began to support them monetarily, easing a huge burden from the shoulders of the Sisters.[10]

In the mid-1850s, Mercy Hospital's identity as a faith-based hospital was due to the Catholic faith of its founders and hospital leaders and a strict adherence to the Sisters of Mercy's oath of service to the poor. In 1854, the bishop transferred ownership of Mercy Hospital to the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters owned Mercy until its sale to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in 2008.[11] Prior to Mercy Hospital's merger with UPMC, the Sisters of Mercy controlled a majority of the Board of Trustees and

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[5] Burstin, *Steel City Jews,* 22.
[6] Brignano and McCullough *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 9.
[7] Ibid., 10.
[8] Sisters of Mercy, "Mission and Values," Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, 2017.
[9] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 17.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 16.

acted as the hospital administration. In this way, they were able to uphold their values and cement the hospital's identity as Catholic.

Montefiore Hospital, Pittsburgh's first Jewish hospital, was founded nearly sixty years after Mercy Hospital and for similar reasons.[12] In the early 1900s, a group of Jewish women, who later identified as the Hebrew Ladies' Hospital Aid Society (HLHAS), convened to discuss the healthcare struggles of their community.[13] These women had been acting as nurses for poor, ill Jewish residents of Pittsburgh and visiting their Jewish neighbors in hospitals to ensure they had kosher food and proper medical care.[14] The women found it increasingly difficult to visit all of their friends and neighbors each day because they were spread out in hospitals all around the city. At their meeting, the women, "recognizing the extreme suffering and distress existing among the unfortunate and destitute sick," decided to found a hospital.[15] This hospital would provide needy Jews in Pittsburgh with "suitable quarters and with medical attention during their illness."[16] The hospital's centralized location would allow the HLHAS to tend more conveniently to all of their hospitalized, Jewish neighbors.

In 1908, Montefiore Hospital was officially opened to the public in Minersville, two miles east of Downtown Pittsburgh.[17] It was important to the HLHAS that the hospital be a facility that allowed patients, particularly Jewish patients, to feel at home while being treated by skilled medical professionals.[18] It was sometimes unsettling for Jewish patients to be surrounded by Christian symbols, like Jesus on the Cross or pictures of

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[12] "UPMC Montefiore," UPMC, 2018.

[13] Carol Bleier, Lu Donnelly, and Dr. Samuel P Granowitz, *To Good Health and Life: L'Chaim: A History of Montefiore Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1898-1990* (Pittsburgh, PA: S.P. Granowitz, 1997), 1.

[14] Ibid., 5.

[15] Ibid., 1.

[16] Irwin Goldberg, interviewed by Lu Donnelly, 1991. Rauh Jewish Archives, Pittsburgh, PA.

[17] Bleier, Donnelly, and Granowitz, *To Good Health, 22.*

[18] Bleier, Donnelly, and Granowitz, *To Good Health* , 31.

Mary, because of the complicated history of Jews and Christians.[19] Poor Jews were also often turned away from area hospitals because they were unable to pay for their medical care, and the HLHAS wanted not only to ensure that all individuals would be able to receive medical care at their facility, but also to help all patients feel comfortable.[20] This effort to help Jewish patients feel comfortable within the hospital and to provide adequate healthcare for Jewish patients became a cornerstone of Montefiore's identity as a Jewish hospital.

IMPLEMENTATIONS OF FAITH

"Faith-based" and "sectarian" are not terms that are typically used in every day conversation. They are both terms that refer to the relationship between a religious institution or community and another organization, in this case, a hospital. The way in which each relationship is implemented varies greatly based on the religion or sect, and as such, it is important to understand how Christianity and Judaism function. The structures of each religion played a role in determining why each hospital was founded and in determining what values the hospital held in high esteem.

The Catholic Church has a very structured hierarchy. The Pope, and by extension the Vatican, are considered the most authoritative sources in the Catholic faith, followed by bishops, and then priests. In Judaism, there is no hierarchy or central authority figure. Jewish congregations choose their own rabbis and can dismiss those rabbis at any point in time.[21] Catholic congregations are assigned priests by the Bishop of their area and have no input in the Bishop's choice.[22] The presence of a permanent priest in a

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[19] Lois Michaels (former UPMC Presbyterian Board of Trustees Members) in discussion with the author, November 2017.
[20] Bleier, Donnelly, and Granowitz, *To Good Health and Life, 17.*
[21] Gerald H. Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics stayed (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999),* 142.
[22] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 141.

Catholic parish is essential to the Catholic liturgy and sacraments, while rabbis are not essential for the functioning of Jewish congregations. In fact, a group of ten men who own Torah scrolls have the authority to create their own congregation and hold services anywhere.[23] Catholic parishes can only be created by a bishop and official services can only be held in a Catholic church.

This difference in structure plays out in the way that Montefiore and Mercy were founded. The seven founders of Mercy Hospital were not even living in the United States when they were called to start Mercy Hospital. When they arrived, they did not have much choice in deciding whether or not they wanted to start a hospital. This speaks to the structured nature of Catholicism and the rigid hierarchy that governs the Church. The HLHAS, on the other hand, founded Montefiore because they recognized their own community's struggles and sought to remedy those issues. Community interest is central to Judaism, and it makes sense that Montefiore Hospital was established in a direct response to the community's needs.

The ways in which Jews and Catholics identify themselves is another feature of each religion that plays a role in the way each hospital was run. Catholic identity is more strictly rooted in religious practices and adherence to rules, while being Jewish can refer to both a religious identity and a cultural identity.[24] The aspects of Montefiore's identity during its early years focused on maintaining strong relationships with the Jewish community and on providing patients with kosher food in addition to the typical duties of caring for sick patients. Mercy's identity as a Catholic hospital was rooted in the call of the Catholic Church to provide care to the poor and vulnerable. As we will see later in the paper, Mercy's identity will

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[23] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 18.
[24] Gamm, *Urban Exodus*, 141.

come to be defined in part by its adherence to Catholic doctrine concerning healthcare.

EVOLVING IMPLEMENTATIONS OF SECTARIAN IDENTITY

Identity is a fluid, ever-evolving concept, and the identities of Montefiore and Mercy are no different. Mercy Hospital and Montefiore Hospital were initially identified as sectarian, based on the religion of their founders and on the religious values incorporated into their mission statements. The expression of each hospital's affiliation with their respective religious institution and community changed to accommodate the shifting needs of each community while continuing to acknowledge their history and the original purposes of each founding group.

Montefiore Hospital's first major change in what it meant to be a Jewish hospital came very shortly after its opening. By 1922, Jewish physicians were facing "a climate of pervasive anti-Jewish feeling" as universities were enforcing quotas on the number of Jewish students admitted.[25] Dr. Sam Granowitz noted in an interview with Lowell Lubic in 1991 that the Jewish students who were able to gain admittance to college and graduate schools had difficulty finding work. He also said it was especially difficult for Jewish medical school graduates, particularly aspiring surgeons, to find hospitals willing to hire them. Montefiore Hospital, taking notice of this national trend, officially stated that Montefiore would be a space for Jewish students to train and Jewish physicians to practice, in addition to being a welcoming environment for Jewish patients and those in need.[26] With this statement, Montefiore changed what it meant to be a Jewish

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[25] Bleier, Donnelly and Granowitz, *To Good Health and Life: L'Chaim,* 51.
[26] Ibid.

hospital. This commitment to Jewish education and employment became a pillar and later a point of contention in Montefiore's history.

In the mid-1930s, Montefiore's Jewish identity was tested by a physician employed at Montefiore Hospital. Dr. Max H. Weinberg published an anonymous piece in 1934, detailing the great failures he perceived in Montefiore's inability to uphold its original mission and Jewish identity.[27] Dr. Weinberg accused Montefiore Hospital of neglecting the education of Jewish physicians and nurses, overcharging patients, and failing to maintain a kosher kitchen. Two months later, the Board of Trustees of Montefiore Hospital held a meeting with the community to address the issue of its kosher kitchen as well as Dr. Weinberg's other allegations.[28] Three rabbis present at the meeting, speaking on behalf of the Jewish community, decided that properly maintaining a kosher kitchen was essential for Montefiore's more traditional patients.[29] Montefiore's kosher kitchen and access to kosher food became important aspects of Montefiore's Jewish identity.

Another aspect of Montefiore's identity that evolved over the course of many years was its desire to be a world-class research institution. In Montefiore's early years, it was seen primarily as a community hospital, but there also existed a desire to pursue cutting edge research and technologies.[30] As early as 1923, talks of affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh occurred.[31] Then-president of the Montefiore Board of Trustees, A.J. Sunstein, proposed the idea of relocating the hospital to Oakland and partnering with the University of Pittsburgh in hopes of increasing funding and opportunities for the hospital.[32] While there is no

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[27] "Report of Committee Investigating Charges Against Montefiore Hospital," *The Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, PA), December 28, 1934.

[28] "Critics Have Opportunity to Voice Grievances at Montefiore Annual Meeting," *The Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, PA), January 25, 1935.

[29] Bleier, Donnelly and Granowitz, *To Good Health,* 38.

[30] Bleier, Donnelly and Granowitz, *To Good Health,* 155.

[31] Bleier, Donnelly and Granowitz, *To Good Health,* 57.

[32] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Montefiore Hospital Association." (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 1,

record of the conversation surrounding this proposal, the hospital was relocated to Oakland, but for the most part, Montefiore, like Mercy, brought in new technology with relatively little help from the University. The conversation of affiliation reemerged in the 1950s when Sidney Bergman was President of the Board.[33] Bergman felt that the only way that the hospital could continue to grow and build upon its current success was to officially affiliate with the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. In order to achieve the hospital's research goals, the Montefiore Hospital Board of Trustees and hospital staff would need to give up some control over the hospital, which was a very controversial topic. The desire to simultaneously maintain a strong Jewish identity and pursue cutting edge medical research was what identified Montefiore as Pittsburgh's Jewish hospital[34]. This desire was also one of the main factors that led to Montefiore merging with UPMC.

Mercy Hospital's identity as a Catholic hospital also developed and changed over time, but Mercy's identity is much more rooted in religious doctrine than Montefiore's identity. Pope Paul VI gave his *Humanae Vitae* address in 1968, an address that cemented the Catholic Church's strict anti-abortion stance.[35] When abortion was legalized in 1973, Mercy did not add abortion to its list of patient services because it was important to Mercy that the services it offered were always in line with the Catholic Church's teachings.[36] Extensive policy was put in place at Mercy to uphold the Church's teachings as well as accepted ethical standards in medicine.[37] The amount of work put into this policy to ensure that Mercy maintains its

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Folder 4, 1923).

[33] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Board of Trustees of Montefiore Hospital Association" (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 2, Folder 3, 1952).

[34] Ibid.

[35] Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae (Of Human Life)*, encyclical letter, Vatican website, St. Peter's Cathedral, Rome, 1968.

[36] Phyllis Grasser in an interview with the author, UPMC Mercy Hospital, 2017.

