



## Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

Volume 11 Issue 1, Spring 2021

pISSN: 2075-0943, eISSN: 2520-0313

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111>

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>

Journal QR Code:



### Indexing



Article:

### The Omani Experience of Multi-religious Coexistence and Dialogue: A Historical Approach to the Omani Principles and its Luminous Examples

Author(s):

Al Muatasim Said Saif Al Maawali\*

Published:

Spring 2021

Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.04>

QR Code:



Al Muatasim Said

Citation:

Al Maawali, Al Muatasim Said Saif. "The Omani experience of multi-religious coexistence and dialogue: A historical approach to the Omani principles and its luminous examples." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 1 (2021). 59-78.

[Crossref](https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.111.04)

Copyright Information:

This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution – Share Alike 4.0 International License



Publisher Information:

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

# The Omani Experience of Multi-religious Coexistence and Dialogue: A Historical Approach to the Omani Principles and its Luminous Examples

Al Muatasim Said Saif Al Maawali\*  
The Omani Studies Centre,  
Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman

## Abstract

In a world that is increasingly hostile towards religious minorities, this paper tries to set a modern-day, successful example of multi-religious coexistence and interfaith dialogue. The paper examines historical examples derived from Omani history and explores Omani characteristics by surveying Western reports written by missionaries, visitors, and travellers of different religions in Oman. This is meant to demonstrate the hypothesis that the multi-religious coexistence and interfaith dialogue enjoyed today by the nearly four-million Omani population is a natural result of a long history of commitment to 'Omani values' and principles, practised by Oman's Ibādī population with their fellow non-Muslims. The paper concludes that there is a strong correlation between the 'Omani values' recorded by the Western writers and the ongoing deeply rooted Omani experience of peaceful religious coexistence and interfaith dialogue. These 'Omani values' include the principles of tolerance, social justice, mutual respect, friendliness, hospitality, and simplicity. Finally, owing to the increasingly rising tensions between adherents of different religions, the paper recommends that such successful Omani experiences should be exported to other countries in the Muslim world and elsewhere.

**Keywords:** Oman, Ibādīsm, multi-religions, coexistence, dialogue, tolerance

## Introduction

The multi-religious peaceful coexistence that Oman's diverse population enjoys nowadays comes as no surprise. The culture of welcoming acceptance, and interfaith dialogue is deeply rooted in the country's long history and it has become an inherent part of the nature of the indigenous people of Oman, as observed by some the Western explorers.<sup>1</sup> This has made it very easy for the present-day Omanis to firmly hold on to the country's doctrines of tolerance, coexistence, and non-violence. Most major religious denominations have a strong presence in Oman, yet this has not resulted in hostility or antagonism among the diverse sectors of society.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, as political and sectarian tensions at the regional and international levels have been escalating, the social

---

\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Al Muatasim Said Saif Al Maawali, The Omani Studies Centre, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman, at [Muatasim@squ.edu.om](mailto:Muatasim@squ.edu.om)

<sup>1</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia* (London: Dār Al Sāqī, 2002), 27.

<sup>2</sup>BBC, "Faith in Oman," Ep. 1, *BBC World Service*, 2014, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01wgcd3>

fabric between the members of the Omani pluralistic community has remained cohesive.<sup>3</sup> As a manifestation of that, an external observer will note that the people in Oman, regardless of their religious backgrounds and ethnic origins, live side by side and interact with one another overlooking insignificant religious and sectarian differences.<sup>4</sup> It is a scene of religious harmony and peaceful coexistence that one might hardly see in other parts of the Muslim world. There is ample evidence to confirm the Omani experience of religious tolerance, which has inevitably resulted in mutual understanding and unprecedented coexistence and dialogue seen across the country. This experience of religious coexistence and dialogue is not a nascent one, nor is it confined to those ascribing themselves to the Islamic faith. In fact, this multi-religious experience of coexistence and dialogue dates back to the early days of Islam in Oman, when ‘Abd and Jayfar, the two kings of Oman, received the envoy of the Messenger of Allāh, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, in the year 6 AH/627 CE. From this very first encounter with him carrying the message of the new religion, Islām, they did not hurt him, expel him, or decline his invitation straight away. Rather, they welcomed and hosted him throughout the period of his stay. More importantly, they happily agreed to engage with him in a fruitful interreligious dialogue that lasted for days. During this time, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was treated very well by the two kings of Oman.<sup>5</sup>