[37] Ibid.

identity as both a Catholic institution and a respected hospital demonstrates how important each aspect was to Mercy's identity. Mercy Hospital's identity as a Catholic institution was molded most influentially by Sister M. Ferdinand Clark. Sister Ferdinand was appointed hospital administrator in 1953 and continued to serve in that position until 1978.[38] Sister Ferdinand is fondly remembered as one of the key forces that helped Mercy Hospital to grow into a "health center for the community" and a "center of education for health service personnel," instead of the hospital acting simply as a "shelter for the sick."[39]

Sister Ferdinand, like the leadership at Montefiore, realized that in order for Mercy to continue to provide excellent care to all populations as an independent institution, it had to become a medical powerhouse in Pittsburgh and attract talented students and physicians.[40] Sister Ferdinand's vision for the hospital was grand but also realistic. She brought in a physician to coordinate a clinical medicine teaching program and pushed the Advisory Board to fund new life specialty programs at Mercy Hospital.[41] These were the first steps in Sister Ferdinand's larger plan to renovate, modernize, expand and strengthen Mercy Hospital.[42]

Sister Ferdinand was also keenly aware of the state of the United States in the 1960s, a time characterized by anger and aggression associated with racism and discrimination.[43] Under the direction of Sister Ferdinand, Mercy Hospital applied for a government grant with the intent to improve healthcare in the Hill District, a primarily Black community near Downtown Pittsburgh.[44] While residents of the Hill District were in need of healthcare services, the grant was denied because "the black community

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[38] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 132.
[39] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 133.
[40] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 132.
[41] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 141.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,*.156.
[44] Ibid.

(of the Hill District) had a poor image of Mercy Hospital."[45] The Sisters quickly realized their error, and Sister Ferdinand and Sister Elizabeth began to immerse themselves in the community by attending local meetings. Although they were often verbally accosted, they continued to try to repair Mercy's frayed relationship with the community.[46] The culmination of Mercy Hospital's re-dedication to serving the poor and vulnerable came in 1968, when Sister Ferdinand publically stated that it was Mercy Hospital's duty to fully commit to serving the Hill District population outside of the walls of the hospital and to include the residents in Mercy's quest for sensitive and compassionate care.[47] A human relations committee was formed to tackle the biases of Mercy employees, and Hill District residents were hired as health care expediters, people who helped spread information, followed up with various patients, and acted as representatives for Mercy Hospital within the community.[48] In 1970, Mercy Hospital opened the Mercy Health Center, "a clinic where the dignity of the patient would be paramount." This clinic operated like a private physician's office and offered a wide range of services to those in the area who were unable to afford care. The Health Center was seen as a "reaffirmation of the first Sisters of Mercy" and of the commitment to sensitive and compassionate healthcare for all.[49]

Mercy Hospital's last major change in its Catholic healthcare model before the UPMC merger came in 1974. Sister Ferdinand believed that the purpose of a modern hospital is to treat the whole patient, to care for the physical, psychological, and spiritual parts of each person.[50] In 1974, Mercy Hospital opened its Department of Pastoral Care, which employed a diverse group of chaplains.[51] The importance of the department can be

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 157.
48 Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 156.
49 Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 161.
50 Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 133.
51 Brignano and McCullough, *Pillar of Pittsburgh,* 174.

seen in the way in which it was run. Not only was the Department larger than any other area hospital, but chaplains were also assigned to units of the hospital, just like nurses and physicians.[52] This elevated the importance of spiritual health within the hospital, an idea that continued beyond Mercy's history as an independent hospital.

It was important for both Mercy and Montefiore that they pay homage to their founders as well as ensure that the future of each hospital be rooted in faith. The identities of Mercy and Montefiore as sectarian hospitals were challenged when each hospital, for different reasons, was sold to UPMC.

MERGERS

The mergers of each hospital were perhaps the most important part of each hospital's history because they directly challenged each hospital's faith-based identity. This section will explore the reasons behind each merger, the ways in which each merger was carried out, and the policy put in place to maintain each hospital's affiliation with its respective religious community.

Montefiore had been loosely affiliated with the University since the 1930s and on December 11, 1969, Montefiore Hospital officially joined the University of Pittsburgh Health Center.[53] The University of Pittsburgh Health Center was comprised of five hospitals in the Oakland, PA area and was formed under the premise that each member hospital could maintain its own authority and would work together to provide "efficient, well-rounded, and effective community health resources."[54] The terms of the Montefiore's agreement with the University stated that Montefiore would

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Montefiore Hospital Association and University of Pittsburgh, "Agreement of Affiliation" (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 3 Folder 3, 1969).

[54] University of Pittsburgh Health Center, "By-Laws of the University of Pittsburgh Health Center" (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 3, Folder 3, 1969), 1.

retain its current leadership and medical staff members in full, with the caveat that any newly hired physicians must first hold an academic appointment in one of the University of Pittsburgh's graduate health schools.[55]

Neither the terms of the affiliation agreement nor the University Health Center by-laws explicitly addressed the distribution of funding for research and teaching purposes, one of Montefiore's key reasons for affiliating with the hospital. In 1971, it is first noted that Montefiore did not feel they were receiving adequate funding and the University was unwilling to allocate more funding.[56] In 1972, The Board of Trustees drafted a memorandum detailing the University's failures in their partnership and reaffirming Montefiore's commitment to its Jewish identity and maintaining the community's support.[57] The staff and trustees were particularly disappointed in the lack of funding to start new medical programs, like specialty cardiac or cancer programs.[58] They also noted that there was intense pressure on Montefiore to enter into a corporate merger with The University, because the University wished to combine Presbyterian Hospital and Montefiore Hospital, located within a block of each other.[59] A document written by Montefiore's Board alleges that the members of the Board had been told that until they agreed to a corporate merger, Montefiore would not receive financial or professional support from the University.[60]

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[55] University of Pittsburgh Health Center, "By-Laws of the University of Pittsburgh Health Center," 2.

[56] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Minutes of the Executive Management Committee," (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 4, Folder 4, June 2, 1971), 1.

[57] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Informal Meeting of the Executive Management Committee," (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 4, Folder 4, December 16, 1972), 3.

[58] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Unfulfilled Promises," (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 4, Folder 4, December 16, 1972), 1.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

Montefiore's Board of Trustees frequently weighed their options in trying to find solutions to their problems and decided the best course of action would be to remain loosely affiliated with the University.[61] Neither a full merger with the University nor the severance of all ties with the University to operate independently was acceptable for maintenance of both Montefiore's Jewish identity and its teaching hospital status.[62] The perceived inequality within the University Health Center, particularly between Montefiore Hospital and Presbyterian Hospital only seemed to widen. There were multiple allegations that the University prohibited Montefiore from seeking out new opportunities and growing their departments. For example, the University is said to have blocked a grant that Montefiore was preparing to grow its Renal Department, because the University wanted that grant to go to Presbyterian Hospital, although its Renal Department was much less robust than Montefiore's.[63]

The sale of Montefiore to the University of Pittsburgh came about in 1990 as the culmination of nearly two decades of frustrations, unfulfilled promises and dire financial circumstances.[64] It was decided that in order to help Montefiore retain its Jewish identity in a time of rapid change, a foundation would be created with the money generated from the sale. In line with the principle of cy-près,[65] Karen Feinstein, Senior Vice President of United Way at the time, was offered the position of President of the new foundation. Dr. Feinstein recalls being handed a two-page mission statement and a paper stating that the foundation's endowment was $75

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[61] "Informal Meeting of the Executive Management Committee," 1.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Montefiore Hospital Association, "Specific Examples of Problems," (Pittsburgh, PA, Rauh Jewish Archives: Box 4, Folder 4, December 16, 1972), 5.
[64] "UPMC Montefiore," University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, 2017.
[65] The principle of cy-près or cy-près doctrine states that if the original purpose of a charitable trust becomes illegal, impossible, or impracticable to carry out, then rather than the trust being dissolved, the court and the trustees find a way to apply the trust to a new cause that is very close to the old cause so that the same general effect can be produced as intended.

million.[66] Dr. Feinstein, the President and CEO of this foundation, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, recounted that she "wasn't allowed to use the word 'sale'" for years after the sale was completed, because there was so much tension within the Jewish community. Dr. Feinstein stated that most of the Pittsburgh Jewish community was upset or at least saddened by the sale, because the hospital had come to represent Jewish excellence in the field of healthcare in Pittsburgh. Some were simply saddened to see their hospital sold to a corporation like UPMC, while others felt that a Jewish hospital was still absolutely essential to their community and this sale was a betrayal of the Jewish community's needs.[67]

Mercy Hospital, on the other hand, was able to maintain a steady income without affiliating with the University for many years. Characterized as "fierce competitors," Mercy and the University did not have any interaction, aside from their loose medical student teaching agreement, until 2007.[68] In 2007, the Sisters of Mercy, recognizing that their hospital could no longer independently survive, reached out to the University of Pittsburgh Health Center and initiated merger talks.[69] Prior to the merger talks, Mercy Hospital had been attempting to merge with another declining, sectarian hospital, St. Francis, in an attempt to save both hospitals.[70] During this discussion, St. Francis went bankrupt and the University bought the building, completely renovated it, and reopened it as the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.[71] [72] The Sisters of Mercy did not want to risk the same fate for their flagship Catholic hospital.

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[66] Karen Feinstein, founder and CEO of Pittsburgh's Jewish Healthcare Foundation, in an interview with the author, 2017.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Phyllis Grasser, the Vice President for Mission Effectiveness and Spiritual Care at UPMC Mercy, in an interview with the author, 2017.
[69] Mercy Hospital, "Key Messages" (presentation created for transition meeting, UPMC Mercy Hospital Archives, Pittsburgh, PA, 2002.)
[70] Georgine Scarpino, *The Rise and Fall of Faith Based Hospitals: The Allegheny County Story* (Bloomington, IN, Authorhouse, 2013), 63.
[71] Scarpino, *The Rise and Fall*, 69.
[72] Interview with Phyllis Grasser.

In 2007, Mercy Hospital's debt was growing, but the Sisters of Mercy were in a stable enough place that they could negotiate with UPMC and push strongly for the maintenance of their Catholic identity in a potential merger.[73] In order to be considered Catholic, a hospital must be sponsored by the Catholic Church.[74] Previously, the hospital had been sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, but the Sisters were declining in age and number and felt that they would not be able to properly sponsor Mercy Hospital if it was no longer under their explicit leadership.[75] Fortunately, the Diocese of Pittsburgh, spearheaded by Bishop Zubik, agreed to be Mercy's sponsor in the event that they were able to convince UPMC's President, Jeff Romoff, to allow the hospital to remain Catholic.[76] Ms. Phyllis Grasser, the Vice President for Mission Effectiveness and Spiritual Care, stated that it was "during the eleventh hour that Mercy was able to retain its Catholic identity." Up until the official deadline for the end of merger talks, Jeff Romoff had been strongly opposed to keeping Mercy Catholic for reasons he did not disclose to the public. As part of the merger agreement, extensive documentation was drawn up by Mercy Hospital and approved by Romoff that stated exactly how Mercy would remain Catholic within the University Health System. Ms. Grasser stated that Romoff was fully behind Mercy in this endeavor and continues to be very supportive of its Catholic mission.[77]

SECTARIAN IDENTITIES TODAY

Montefiore Hospital has been integrated into the UPMC hospital system for over 25 years, while Mercy Hospital joined the hospital system only 14 years ago. Both hospitals have been able to maintain some of their historical ties with Jewish and Catholic communities in Pittsburgh. This

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Catholic Health Association of the United States, "Sponsorship Overview."
[75] Interview with Phyllis Grasser.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

section of the paper will explore the extent to which the hospitals mergers
have changed the ways in which the hospitals interact with the Jewish and
Catholic communities as well as the ways in which UPMC Mercy and
UPMC Montefiore provide care to their patients.

While UPMC Mercy has certainly changed since it was brought into the
UPMC system, the hospital seems to have been able to maintain and even
strengthen its Catholic identity. Ms. Grasser, having been employed by
Mercy Hospital well before the merger, noted in an interview that "the
hospital might even be more Catholic than it was before the merger."
UPMC Mercy's commitment to serving the poor and vulnerable, a
commitment Ms. Grasser emphasized as primary to Mercy Hospital in its
infancy, remains and continues to strengthen. Ms. Grasser stated that at
UPMC Mercy, caring for the poor and uninsured goes beyond providing
basic care. UPMC Mercy treats each individual, especially those of
vulnerable populations, with the utmost respect and dignity and prioritizes
their needs over the health needs of patients who are able to pay for their
care.[78] The merger documentation states that UPMC Mercy is obligated to
provide "health services to the poor, underinsured and uninsured in such
amounts as are not less than those historically provided by the hospital."[79]
This initiative ensures that the commitment to intentional, dignified care
that was started by Sister Ferdinand, with the creation of the Mercy Health
Center, continues to permeate UPMC Mercy.

Another important aspect of UPMC Mercy's Catholic identity is Catholic
sponsorship and leadership. As part of the negotiations, the Diocese of
Pittsburgh is responsible for appointing a portion of the Board of
Directors, including the Vice President for Mission Effectiveness and

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[78] Ann Rogers, "UPMC Mercy revisits tenets of its identity" *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*,
(Pittsburgh, PA) January 23, 2012.
[79] UPMC Mercy, "Administrative Policies and Procedures" (Pittsburgh, PA, UPMC Mercy
Hospital Archives, 2015).

Spiritual Care, the person responsible for ensuring that the hospital adheres to the guidelines set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic bishops. While the Board of Directors is no longer exclusively or even a majority Catholic, the Diocese appointed individuals have real decision-making power. This power ensures that the services and procedures available to patients at UPMC Mercy strictly adhere to the Catholic understanding of ethical healthcare.

Another condition for the Diocese's sponsorship of UPMC Mercy was that the hospital fully comply with the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare (ERDs). The ERDs are a set of rules compiled by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that ensure the ethical standards in each Catholic healthcare facility are in line with the Church's teachings about human dignity and morality.[80] Some of the directives for Catholic hospitals include hospitals advocating for marginalized populations, providing free healthcare to the community, and maintaining a pastoral care service.[81] These directives directly affect the manner in which patients are treated at UPMC Mercy and patient services, like 24/7 access to a chaplain that are offered to patients. The ERDs also state that Catholic hospitals are not able to prescribe birth control or perform abortion, sterilization or fertilization procedures.[82] These pro-life measures directly affect the way in which patients are cared for at UPMC Mercy. The hospital staff is not permitted to perform the procedure within the wall of UPMC Mercy and will assist the patient in transferring to another facility to have the abortion, if needed or necessary.

As per the ERDs, each Catholic hospital must have an ethical consultation service available to advise medical professionals and patients on how to

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[80] Catholic Church, *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (Washington, DC, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2001), ERD 1.
[81] Catholic Church, *Ethical and Religious Directives,* ERDs 10 and 15.
[82] Catholic Church, *Ethical and Religious Directives,* ERD 26.

best navigate morally ambiguous situations.[83] UPMC Mercy's ethic committee is headed by Ms. Grasser and was formed in the merger. Policies and procedures have been put in place for how medical staff can respond to various situations involving life, death and suffering. It is advised and sometimes required in many of the more complex scenarios that the medical team contact UPMC Mercy's ethics committee for an ethics consultation. During this consultation the committee assesses the situation, speaks with the patient, the patient's medical care team, and the patient's family if they are available. Ms. Grasser emphasized that "Mercy is really no different than any other hospital. We always want what is best for the patients that we care for, and we do truly care for our patients."

The Spiritual Care Department at UPMC Mercy has grown since its inception in 1974. Mercy currently employs five Catholic priests, a Franciscan friar, and a Sister of Mercy as paid, full-time employees of Mercy Hospital.[84] Ms. Grasser thinks that UPMC Mercy's spiritual care department is one of the most robust in the UPMC system, as many spiritual care departments are run by volunteers and only one or two ordained individuals are paid staff members. According to Ms. Grasser, spiritual care providers are assigned to floors of the hospital. The Department is very intentional with its strong presence and plays an active role in the care of the whole person, another example of the way that Mercy's Catholic model of care affects patient care at UPMC Mercy.

UPMC Montefiore, in comparison to UPMC Mercy, has not formally retained its sectarian identity although some ties to the Jewish community still remain. Transfer documents agreed upon by Montefiore Hospital and UPMC stated that UPMC would commit to supporting programs benefitting the Jewish community that Montefiore had previously

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[83] Catholic Church, *Ethical and Religious Directives,* ERD 22.
[84] Catholic Church, *Ethical and Religious Directives,* ERD 22.

supported.[85] Montefiore Hospital Board of Trustees President, Farrell
Rubenstein, also stated that efforts would be made to keep Montefiore
Jewish.[86] The Ladies Hospital Aid Society, formerly the Hebrew Ladies
Hospital Aid Society, expressed interest in remaining involved in the
newly renamed UPMC Montefiore, and in 1991, took up the fundraising
effort to begin a Jewish chaplaincy program.[87] This program was the first
to employ a Jewish chaplain in Pittsburgh, noted Rabbi Larry Heimer.
Rabbi Heimer is a chaplain at UPMC Montefiore and UPMC Presbyterian,
and ministers to the spiritual needs of Jewish and non-Jewish patients.[88]
He stated that there is still an emphasis on Jewish holidays and Jewish
culture at UPMC Montefiore, more so than other area hospitals. He also
stated that the Ladies Hospital Aid Society only funded the Jewish
chaplaincy program for its first year, and since 1992, he has been
employed by UPMC. Rabbi Heimer noted that the Ladies Hospital Aid
Society has been very involved in UPMC Montefiore and UPMC
Presbyterian throughout the years and continues to provide chaplains with
funding for various special projects. Shortly following the merger and
throughout the 1990's, the LHAS ran various fundraising campaigns in
order to continue to support the Jewish chaplaincy program, provide
Passover Seder for UPMC Montefiore patients, and purchase prayer books,
candles, and other items for patients who wish to celebrate Jewish
holidays.[89] Presently, UPMC Montefiore, as well as the other UPMC
hospitals in Oakland, have contracts with a kosher kitchen in Squirrel Hill
to provide kosher food for anyone who requests it.[90] This demonstrates
that although Montefiore's ties with the Jewish community have
weakened, they still affect the services that are offered to patients at

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[85] Scarpino, *The Rise and Fall,* 105.
[86] Roteman, Joel, "Montefiore to Continue its 'Jewish' Spirit," *Jewish Chronicle*
(Pittsburgh, PA), June 7, 1990.
[87] "LHAS Kick-off for Chaplaincy," The Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh, September 13,
1990.
[88] Interview with Rabbi Larry Heimer by the author, December 2017.
[89] "A Jewish Tradition of Service," Jewish Chronicle (Pittsburgh, PA), June 9, 1994.
[90] Interview with Rabbi Heimer.

Montefiore. The importance of kosher food has not been lost at Montefiore even though Montefiore is no longer sectarian.

While Montefiore's historical relationship with the Jewish community still does affect patient care at Montefiore and now also at Presbyterian, much of Montefiore's identity as a Jewish hospital has been lost. One of the main reasons for this loss comes from a lack of monetary support from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation. The Foundation did not support Montefiore's efforts to remain Jewish as the LHAS had. Instead, they granted money to the United Jewish Federation as well as various programs designed to care for the health needs of women, immigrants and mentally ill individuals.[91] Dr. Feinstein envisioned the Foundation as an active, engaged participant in the conversation of community health.[92] Rather than simply support UPMC Montefiore, Dr. Feinstein wanted to focus on directly addressing "a select core of health problems" facing the community with "ambitious, far-reaching, and long-term" grants to effect real change in community health and healthcare systems in Pittsburgh.[93] While this is certainly a noble and impactful goal, the lack of support expected from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation may have played a role in Montefiore's inability to maintain its strong Jewish identity.

Montefiore's lack of independence is another reason that it struggled to maintain its strong Jewish identity. UPMC Montefiore and UPMC Presbyterian were initially separate hospitals, and although they are still two separate buildings with two distinct names, they function as one hospital. The real merging began in 1992 when the Emergency Department in UPMC Montefiore closed and all Montefiore ED staff moved to Presbyterian's Emergency Department.[94] Other services and

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[91] "$1.1 million in Healthcare Grants," The Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh, April 9, 1992.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] "Montefiore, Presby Emergency to Merge," *Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh*, March 1, 1992.

wings of the hospitals closed to allow UPMC to funnel all of its resources into one hospital, rather than split the funding for a service between Montefiore and Presbyterian. UPMC Montefiore did not have much say in which of their floors were closed and which remained open, a frustration that had haunted Montefiore since its earlier affiliation with the University. The Board of Directors that governed UPMC Montefiore also governed UPMC Presbyterian in the years following the merger, but now UPMC Montefiore, along with UPMC Presbyterian and other UPMC hospitals in Oakland are governed by a joint Board of Directors. UPMC Montefiore and UPMC Presbyterian share a hospital staff and are physically connected with a skywalk.

A final important reason that Montefiore was unable to maintain its Jewish identity was that there seemed to no longer be a need for an independent, Jewish hospital in Pittsburgh, at least from the perspective of most Montefiore physicians. The discrimination that plagued Jewish students and physicians through the 1970s no longer existed.[95] While this injustice was fresh in the minds of many, Jewish physicians were generally welcomed into most medical schools, medical training programs and hospitals in Pittsburgh in the 1990s. Also, only about 17% of patients at Montefiore in the year before its merger were Jewish.[96] As Anti-Semitism in the United States calmed down, Jewish patients felt more comfortable being treated in other hospitals. The two main groups of Jews, Jewish physicians and Jewish patients, that the hospital was initially created for no longer suffered the same issues in the 1990's as they did in the early to mid-1900's. As a result, the urgent need for a Jewish hospital in Pittsburgh no longer existed.

CONCLUSIONS

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[95] Lowell Lubic, interview conducted by Lu Donnelly and Samuel Granowitz, 1991.
[96] Ibid.

The interaction between faith and medicine, in Pittsburgh, has existed for many years, and its history has been complicated. The founding of Mercy and Montefiore as independent, faith-based hospitals set up the relationship between each hospital and their respective religious community, and those relationships evolved over time. Mercy Hospital expanded upon its initial goal of caring for the poor by creating a spiritual care department, pledging large amounts of free care to the community, and building the Mercy Health Center. Montefiore Hospital also built on its initial aim of providing a welcoming environment for Jewish patients by hiring a vast majority of Pittsburgh's Jewish healthcare providers, maintaining a kosher kitchen, and pursuing lofty research goals that advanced the hospital and the Jewish community. The mergers of Montefiore and Mercy were challenging for the hospitals because they threatened the faith-based nature of Montefiore and Mercy in a way that the hospitals had never before experienced. UPMC Montefiore's Jewish identity is not as obvious as UPMC Mercy's Catholic identity, but nonetheless, the historical ties that bound each hospital to their respective religious communities continue to play a role in patient care and services today.