Although the message that ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ conveyed was alien to the Omanis and unknown to either of the two kings, or their ancestors, they accepted the invitation to discuss and have an open dialogue about it, and they even thought about it thoroughly. As a result of that fruitful dialogue, they ended up accepting the new message and embraced a religion they were not familiar with and of which they had never heard.<sup>6</sup> Even though they were kings themselves, they did not find it demeaning to embrace new leadership and become followers of a nascent foreign authority after being convinced through serious dialogue. Bearing in mind that there was no pressure from the newly emerging Muslim state, as the distance between the two political entities is vast. This led the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) himself to be a witness of their accepting and welcoming nature to converse and engage in dialogue with the followers of the other religions. Imām Muslim, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection of Ḥadīth, reported on the authority of Abū Barzah al-Aslamī, who said that Allāh’s Messenger (SAW) sent a person to a tribe amongst the tribes of Arabia. They insulted him and beat him. He came to Allāh’s Messenger (SAW) and narrated to him the story of atrocities perpetrated upon him by the people of the tribe. Thereupon, he (the

<sup>3</sup>Thuwaybah Al Barwani, and Tayfour Albeely, “The Omani Family: Strengths and Challenges,” *Marriage and Family Review* 41 (2007): 119-142.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Mignan, *A Winter Journey through Russia, The Caucasian Alps And Georgia* (London: Rare Books Club, 1839), 239; Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands Translated by Ibrahim Mar'i*, 8th ed. (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2010), 46.

<sup>5</sup>Abdullah As-Sālimī, *Tuhfat Al-A‘Yān Fī Sīrati Ahli ‘Umān* (Muscat: al-Istiḳāmah Bookshop, 1997), 1:10.

<sup>6</sup>Laila Brence, “Amr Bin Al-Aas,” *Defence Journal* 19, no. 7 (2016): 69-70, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1773054187/fulltextPDF/DD7DBB675E564CBFPQ/1?accountid=27575>

Holy Prophet) said: ‘If you were to come to the people of Oman, they would have neither insulted you nor beaten you.’<sup>7</sup>

Hence, the paper’s attempt to demonstrate that the 1,400-year-long experience of religious coexistence and dialogue is not an accidental reaction to a global trend, nor is it an inevitable consequence of weakness. Rather, it is an experience based on a strong commitment to Omani values and principles, which Omanis have always firmly held. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore the principles behind this multi-religious experience of coexistence and dialogue upon which the Omani/Ibādī experience is built. With this context, the paper will quote the observations of many Western travellers, explorers, missionaries, and writers who witnessed this reality and noted these principles. Moreover, the paper seeks to uncover many historical and luminous examples of coexistence and dialogue with other non-Muslim religious groups who resided in Oman. This latter part will contain particular analytical presentations of coexistence and dialogue with Jewish, Christian, and Hindu communities, respectively. The paper starts by defining both ‘coexistence’ and ‘dialogue’ as keywords for the research, with justifications for the writer’s choice in this respect.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1. Coexistence

Cambridge Dictionary defines coexistence as ‘The fact of living or existing together at the same time or in the same place.’<sup>8</sup> This definition gives a specific reference to ‘living’ together, as opposed to just ‘existing.’ By that specification, the definition draws the reader’s attention to the fact that coexistence is not just a coincidence; rather, it is a right and choice in life practised by all living creatures. In addition to this, the definition covers both the time and spatial dimensions of existence, as coexistence could occur in a specific place, it could occur in different places but at the same time.

### 2.2. Dialogue

The term ‘dialogue’ has been given a number of definitions. Among the definitions chosen by the researcher is that of Oxford Dictionary, which defines the concept as ‘A discussion between two or more people or groups, especially one directed towards exploration of a particular subject or resolution of a problem.’<sup>9</sup> This definition was particularly chosen due to its comprehensive scope and suitability, at least, for the research context. While other definitions, such as that of Cambridge,<sup>10</sup> imply that dialogue only

<sup>7</sup>Muslim an-Nīsābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ at-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2004).

<sup>8</sup>Cambridge University, “Coexistence,” *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/coexistence>

<sup>9</sup>*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2020, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/dialogue>

<sup>10</sup>Cambridge University, “Coexistence,” *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dialogue>

takes place when there is a dispute to be settled and resolved, religious dialogue does not necessarily seek to achieve that. On the contrary, it often involves a recognition of the other and an acknowledgement of their beliefs.