The structured hierarchy of Catholicism and the requirement that the Catholic Church sponsor Catholic hospitals were two of the main reasons that UPMC Mercy was able to maintain its official sectarian identity. The Diocese's ability to nominate the VP for Mission Effectiveness and Spiritual Care as well as other Board of Directors allowed the hospital to retain its Catholic nature with little to no effort on the part of UPMC. Montefiore was not mandated to affiliate with a Jewish organization, and as a result, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, the foundation that was supposed to help Montefiore retain its Jewish identity, did not provide funding or support for the hospital's efforts to remain Jewish. Although the Ladies Hospital Aid Society continues to support some of Montefiore

Hospital's Jewish initiatives, there is no structure in place to ensure that the hospital remained Jewish.

Each hospital's mission and purpose also played a role in determining how hospitals would be able to maintain their identities. UPMC Mercy was founded to provide care for Pittsburgh residents, and the Sisters of Mercy decided that mode would be Catholic. Montefiore on the other hand was founded to alleviate specific needs in the Jewish community, namely caring for poor Jewish patients who were unable to pay for hospitalization and providing Jewish students and physicians with a place to learn and work. Both hospitals provide care for a large number of people and are integral to the communities that they serve, but the Jewish community no longer needs a Jewish hospital in the same sense that they did in the early 1900s. Jewish patients are welcomed into all Pittsburgh hospitals now and Jewish physicians are no longer facing workplace discrimination. Organizations like the Jewish Healthcare Foundation feel that their resources can be put to better use serving vulnerable populations in Pittsburgh rather than allocating money to Montefiore, a hospital now supported by UPMC's resources.

In addition to these factors, Montefiore's proximity to UPMC's flagship hospital, UPMC Presbyterian, made it all but impossible for Montefiore to maintain any semblance of independence. UPMC Montefiore and UPMC Mercy are physically connected and share a staff. UPMC Montefiore is no longer governed by its own Board of Directors, while UPMC Mercy has a separate Board of Directors. UPMC Mercy's Board reserves a limited number of positions for Diocese of Pittsburgh representatives, while there is only one woman on UPMC's Oakland Board of Directors who has clear ties to the Pittsburgh Jewish community.

Regardless of Montefiore and Mercy's sectarian status, each hospital is still affected by their historical identities as faith-based hospitals. Montefiore

has developed a connection with a kosher kitchen in Pittsburgh to provide Jewish patients with kosher meals and has maintained its connection with the LHAS. The spiritual care department as Montefiore and Presbyterian also employs a rabbi. While Montefiore is no longer officially faith-based, it still provides services to the Jewish community. UPMC Mercy has maintained and strengthened nearly every aspect of its Catholic identity. Mercy's commitment to serving poor and vulnerable populations is still one of its core values. The spiritual care department at Mercy hospital is one of the most robust in the area and provides unique services not only for patients but also for staff in the form of in-service trainings. In accordance with the Catholic standards for healthcare, Mercy does not perform abortions, fertilizations, or sterilizations, a decision that directly impacts patient care.

This research is relevant to today's society because religious institutions are big players in healthcare. Organizations like Catholic Social Services and the Jewish Healthcare Foundation are contributors to healthcare in Pittsburgh. Very practically, it is useful for people seeking services from these organizations to understand what types of services will be offered, particularly services like abortion or birth control. It is also important because faith-based hospitals offer several models for healthcare that are different from the traditional model. Much can be learned about the way patients are cared for at both UPMC Montefiore and UPMC Mercy. Mercy's model of caring for the whole person with dignity, and Montefiore's mindfulness of its patient population improve patient care in including other very relevant aspects of life beyond physical health.

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Developing Tolerance and Conservatism: A Study of Ibadi Oman

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INTRODUCTION

The Sultanate of Oman is a country which consistently draws acclaim for its tolerance and openness towards peoples of varying faiths. The sect of Islam most Omanis follow, Ibadiyya, is almost entirely unique to Oman with over 2 million of the 2.5 million Ibadis worldwide found in the sultanate.[2] This has led many to see the Omani government as the de facto state-representative of Ibadiyya in contemporary times. When compared with the nation-states that claim to represent other sects of Islam, Iran for Shi'ism and Saudi Arabia for Sunnism, Omani tolerance becomes even more impressive. Whereas Iran and Saudi Arabia actively discriminate against those citizens which do not follow the government's prescribed faith, Oman legally protects religious freedom for all citizens and visitors. Ibadi citizens in Oman adhere to the religious freedom laws, resulting in an extremely low number of religious discrimination cases. It might be tempting to claim that this trend of tolerance resulted from the recent globalization and the smooth transition of Oman into a modern state during the twentieth century, but this assumption would be misguided because there are a number of sources throughout history that praise Oman for its tolerance. For instance, "One [nineteenth century] British observer of Ibadis in Oman and Zanzibar came to the conclusion that the Ibadis are most tolerant of people, living in harmony with all religious and

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[2] Other communities are found in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Tanzania.

ethnic groups."[3] For a more concrete example, one merely needs to view the two-hundred-year-old Hindu temple that stands in the heart of downtown Muscat to understand that Ibadis have been willing to accept peoples of alien faith in their lands for centuries.[4]

Ibadis have lived side-by-side with non-Ibadis for centuries, but their form of tolerance does not necessarily mean acceptance. Tolerance towards other religions by Omani Ibadis adheres to the literal definition of the word because, while they are willing to tolerate the existence of foreigners in their land, they do not accept the legitimacy of their faiths. This is best exemplified by the limits the Omani government places upon all faiths. Non-Muslim and Muslim religious groups alike are not allowed to practice rites or rituals publicly without approval from the government for fear of the civil unrest they may stir. Additionally, non-Muslim groups may only build places of worship on land that is donated to them by the Sultan of Oman, presently Sultan Qaboos (r. 1390 A.H./1970 C.E.).[5] Although the law limiting public ritual is applied universally, it is clearly aimed towards non-Ibadis because an Ibadi practice, if properly done, would cause no significant unrest amongst the majority Ibadi population. This implies that, although the state is willing to legally promise religious nondiscrimination, it cannot guarantee that Ibadi citizens will not be disturbed by public displays of what Ibadiyya sees as unscrupulous faiths. This fear of backlash also dictates that the government must separate the places of worship by controlling where foreigners practice their religions. Omani tolerance, therefore, does not prescribe to the Western secular notion of religious freedom wherein the privatization of religion allows

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[3] Valerie J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibadi Islam* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 29.

[4] Douglas R. Leonard, "The Origins and Contemporary Approaches into Intra-Islamic and Inter-Religious Coexistence and Dialogue in Oman," *The Muslim World* 105, no. 2, (May 2015), under "Oman," http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/muwo.12094/full (accessed September 25, 2017).

[5] U.S. Department of State*, International Religious Freedom Report: Oman*, U.S. Federal Government, (Washington, DC, 2011), under "Oman," https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf (accessed October 3, 2017).

peoples of all faiths to practice and espouse their beliefs openly so long as they are not violent. Rather, Omani tolerance allows these non-Muslims to integrate and prosper in Omani society if their faith remains separate from that society.

Regardless of the lack of religious acceptance, the willingness of Ibadis to protect the livelihoods of non-Muslims is impressive considering their faith's radical roots as a subsect of Kharijite theology. The Khawarij were known as the original violent radical sect of Islam for their ruthlessness and cruelty towards anybody who did not espouse their beliefs. This original radicalism has caused many to wonder how Oman has become so tolerant. Some believe it results from Oman's geography, which, in ancient times, naturally led the population to maritime and trade traditions that exposed them to foreign peoples. Others attribute religious tolerance to Ibadi theological and doctrinal developments. Still others believe Sultan Qaboos is responsible based upon his success in modernizing the country and opening it to globalized trade. Although each of these theories has valid arguments, when taken independently, they do not provide a clear picture for the transition. Instead, to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of how tolerance and conservatism developed in Ibadi Oman, one must consider each of the above theories as developments that build upon one another to create modern day Ibadi doctrine.

THE KHARIJITE ORIGINS OF IBADIYYA

Many scholars struggle to pinpoint the moment in which the Khawarij began to separate themselves from the rest of the Islamic community. Many are inclined to agree with the Muslim tradition that argues the group separated following Caliph 'Ali ibn Abi Talib's (d. 40 AH/661 CE) arbitration during the Battle of Siffin. However, contemporary scholarship ponders whether the initial split occurred with the killing of the third caliph, 'Uthman b. Affan (d. 35/656). 'Uthman was killed by a group of

peasants from Southern Iraq and Egypt who came to Mecca and surrounded 'Uthman's house. The unrest stemmed from allegations that the Caliph unethically used *mal al-muslimun* (Money of the Muslims) to pay his relatives whom he also made governors of large swaths of the Islamic Empire. These spoils were supposed to be given to the *'umma* (Muslim Community) following military victories against heathens or pagans.[6] The scholars who believe the third caliph's murderers were pre-Siffin Khawarij, back their speculation by referring to the Khawarijs' recognition of the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr (d. 12/634) and 'Umar (d. 22/644), 'Uthman in his early years as caliph, and 'Ali as the righteous and legitimate rulers.[7] What this recognition means is that the Khawarij are not really Shi'ite like the majority of 'Ali's army because they recognize the legitimacy of the first three caliphs. The Shi'ites refuse to recognize Abu Bakr's ascension to the caliphate because they believe 'Ali should have been the rightful heir to the Prophet due to their blood relationship and a variety of the Prophet's actions which, according to them, show he chose 'Ali as successor.[8] Therefore, the Khawarij, by recognizing Abu Bakr and the others, were never Shi'ites, and nor were they proto-Sunnis because they condemned 'Uthman's later years as Caliph. Therefore, the group of peasants that assassinated 'Uthman seem to follow the Khawarij's thinking on the Righteous Caliphs and could be seen as proto-Khawarij.

Regardless, this group would definitively separate from both Sunni and Shi'ite doctrine following the Battle of Siffin. 'Ali's arbitration with Mu'awiya that caused him to forfeit the caliphate led the Khawarij to abandon 'Ali and to the creation of their creed, "judgement belongs to God alone."[9] This creed is the basis for many of the Khawarij doctrines, such as

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[6] Harry S. Timani, *Modern Intellectual Readings of the Kharijites* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), 4-6.

[7] Timani*, Modern Intellectual*, 5.

[8] Momen Moojan, *An Introduction to Shi'I Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven, USA: Yale University Press 1985), 12-14.

[9] Timani, *Modern Intellectual,* 5.

their belief that only God has the right to rule human beings because they are His creation and He is far superior to any man that has been or will ever be. They argue that power must be designated to a person by God and His will must be exercised by man over man on Earth. As a result, God designates the prophets, caliphs, and imams to deliver His will.[10] Therefore, when 'Ali gave up the Caliphate, he spurned God's choice to make him the Islamic ruler and was no longer worth following. So, they left 'Ali's army and established themselves in the town of Harura near 'Ali's capital in Kufa. Once settled in Harura, they implemented radical doctrines that condoned terrorizing and killing Kufans who were still willing to follow and recognize 'Ali as a righteous leader.

Before continuing the narrative, it is necessary to explain the Kharijite doctrine of *kufr* because it was used to justify the violence the Khawarij showed against the Kufans and other Southern Iraqi Muslims. *Kufr* directly translated from Arabic means "unbeliever" or someone who no longer deserves the protections guaranteed between Muslims according to the Quran.[11] To the early Khawarij, Muslims gained the rank of *kufr* by committing an unrepented sin, such as following and preaching for the legitimacy of an unrighteous caliph or imam. These actions were disgraceful according to the Khawarij because these leaders violated God's Quranic will making their followers sin by association. Therefore, the Khawarij questioned Muslims on who they believed the righteous leader was and killed those who followed the wrong man as though they were polytheists because they committed the sin of leaving the *'umma*.[12] The development of *kufr* doctrine caused not only significant harm for the Kufans and Basrans who lived in the regions around Harura, but also to

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[10] Timani*, Modern Intellectual*, 107.
[11] Friedman Yohanan, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.
[12] Timani, *Modern Intellectual,* 18.

the Khawarij. Their violent actions led 'Ali to massacre nearly all of them during the Battle of al-Nahrawan just two years after they left his army.

What followed was an act of revenge as three Kharijite survivors held a meeting where they decided to assassinate those they saw as unjust manipulators of Islam, 'Ali, Mu'awiya, and 'Amr ibn Al-As. Although they wanted to assassinate all three of the leaders, there was a special desire to kill 'Ali as an act of vengeance for what happened at the Battle of al-Nahrawan.[13] After months of planning, the three Kharijite assassins finally made their moves, but only the Egyptian Kharijite attacking 'Ali would succeed. He struck 'Ali with a sword outside the Grand Mosque of Kufa just after the morning prayer on January 26, 661.[14] 'Ali would be given as much care as possible, but he would pass away two days later because of his wounds. Before he passed, however, he was able to designate his and Fatimah's, the Prophet's daughter, son Hassan as the next Shi'ite Imam. This secured leadership for the the Kufan and Basran communities' after his passing.[15] The martyrdom of 'Ali at the hands of the Khawarij would only solidify the Basrans' and Kufans' resolve to follow the Imam and guarantee the survival of 'Ali's teachings and his struggle against the Umayyad Caliphate.[16] Thus, the Khawarij actions against the Shi'ite leader would have the undesired effect of consolidating his followers into some of the longest lasting Shi'ite communities in the world.

OMAN'S IBADI IMAMATES

It was in these Shi'ite communities that Ibadi thought began to develop from Kharijite teachings. It is worth noting that the initial division between the Khawarij and the Ibadis seems to have occurred in 64/686

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[13] Timani*, Modern Intellectual,* 213.
[14] Timani, *Modern Intellectual,* 20.
[15] G.R. Hawting, *The History of al-Tabari (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk) Vol. XVIII* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 217-223.
[16] Timani, *Modern Intellectual,* 21.

about twenty-four years after 'Ali's assassination. It was during this time that Ibn Ibad (d. 86/708) wrote a series of letters to other Khawarij explaining that there was no need to perpetrate violence against fellow Muslims. These letters had a profound effect on the Kharijite scholarship that was being carried in Basra and would draw many away from the violent Khawarij that still wanted to remove the Umayyad caliph and Shi'ite Imams. Many of these violent Khawarij began to persecute the new Kharijite sect as being too weak to enforce *kufr* and, in some cases, began to extend their violence towards the young Ibadi movement. [17] Despite this, many Kharijite scholars continued to work with principles that resembled Ibad's and continued to develop a more peaceful version of Kharijite conservatism.

Amongst these scholars was the jurist Jabir ibn Zayd (d. 89/711), an Omani man whom moved to Basra after 'Ali's assassination. Very little is known about his personal life. For instance, he may or may not have been an Ibadi Imam, which in his times would have merely meant a distinguished Kharijite scholar who heeded the words of Ibad's letters. It is even possible that he was just a scholar working to revise Kharijite doctrines without ever having contact with Ibad's works.[18] Jabir's writings would have a profound impact on the small Ibadi community in Basra, and he has been labelled as the father of Ibadiyya instead of Ibad. Jabir's work was recognized not just amongst the native Basrans, but amongst the Oman-based Azd tribe who had become an influential group in Basra since their arrival following the conquests of 'Umar's reign.

The Azd have a long history within Oman. They are the Arab tribe responsible for removing the Sassanid Persians from Oman in the 2nd

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[17] John C. Wilkinson, *Ibadism: Origins and Early Development in Oman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 136-7.
[18] Valerie J. Hoffman, "Ibāḍism: History, Doctrines, and Recent Scholarship," *Religion Compass Vol.* 9, *no.* 9 (2015): 299.

century CE and continued to migrate into the region from then. This created a cultural connection between Oman and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. This connection had not been made before because Oman's was isolated from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula by the Empty Quarter to its north and the Yemeni Mountains in the West. This isolation gave ancient Omanis the opportunity to create a culture that was unique to the rest of the peninsula. A key part of their culture derived from their geographical location at the South-Eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula that gave Omanis easy access to the Indian Ocean. This led ancient Omanis to become sea-faring people who traded with groups in present-day East Africa, India, Indonesia, South-East Asia, and China. [19] This consistent exposure to other cultures is often used to explain the Ibadis' religious tolerance but does not account for how Omanis developed Kharijite conservatism into Ibadi tolerance.

Regardless, when the Azd tribes began ruling Oman in the 2nd century CE they did not destroy these maritime trade connections as they were vital to the local economy. However, they did end Omani isolation from the rest of the Peninsula which would be vital to Oman's conversion to Islam during the time of the Prophet. Even Oman's conversion is unique because it did not happen as a result of Islamic conquest, but rather through the Prophet's diplomacy. In 8/628 the Prophet sent 'Amr ibn al-As to Oman with a letter asking for the ruling Azd tribe to convert themselves and their people to Islam. This was common practice for the Prophet who sent letters as far as Constantinople, Alexandria, and Ctesiphon. However, unlike those other regions the Azd rulers of Oman accepted the Prophet's offer and quickly set about converting their kingdom. As a caveat of this agreement, the Azd could rule Oman with great autonomy. Having escaped the conquest experienced by the rest of the Arabian Penninsula, the Azd only had to recognize the superiority of the Prophet and maintain

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[19] Isam al-Rawas, *Oman in Early Islamic History* (Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 2000), 23-6.

Islamic practices within their kingdom to retain sovereignty. This gave Azd tribesmen the independence necessary to continue developing Oman's Islamic identity separate from the rest of the Muslim world.[20]

This is not to say the Azd did not participate in the burgeoning Islamic Empire. During the rule of Caliph 'Umar, they fought bravely in the Muslim army responsible for toppling the Persian Sassanid Empire. Many Azd settled in Basra following their successes with the Muslim army during the Islamic-Sassanid War. Their significance grew greater after the Umayyads conquered Southern Iraq and placed their recent conquests with Oman under one emirate. This granted the Omanis control over the Strait of Hormuz and a considerable amount of trade arriving into the Islamic Empire from the Indian Ocean.[21] Basra served as the main port through which these goods would be distributed. So, to control the trade as it arrived in The Gulf, the Azd and other Omani tribes began to build population and influence bases in Basra while still vying for power in Oman. The powerful Basran Omanis began to follow Kharijite doctrines after 'Ali's assassination when Basra became the radical sect's scholarly center. However, the peacefulness of Ibadiyya was more attractive because they had moved to Basra for maritime trade, and other Kharijite sects would compel the Omanis to kill those foreigners they attempted to trade with. Instead, they turned to Ibadiyya because it allowed for a peaceful approach that could permit the trade which secured the prosperity of their tribe and their country.[22]

With Ibadiyya firmly established in the Azd tribes, the Omanis were able to take control over the school's development. Key to establishing this center of Ibadi thought was the creation of an Omani Ibadi imamate with a ruling imam who religiously and politically guided Ibadis' and Ibadiyya's

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[20] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 36-7.
[21] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 50-1.
[22] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 52.

intellectual development. It is important here to discuss the Ibadi concept of an imam. Ibadis chose to call their religious leader an Imam for politico-religious reasons. Primarily, there was a desire to be politically independent from the caliphs, and to create a pure faith that was still open and unoppressive towards other Islamic faiths.[23] They also separated themselves from the Shi'ite concept of Imam by declaring the leader did not have to be a descendant of the Prophet and subdividing the office into three categories. First was the concealment imam. This type of imam was particularly useful during times wherein it was impossible to establish an Ibadi state and the imam needed to operate in secrecy to avoid being hindered by authorities. One finds this form of Imam during the Basran period. Second is the activist imam who worked to establish an Ibadi state. This style of imam was used in battle situations where the Ibadi community would have to fight to gain self-governance. Finally, the declaration imam was established after the Ibadis had been victorious over their oppressors. This imam was to run an Ibadi state and enact Ibadi doctrines for its citizens.[24]

Most importantly an Ibadi Imam must be pious, intelligent, and a knowledgeable religious scholar selected by the consensus of the Ibadi community. Not only are they selected by consensus, but they can be removed if they lose this consensus by failing to enforce Ibadi doctrines or creating religious developments that do not fit what the community believes to be Ibadi in nature. As a result, Ibadiyya was able to develop through the scholarly Ibadi community and not at the behest of a single man as is often found in Shi'ism and Sunnism.[25]

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[23] Leonard, "Contemporary Approaches."
[24] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 95-103.
[25] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 104-6.

Moving the Ibadi center of thought to Oman was possible after the failure of the first Ibadi Imamate in the Hadramawt of North West Yemen.[26] Omanis, and in particular the Azd tribesmen, could not establish a new Imam in Oman with the Hadramawt Imam still in existence because it would dilute the purity of the faith. Therefore, using the consensus election doctrines, Omanis established their first Ibadi Imamate in 132/749. The primary imam was al-Julanda bin Mas'ud (d. 134/751) of the Julanda tribe. His tenure, and the Imamate would be short lived because of an Abbasid invasion of the region which overwhelmed any military force the imam could muster. He died fighting against the invasion, and Oman was placed under the Abbasid Basran Governate.[27] Interestingly, the Abbasids chose a non-Ibadi Julanda tribe member to rule Oman in hopes of calming the populous but having a non-Ibadi Muslim as a ruler did not sit well with the Omanis.

Inevitably, the Ibadi Omanis revolted against the Abbasid-Julanda governors in 177/793 and established a new imamate in Oman. This imamate would last just over a century but fell due to a common challenge that all the imams faced during their reigns, tribalism. Imams were constantly being accused by other tribes for being impious and leading Ibadis astray in hopes they could remove the imam and establish someone from their tribe in his stead. Most of these revolts were led by the Julandas who wished to restore their own power regardless of the current imam's competency as a ruler or Oman's prosperity. For instance, the reign of Imam Sheikh 'Abd al-Malik bin Humayd (d. 226/840) was known as a time of peace, stability, and intellectual progress within the imamate. However, he still suffered an al-Julanda revolt as they attempted to regain the power they had lost since the Second Imamate and their Abbasid-

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[26] The establishment of the primary Ibadi Imamate in Yemen explains why an Ibadi-like community still exists in the Yemen today.

[27] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 112-118.

backed governate.[28] As time passed, not only were the Julandas upset with their political situation, but other tribes began to desire having one of their tribesman chosen to be the Imam.

Eventually these tensions grew so intense that for three consecutive Imams' from 237-280/851-891 there were internal conflicts so large that they became civil wars. Each civil war was fought to depose the ruling Imam by an alliance of tribes.[29] The final escalation occurred in 278/891 when the tribes around Sohar elected their own Ibadi Imam to directly challenge Imam 'Azzan bin Tamim (d.280/893). The existence of two Ibadi Imams was unprecedented and strictly prohibited by Ibadi political thought. 'Azzan bin Tamim would be left with no choice but to create an army and march against his Sohar rival. The two sides met at al-Qa' and ultimately 'Azzn would be the victor.[30] However, following the battle, 'Azzan's and Oman's power was greatly diminished leading the Abbasids to seek a new campaign in the region. This was not the first time that the Abbasids invaded the Second Imamate, having been beaten back on two occasions by 'Azzan's predecessors. In this instance, Oman was unprepared. Having suffered great losses of manpower due to the past decades' civil wars, the administrative and economical poverty of the state, and an overwhelmingly large Abbasid force, the Imamate had little chance to survive. The Abbasids once again conquered Oman in 280/893, ending the Second Imamate and placing the region firmly under Abbasid control for centuries.[31]

MEDIEVAL IBADI THEOLOGY

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[28] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 156-159.
[29] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 171-188.
[30] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 190.
[31] al-Rawas, *Early Islamic*, 191-195.

The Omani Imamates stretching from the time of al-Julanda bin Mas'ud to the fall of the last imam in 1385/1965 were essential to the theological development of Ibadiyya. Despite the desire for purity of faith, which would seem to contradict development and change, Ibadiyya has consistently been reformed throughout its long history. For instance, early Ibadi communities refused to recognize the *Sunnah of the Prophet* espoused by Sunnis because they wished to keep their independence of culture and state from the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates.[32] However, after the fall of the second Ibadi Imamate of Oman in 177/799 and the expansion of Abbasid power over the region, it was impossible for the Ibadis to ignore outside scripture. They began to accept the *Sunnah* as a source from which theology could be derived and began to incorporate more Sunni elements into their theological work.[33] This development in Ibadiyya was a giant leap away from the Khawarij who refused the *Sunnah.* This change gave the Ibadis the ability to create dialogues with Sunnis from common ground. In fact, the *Sunnah* may have been accepted into Ibadiyya because it was needed to cooperate better with the new Abbasid authorities and create a mutually beneficial relationship rather than a combative one which the far weaker Omanis would have certainly lost. This openness towards outside sources of knowledge did not compromise the Kharijite tradition of consensus which formed the backbone of unified Ibadi thought. Scholarship on the *Sunnah* had to have the consensus of the community before it could be implemented because Ibadis believe that the knowledge of a person and their analogical thinking is more important than the words of any book. Simply, a consensus approval of a single person's idea shows more sound reasoning than the book from which it may derive and can lead to an acceptable doctrine.[34]

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[32] Wilkinson, *Origins*, 128.

[33] Wilkinson, *Origins*, 377.

[34] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 75.

This belief that a consensus backed idea is more legitimate than any written authority even extends to the Quran because, to them, all literary works are created in space and time. Their belief in the createdness of the Quran is vital to their open and tolerant attitude towards all groups. Although they believe that God's speech is eternal, the Quran is not because it was created for the people at the time of the Prophet. God's message was meant to make sense to the Prophet and his immediate followers, not to hold the same weight as time goes on.[35] Within the Quran, one can find the meaning of God's will, but for those living in different times and locations, it is far more difficult to understand and cannot be literally applied to their lives. This means that the text must be interpreted by people to implement God's will, because if it is not interpreted, one is using God's message as it was meant to be used by the Prophet and the Arab people until 10/632. This use of the *Ashab al-Nuzul* method of Quranic interpretation along with consensus-based reasoning gave the Ibadis almost unlimited liberty in deciding the path their faith takes.[36] Even so, it did and does not give the individual freedom of choice in faith. It provided the Ibadi scholarly community the power to shape thoughts and teachings to respond to changing times and circumstances. This gave the school great adaptability and allowed Ibadis to accept other cultures and religions, which the Omani economy and people required to prosper.

The way in which Oman interacts with these foreign groups is also dictated by their doctrinal systems. The first doctrine which must be examined that is relevant to foreign interaction is the previously discussed Khawarij *kufr* doctrine. The Ibadis have split *kufr* so it can be applied to two different groups. The first group is the *kufr nifaq*, or hypocritical unbelievers. These are all non-Ibadi Muslims, and un-repenting sinners from the Ibadi

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[35] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 40-1.
[36] Leonard, "Contemporary Approaches."

community.[37] The peoples of this group are not treated as alien to Islam. Instead, Ibadis believed they have received the message of God and His Prophet but have turned their backs on the truth. Despite these fundamental differences, they are still provided the same legal benefits as other Muslims (i.e. inheritance rights, freedom from *jizya* tax, legal protection from murder, etc...). The second group of *kufr shirk*, or unbelievers, are all those who refuse the *Shahadah*.[38] This includes all polytheists, atheists, ancestral worshipers, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians.[39] It must be stated that the Ibadis believe that people are given limited self-determination. Their self-determination doctrines closely follow the *'Asharite* school's theory that God supplies people with choices. Those who are faithful to Him will choose the path of piety and be received in heaven.[40]

The *kufr shirk* peoples have chosen not to follow the path towards the good which God laid for them and will be condemned to eternal hell as a result. However, this does not mean that these people are to be sent there by the sword of an Ibadi. For instance, the People of the Book, or the Jews, Christians, and, sometimes, Zoroastrians, are supposed to be given the opportunity to convert to Islam by the Imam. If they refuse this offer, then they are to pay the *jizya* tax to the Ibadi authorities. The Ibadis are then supposed to use these funds for pious means, therefore, indirectly allowing the People of the Book to provide for righteous practice according to Ibadiyya.[41] What the tax does, therefore, is give the People of the Book a place within Ibadi society by allowing them to provide for Ibadis' piety. They were accepted in this role as financier and help to achieve the success of the imamate and larger Ibadi nation.

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37 Hoffman, *Essentials*, 28.
38 The *Shahadah* is, "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet."
39 Hoffman, *Essentials*, 27.
40 Hoffman, *Essentials*, 34.
41 Hoffman, *Essentials*, 220.

Although the People of the Book are given a role within Ibadi society, there is a question as to how Omanis are supposed to interact with all *kufr*. As previously shown, the Khawarij believed that all *kufr* should be killed for not heeding God's word. Ibadis don't apply violence when they are forced to deal with those who have less faith than themselves. Instead, they practice *Bara'a*, or disassociation. In Ibadiyya, *Bara'a* has a duel meaning. When applied to the *kufr* it implies that he or she has disassociated themselves from God. While for the Ibadi it implies that they must disassociate themselves from the *kufr*.[42] This disassociation for the Ibadis could have one of two meanings. It could mean that the Ibadis would have to disassociate themselves from the *kufr* at a physical level, or it could imply that they must disassociate their relationship with the *kufr* from their relationship with the *kufr's* beliefs. Importantly, the Ibadis choose to follow the second interpretation. They believe that affiliation leads to association between people, and Ibadis believe "the root meaning of affiliation is agreement on the truth."[43] Therefore, associating with someone means that the Ibadi would have to agree with the truth which that person believes. Disassociating, on the other hand, can simply be carried out by recognizing that someone has different beliefs than themselves and separations are created based upon that difference.

Not only are Ibadis allowed to physically interact with non-believers, but they can be accepting as to who the non-believer is when faith is removed. This is epitomized when late nineteenth-century Ibadi theologian Nasir al-Rawahi (b. 1277/1860) wrote,

> Natural love does not harm you unless it becomes religious affiliation. There is nothing wrong with being polite to someone while inwardly retaining religious dissociation from him. The Prophet only asked his Lord not to give any infidel who lived near him something that would make him love him because of the

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[42] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 29.
[43] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 174.

> Prophet's perfect devotion and desire to be affected by God alone, in worship and love.[44]

Al-Rawahi is making the profound statement that Ibadis should not be dissuaded from loving the *kufrs*. They have interpreted the meaning of the Quranic verse wherein the Prophet asks for disassociation as originating from his perfection, not because it is a necessitated practice for all Muslims. In the Ibadi sense, therefore, it would be ridiculous to ask Muslims to refrain from kind and loving interactions with all peoples because no man could ever reach the level of religious perfection the Prophet espoused. So long as the Ibadis understand the difference between loving the *kufrs* with whom they associate and loving the *kufrs'* faith, and choose to only love the former, then they will not corrupt their own faith.

Though this doctrine allows for Ibadis to be physically kind and emotionally loving of their *kufr* relations, it must be kept in mind that the Ibadis are still required to separate themselves at the religious level. Ibadis still claim religious superiority to all other religious groups, meaning that the *kufrs'* practices, rituals, and beliefs are all sinful. Ibadis place themselves in the right while all others are in the wrong when it comes to religious matters.[45] Therefore, what is expressed by the Ibadis, at least doctrinally, is tolerance in its strictest form. They preclude from accepting the legitimacy within of *kufrs'* beliefs and are theologically forced to condemn those they love to hell. This creates an interesting dichotomy in Ibadi faith between tolerance and self-superiority wherein the self-superiority is only to be felt and shown privately between Ibadis or even within a single Ibadi, but they display tolerance to all others in public life.

COLONIAL OMAN

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[44] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 204.
[45] Hoffman, *Essentials*, 157.

Though these doctrines have become vital to Ibadis espousing tolerance and peace with its neighbors, following the First and Second Omani Imamates there was still great internal Omani and Ibadi divisions which created violence and threatened the sovereignty and security of Oman as an Ibadi state. For instance, during the seventeenth century, Oman was once again divided. On the Gulf coast of Oman, the Sultanate had taken control over the territory which was previously occupied by the Portuguese, while the interior of the region was still under the control of the Ibadi Imam.[46] This division would remain until the middle of the nineteenth century when the Sultanate ultimately unified the two states following a bloody ten-year war. Throughout the period of division and following the Portuguese occupation, there were interactions with foreigners that placed the Omanis as the colonizers and the colonized that would change how Omanis viewed themselves and their faith.

This reimagining of what it meant to be an Ibadi-Omani began when the Sultanate started to colonize East Africa and Southern Persia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most scholarly and culturally important location in this new Omani empire was the small island of Zanzibar, where the sultans even established their capital during the mid-nineteenth century.[47] During this time the Said dynasty had come into power for expelling a Persian invasion during the early eighteenth century and had been quick to ensure that all Omani tribes were viewed equally. For instance, there was no distinction of *Sayyid* given to one tribe to place them above all the others. Combined with the lack of an election to decide the next ruler, tribal politics became significantly less important.[48] It may seem reasonable that the Saids, being the ruling family, would claim to

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[46] Linda P. Funsch, *Oman Reborn* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2015), 37-8.

[47] John C. Wilkinson, "On Being an Ibadi," *The Muslim World* 105, no. 2, (March 17, 2015), under "Ibadi"
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274140696_On_being_an_Ibadi (accessed October 15, 2017).

[48] Wilkinson, "Being an Ibadi."

have superiority, but there was recognition that they were not the true power, God was. They would only be allowed to rule if they did so justly according to God's Will including Ibadi Theology, which dictates that the Saids' had to give equal treatment to all Ibadis and *kufr nifaq*.[49] It was during this period of equal-footing for all tribes that the Omani Empire began to take shape.

Since the Omani expansion occurred under the social norm of equal treatment between elites, there was less focus on shaping these newly accessible regions to fit the needs of the tribe. The result was that the Omanis occupied foreign lands under the flag of Oman, not under the flags of the Julanda, Ya'rubi, or Said tribes. Ibadi tolerance was applied to these foreign lands, and the Omanis governed fairly and justly. They also maintained significant internal distinctions between themselves and those they governed over.[50] The focus of these distinction, both on an individual and societal level, was that they were Ibadis and their homeland was Oman. As time continued and the Omani colonists viewed themselves with each of these defining characteristics, the two began to be combined into one. Eventually, being Ibadi meant one was also Omani, causing the faith and the nationality to become mixed.[51] This was a huge change for the religiosity of Omanis which up to that point was seen separate of the land which the Imamate had occupied. However, these new peoples and the consistent spread of Oman's government abroad made it clear to Omanis that their defining feature and what gave them the right to rule was that they were Ibadis and they carried the proper faith to the *kufrs*.[52]

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[49] Gertjan Hoetjes, "Iran-GCC Relations: The Case of Oman," In *Iran's Relations with the Arab States of the Gulf: Common Interests Over Historic Rivalry* (Berlin, Germany: Gerlach Press, 2016), 151-152.

[50] Wilkinson, "Being an Ibadi."

[51] Wilkinson, "Being an Ibadi."

[52] The Omanis did, and continue to, recognize the North African Ibadis as proper Ibadis, but because the Omanis have harbored almost all the major Imams, they uphold that Ibadiyya and Oman are more interlinked than Ibadiyya and North Africa.

This method of distinction, and new identity was solidified by the fact that the Omanis, due once again to their theological doctrines, could not send missionaries to convert those whom they ruled. In Ibadiyya, Ibadi missionaries can only be sent to seek converts if there is an undisputed Ibadi Imam. However, the existence of the Sultanate on the Omani coast, the North African Ibadis' Imam, and the increasing threat of Wahhabism on the Imamate-ruled interior of Oman meant the Imams of this period were disputed.[53] Therefore, the Imams did not feel in the right to dispatch missionaries. Likewise, the Said Sultans could not sponsor missionaries, because their right to rule over Ibadis was based on upholding Ibadi doctrines. Therefore, if their non-imam leaders sent missionaries, their legitimacy would be compromised leading the Omani Empire to collapse into a civil war. As a result, Omanis in foreign territories would continue to see themselves as distinguished from the populations they governed because the colonized would largely keep their faith due to the lack of missionary actives.[54]

The strengthening of the Ibadi-Omani identity through non-conversion meant that, even when the Omani Empire became dominated by the British and many colonists chose to return home, the new identity had become well established throughout the country. Oman's physical geography and lack of development guaranteed the identity's survival because the British were only able to control the Imamate.[55] The Imamate in the interior remained untouched by British governance allowing for a continuous Omani sovereignty. The Imamate was perfect for building the importance of this religious-nationalist identity because its government focused on maintaining Ibadi doctrines while resisting British rule. Though it is the Imamate that should be credited for strengthening the

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[53] Wilkinson, "Being an Ibadi."
[54] Wilkinson, "Being an Ibadi."
[55] Ibid.

Omani-Ibadi identity, its existence would be far more important on the British-backed Sultanate coast.

OMAN POST-WORLD WAR II

The primary British objective in establishing a protectorate over the Sultanate was to control Gulf and Indian Ocean trade. They did not care to govern over the people because it would interfere with their commerce-minded objectives, especially since the Omanis new identity would almost certainly lead to revolts against their rule. Therefore, the sultans were given autonomy in domestic policies and could choose to govern their people as they saw fit so long as it did not interfere with British trade.[56] Through this autonomy the Saids continued to retain their legitimacy to rule in the eyes of their Ibadi subjects, despite being under the protection of *kufr shirks* who did not espouse Ibadiyya. Having maintained their legitimacy, the Saids gained even greater power over Oman during the British protectorate. This occurred because the consistent challenges the Imamate faced to their legitimacy and the technological advances the British gave the sultans access to.[57] After almost sixty years of British protectorate, the Omanis once again achieved independence in 1370/1951. Using this newfound sovereignty, Sultan Said ibn Taimur (d. 1392/1972) began to consolidate his power over the entirety of Oman by attacking the Imamate shortly after the election of a new Imam in 1373/1954.[58]

The Sultanate's invasion began in 1373/1954 and would end in triumph five years later. Sultan Said ibn Taimur wished to quickly establish himself over his newly conquered territory so he began by exiling over a dozen religious scholars who continued to preach the necessity of an Imam.[59]

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "The Transformation of Religious Learning in Oman: Tradition and Modernity," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21, no. 2. (March 2011),

Though this policy was effective in maintaining the Sultan's legitimacy, it defined the Sultan's closed-mindedness. This was especially harmful because, during the previous decades, Omanis had begun to travel throughout the world and had been exposed to new ideologies. Primary amongst these new ways of thinking was Communism. However, the isolationist attitude of the Sultan, and his desire to maintain a traditional Oman without socialist policies led to a Communist uprising in the Dhofar region in 1384/1965.[60] This war would rage on for over five years under Sultan ibn Taimur's leadership despite the Omanis having received considerable aid from the United Kingdom, Jordan, and Iran.

The ineffectiveness of Oman's alliance was largely due to the Sultan's refusal to modernize the country. During the five years of peace between the wars he made no efforts to improve Oman's infrastructure, making it very difficult to move any equipment or supplies to the distant province.[61] Recognizing these deficiencies in the Omani state, Sultan Said ibn Taimur's British educated, and militarily-trained son, Qaboos ibn Said al-Said, began to protest his father's inefficiencies as a ruler. Anticipating the danger his son represented to his rule, Sultan Taimur had the young prince placed under house arrest shortly after returning from his journeys abroad. However, seeing that the war would drag on and the country was not being prepared for the future, Qaboos could sit idle no longer. Therefore, he bloodlessly ousted his father and proclaimed himself the sultan.[62] Within five years of the coup, the war was over, and Oman had government-led development plans that would bring Oman out of the Middle Ages and make it a modernized state.

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under "Oman,"
http://proxygw.wrlc.org/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/867410558?accountid=11243 (accessed September 14, 2017).

[60] al-Salimi, "The Transformation."

[61] Funsch, *Reborn*, 105.

[62] Roby C. Barret, *Oman: The Present in the Context of a Fractured Past* (Florida: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2011), 6.

The most important field of these reforms has been the de-construction and reconstruction of the Omani education system to implement modern education methods. Traditionally, the Omani education system was similar to those used by the majority of the Arab World before Western powers' domination over the region. Children at a young age were educated in the mosque by the sheikh or imam and were taught about the Quran as interpreted by the religious leader. This education was religious based and learned based upon the varying versions of Islam the imams taught. These imams consistently disregarded the teachings of other schools of Islamic thought, only providing their students a narrowminded outlook of the wider faith. In Oman, if a student was deemed bright enough, they would be sent to schools, most of which were abroad, for further education, usually in secular fields. The students who did not show excellence in the classroom would stay in Oman and typically work for their families, most commonly in agriculture.[63]

Recognizing the limitations this style of education, namely sectarianism and inefficient economy, from other states that continued to use it, Sultan Qaboos worked to restructure Oman's education system. Immediately after taking power, in order to improve Oman's secular education, he began to rewrite education policy to hire non-Omani scholars who could teach from a non-religious perspective at the primary and higher levels.[64] This process initially took shape by unifying the curriculum at mosque schools to teach the basic principles of Islam which all the Islamic schools of thought agreed on.[65] There was also a push to begin modelling Omanis education on the liberal-Western model. These changes had to be done carefully, so Sultan Qaboos balanced them with traditional religious education. However, overtime he began to eliminate schooling in mosques and began ordering the construction of government-run primary schools

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[63] Leonard, "Contemporary Approaches."
[64] Ibid.
[65] al-Salimi, "The Transformation."

around the state as infrastructure was expanded and updated. The movement away from mosque-based education was long and arduous, but the Ministry of Education closed the final mosque school in 1996, cementing Oman's successful commitment to a reformed education system.[66] While the new government schools did not ignore religious instruction, there was a reduced focus on Ibadiyya. Professors are now required to teach a plurality of faiths, both Islamic and otherwise.[67] This shift opened Omani students to outside religious groups that their now globalized state requires them to interact with. As shown above, Ibadi doctrines do not require separation from foreigners and their faiths, but without the proper education having effective and strong relations in a globalized world would be very difficult.

These educational reforms have led to an environment in Oman that espouses intra-faith and inter-faith dialogues.[68] These dialogues, which exist at all levels of society, have made Oman an important platform for various faith leaders to solve their grievances with other faith leaders. For instance, Oman holds an Islamic faith dialogue conference every year wherein scholars of Sunnism, Shi'ism, and Ibadiyya meet to discuss the similarities and differences of their faiths.[69] These conferences help to increase the understanding between peoples who share faiths, giving them the ability to cooperate rather than battle each other. Not only does the Omani government provide physical conferences for dialogues, they have published scholarly journals that pride themselves on publishing writings from scholars of all faiths since 2004. The journals are called *al-Tasamoh* (tolerance) and *al-Tafahom* (understanding) and feature articles on all fields of scholarship as written by people according to their faiths.[70] The ease of access to these articles, including access for all Omani citizens,

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[66] Ibid.
[67] Leonard, "Contemporary Approaches."
[68] In this case intra-faith is between the schools of Islam, and inter-faith is between Muslims and other religious groups.
[69] Leonard, "Contemporary Approaches."
[70] Ibid.

means the entire population can gain an understanding of other religious groups' thought processes outside of theology. Learning about different ways of thinking beyond theology is the most important aspect of these journals. They give the Ibadis the ability to cooperate with foreigners who work in the same field as them increasing their own, and Oman's, productivity and prosperity. This increased and shared success leads to even greater ties between Ibadis and foreigners, amplifying Ibadi openness and diminishing the likelihood of radicalism by defeating sectarianism.

This pro- dialogue environment inside Oman has had a great effect on its ability to carry out a neutral and mediation-based foreign policy. For much of his history, Sultan Qaboos has been able to maintain strong relations with Iran, both during pre- and post-Islamic Revolution, without being pressured to participate in the various crises around the Middle East. This relationship between Oman and Iran began when the Iranians played an active role in subduing the Dhofar Revolt. They deployed 6,000 soldiers, squadrons of planes, and other military equipment to Oman while also helping to convince the United Kingdom and Jordan to give similar support. Despite the widespread fear in other Arab-Gulf states following Khomeini's revolution in 1979, Oman maintained strong relations with the Iranians by concluding a series of bilateral economic and military cooperation treaties that made the two states more interdependent.[71] These strong ties have allowed the Ibadis to act as mediator between various states and Iran. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Iran have often been at odds over territory within the Persian/Arabian Gulf. Oman has played a major role in creating dialogues and deflating conflicts before they became violent. Beyond the GCC, the Iranians relied on the Omanis to mediate the peace treaty that ended the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. This aid helped establish the legitimacy of the young theocratic republic and gave the Omanis the opportunity to return the favor of assistance from

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[71] Hoetjes, "Iran-GCC," 145-146.

the Dhofar Revolt. [72] More recently, Iran used Oman to create a secret dialogue with the United States in 2012 that eventually led to the creation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or the Iran Deal.[73] This deal has eliminated numerous economic sanctions that have hindered Iranian development for decades and has helped to secure the Iranian economy's prosperity. The Ibadis can maintain the integrity of their faith by expanding their tolerance to other states and promoting peace between combating groups. The Omani role as a mediator has led other states to respect Omani sovereignty and allowed Sultan Qaboos to enact reforms to the sultanate's political and religious landscapes without interference from external powers.

These political reforms have largely been focused on mending the gap between the secular sultanate and Ibadiyya since the removal of the Imamate. Sultan Qaboos began this reconciliation in 1392/1973 when he established the Ibadi Mufti as a part of the Sultan's government. As it stands, the Mufti is the leading figure in Ibadiyya within Oman and has great influence over religious decisions made in Ibadi communities around the world.[74] Qaboos looked to create a replacement for the Imam that could give the Ibadis religious guidance in a way similar to the imam. As a sign of respect towards Ibadiyya and the general learnedness of its new lead figure, Qaboos gives the Mufti leadership over many of the government's ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Endowments and Religious Affairs. Although this wide array of ministries would seem to give the Mufti great power to push a strict Ibadi agenda, he is unable to act without the Sultan's approval. Therefore, unlike the Imam, the Muftis have consistently promoted a more

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[72] Hoetjes, "Iran-GCC," 147.

[73] Ahmet Uysal, "What is Unique About the Omani-Iranian Relations?" Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara, (August 2016), under "Oman," https://iramcenter.org/en/what-is-unique-about-the-omani-iranian-relations (accessed November 5, 2017).

[74] al-Salimi, "The Transformation."

consensual and open version of Islam that better reflects the even-handed government that has defined Sultan Qaboos's reign.[75]

The transition towards a more secularized government would seem to be a difficult task considering Ibadiyya's long history with the imamate and religious rulership. However, Ibadiyya, due to its constant interpretation of the Quran to adjust its meaning form contemporary issues, is different than other forms of Islam as it has "an ideological approach that provides ways for Islam to adapt to changing circumstances, which includes modernization"[76] The reformation of Ibadiyya to permit a secular leadership without a distinguished imam can be seen with the Muftis' reforms to the judicial system. Currently, it is required that Omani judges not only have specialization in *Sharia,* but they must also learn about the secular laws of the state.[77] Previously, as in many Islamic states, judges were required to have received only religious learning in order to maintain law and governance of *Sharia.* If the monopoly of religion over justice and judicial practices would have been allowed to continue, undoubtedly, the Sultan's rule would have continuously been challenged by pro-Imamate elements within Ibadiyya. But Ibadi doctrines and theology have been changed since Qaboos through religious leadership to allow for secular rule-of-law to coexist with religious law inside Oman.

Ultimately, Sultan Qaboos's educational, political, and foreign policy reforms have caused Ibadis to become surefooted in their tolerant traditions. During a time when the other Islamic sects created radical movements like al-Qaeda, Hamas, and many others that violently opposed foreigners and inter-Islamic groups, Ibadis have remained peaceful and have shown no interest in joining or creating similar groups. Sultan Qaboos is largely responsible for this peaceful attitude. He exposed his fellow Omanis to the benefits of outside-sources of information and gave

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[75] Hoejtes, "Iran-GCC,"151.
[76] Hoetjes, "Iran-GCC," 154.
[77] al-Salimi, "The Transformation."

them the ability to understand others' ways of thinking. From this solid basis of learning and dialogue he was able to reshape Oman's foreign policy to be an active and peaceful player in world politics by choosing to mediate crises and not involve itself in violence. The increased prosperity Oman gained from these educational and foreign policy reforms enabled Sultan Qaboos to change the dynamics of religion and state within Ibadiyya. The increased exposure of his country was not used to harbor fear of outsiders, but rather to begin implementing more secular ideas into the conservative faith. Through the Muftis' reforms, Ibadiyya has transitioned from a conservative faith which espouses the unification of religion and state, to a faith that allows for contemporary human-rights for all citizens regardless of, "gender, origin, color, language, religion, sect, domicile, or social status."[78] Things could have developed much differently in Oman since 1970 if Sultan Qaboos had failed to subdue the Dhofari Communists, implement new educational policies, and modernize Ibadis' faith and culture. Serious religious opposition could have arisen against the sultan. Religious groups would likely have become violent and began to espouse xenophobic messages to oppose Sultan Qaboos's openness leading to intolerant and aggressive forms of Ibadiyya, which one does not find in Oman today.

CONCLUSION

Sultan Qaboos has cultivated Oman's tolerant past to create a peaceful, tolerant, and non-sectarian Muslim state that still espouses conservative doctrines and maintains a conservative society. Although he does deserve a great amount of credit for creating contemporary Oman, there have been a number of societal developments throughout the country's history that have led to the coexistence of conservatism and tolerance. Initially, Oman's geographical position and maritime tradition vitally established

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[78] Funsch, *Reborn*, 108.

contact with foreigners that necessitated a tolerant society before Islam entered the region. These outward looking social developments made Oman politically independent and socially unique from its Arab Arabian Peninsula neighbors. With the maritime economy and long history of independence established, the introduction of Islam threatened to end Oman's sovereignty as the major sects required Muslims to follow a foreign Imam, as with the Shi'as, or a foreign Caliph, as with the Sunnis. Therefore, the Omani nobility began to look for a way to maintain their Islamic faith while guaranteeing the independence of their state. They found this by turning to the violent and radical Khawarij sect which had separated itself from the other sects by strictly adhering to the Quran early on. Although the Omanis had found their independence in faith, the violence and intolerance of Kharijite practices threatened the Omani maritime tradition. This is when Ibadiyya began to play a role. Still Khawarij, Ibadiyya allowed for Kharijite thought to be non-violent towards outsiders. This meant that Omani nobility had found a faith which gave them continued independence and did not destroy their economic traditions.

The conversion of Oman and the establishment of an Ibadi Imam solidified Oman's religious and political independence. The Imamates were essential in the further development of a tolerant faith. The Imams were also unafraid of allowing for the faith's development based upon the consensus of the community giving the whole of Oman's traditionally tolerant society the power to legitimize interaction with and protection of foreigners. It was during these times that Ibadiyya not only continued to use the *kufr nifaq* and *kufr shirk* doctrines, but expanded the initial tolerance guaranteed by those doctrines. It is quite possible that the Omani population realized it would not be enough to guarantee their prosperity by tolerating only "sinning" Muslims, but they must also tolerate the heathens: including Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, and others. Therefore, at some point, the disassociation that the *kufr* doctrines

required was no longer applied to the physical level as it had under the Khawarij and early Ibadis. Instead an Ibadi merely had to disassociate with the *kufrs* on a faith level and were even allowed to love *kufrs* so long as they did not fall in love with the *kufrs'* faiths.

None of these theological and doctrinal developments would have been possible if Ibadiyya did not become adaptable. This adaptability is best shown by their eventual acceptance of the *Sunnah of the Prophet* which they initially denied in hopes of maintaining their independence. Ibadiyya's adaptability and development was only made possible by theologically viewing the Quran as a created document that could be interpreted. Ibadis would not have broken the violence and xenophobia of the Khawarij if it had not shifted on both the *Sunnah* and the Quran. Therefore, the developments made under the Imamates and Caliphate occupations completed the reshaping of Ibadiyya's Kharijite basis to resemble a faith that is tolerant of all non-Ibadis.

Although the Imamates created an outwardly tolerant faith, Omani politics made it difficult for Ibadis to find peace. The Second Imamate was torn down by tribal disputes and the Ibadis continued to struggle in Oman. They were unable to establish internal stability until the Sultanate of Muscat removed the Portuguese along the Omani coast and began Omani colonization. Resulting from this new form of exposure to foreigners, as a ruler and not just a trade partner, was the use of the faith as a source of Omani identity. Ibadiyya was transformed during this time and the Ibadis and those they colonized recognized that Ibadi and Omani were one in the same. This combination of a religious identity with a regional identity and the non-tribal based rulership of the Said sultans led to the decrease of tribalism in Oman. This meant the divides that destroyed the Second Imamate had largely been mitigated by the time the British began dominating the region.

With the Omanis unified through their faith, the British domination over the coast did not cause a radical backlash as they were unable to dominate the Imamate in the interior, giving Omanis a sense of security not found in other parts of the Islamic World. Regardless of the Omani security of identity, the country needed to be politically unified if it wanted to retain its sovereignty and power. The Sultan, having been given British technological advances, was able to unify the country after a five-year war, but he was unable to curb the ideological differences between the continuously more globalized country and faith. It is here that Sultan Qaboos built his legacy. He has managed to modernize Oman politically and economically without westernizing its society and compromising Ibadi doctrines and theology. Much of this was done by using Ibadiyya's long history of adaptability to his advantage by reshaping religious leadership. Using a mufti, he can control has given him the ability to carry out the necessary political and economic reforms that guarantee prosperity while also satisfying Oman's conservative population's desire for religious conservatism. Deriving from Kharijite philosophy makes Ibadiyya naturally conservative and, therefore, prone to radicalism. This has not taken place due to Qaboos's guidance and smart policies since beginning his reign over half a century ago.

Ultimately, when one looks as to why Ibadi was able to develop from the Khawarij into being one of the most tolerant countries in the Middle East, it does not merely stem from one factor.[79] Instead, it is a narrative that stretches back to ancient times. Omani tolerance stems from its ancient traditions of maritime trading, social and political independence, and foreign interactions. Combined, this history has caused the Islamic Omanis to look for a faith that could reconcile these traditions. Once they settled on Ibadiyya, the Ibadi Omanis continued to open the faith up by

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[79] Due to the combination of Ibadi and Omani identity it is acceptable that Ibadiyya can currently be considered a nationality, and, as a result, a social and political driving force for the modern-day Sultanate.

giving it greater adaptability. This led to the vital doctrinal shifts which no longer demonized people, like the Khawarij did, only their faiths. Importantly, the uniqueness of Omanis' faith caused them to place this unifying feature above their tribal differences and ignore the crisis of identity which afflicted the Muslim World following western domination of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finally, the country's unification under the Sultan has perpetuated this long history of tolerance. Sultan Qaboos brilliantly reconciled the secularized world of the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century by ensuring Ibadiyya remained tolerant and did not fall into radicalism like other Muslim sects. This has built an Ibadi Oman which still espouses religious conservatism on a personal and private level that it retains from its peoples' Kharijite faith while also maintaining the tolerance that has existed in Omani society for millennia.

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