### 3. The Omani Principles of Coexistence

Ever since the dawn of the age of geographical discoveries, Oman has been, in the Western eyes, a mysterious land that drew attention.<sup>11</sup> Thus, many Western travellers were sent to explore the ‘unknown Oman’ to achieve colonial, political, economic, or religious gains.<sup>12</sup> Most of these travellers, explorers, and missionaries left behind a detailed and descriptive legacy of what they observed in Oman. The Omani values and principles are not an exception to this rule. It is argued through this paper that these established principles are the basis for what Oman has experienced of tolerance, coexistence, and dialogue. Among these principles that have been recorded by the Western visitors are the following:

#### 3.1. Friendliness

It is stated by the Christian missionary, Mylrea,<sup>13</sup> who visited Oman and travelled across the country that: ‘One of the things which impresses the visitor to Oman is the extraordinary friendliness of the people. Most travellers to Oman have stressed this point, and to me, coming from the dour Wahabi north, the reception we received everywhere was delightful.

#### 3.2. Hospitality

This quality of being hospitable and generous is noted by the most Western visitors to Oman. Among them is the famous missionary Samuel Zwemer who is called ‘The Apostle to Islam’. Describing the people of Oman, Zwemer says: ‘... remarkably free from fanaticism, simple in their habits, and wonderful in their hospitality. Most of them belong to the Abadhi [Ibāḏī] sect, which has many beliefs in common with Christianity, and the experience of our missionaries has been that the people are not only accessible, but willing to learn, and many of them eager not only for medical help, but for teaching’.<sup>14</sup>

The famous British traveller James Wellsted also highly appreciated the Omani hospitality and treatment towards visitors, and described how generous they were when visited by guests.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the qualities of being welcoming, respectful, and protective

<sup>11</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971).

<sup>12</sup>Sulaymān al-Ḥusaynī, *Evangelical Missions to Oman and the Contemporary Islam-Christianity Relationship* (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2006), 26.

<sup>13</sup>C. Mylrea, “Muscat-Mutrah and Oman, Then and Now,” *Neglected Arabia* no. 200 (1943): 3-10.

<sup>14</sup>Samuel Zwemer, “Notes On Oman,” *National Geographic*, no. 1911 (1911): 89-98.

<sup>15</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia* (London: Dār Al Sāqī, 2002), 204.

of others are also stated by Heude.<sup>16</sup> The notion is further confirmed by Bertram Thomas, the British explorer and finance advisor to Şultān Taymūr b. Fayṣal (died in 1965). Bertram Thomas, who was also the first Western traveller to cross the Empty Quarter, explains that the Omani generosity is not a passing or accidental quality, rather it is instilled in their nature, to the extent that one might give away all that he has of food in favour of his guest.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this, Samuel Zwemer recorded a number of examples of the generous receptions with which he was received and described the lavish banquets that were offered to him, so much so that Zwemer once shouted: ‘Nobody gets hungry in Oman, nobody gets hungry in Oman.’<sup>18</sup> The Omani hospitality was also experienced by the British army officer and political agent Samuel Miles, who travelled across the country and noted the warm welcome he received in every city he visited.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.3. Simplicity

The simplicity that marked the Omanis in their interaction with others was noted by the English travel writer William Heude.<sup>20</sup> In addition to this, the American missionary doctor Paul Harrison praised the simplicity and honesty of the Omani traders with whom he had to deal with.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the British explorer James Wellsted witnessed that the Omanis he interacted with were distinguished in their simplicity, and that was what made the Europeans love and coexist with them.<sup>22</sup> Dr Ibrāhīm Salāmāh commented on this observation by saying: ‘The Omanis are still known for that today’.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.4. Tolerance

Tolerance and coexistence are two sides of the same coin, in that they are interdependent, affecting one another. Therefore, no peaceful and harmonious coexistence can be perceived without tolerance. This important characteristic of the Omani people was noted by many Western travellers to Oman: ‘Though tolerant of other religions, they [Ibādī

<sup>16</sup>Hilāl al-Ḥajrī, *British Travel-Writing on Oman: Orientalism Reappraised*, 1st ed. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2006), 94; William Heude, *A Voyage up the Persian Gulf and A Journey Overland from India to England in 1817* (London: Spottiswoode, 1819), 23.

<sup>17</sup>Bertram Thomas, *Arabia Felix*, Trans., Mohammed Ameen, 1st ed. (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1981).

<sup>18</sup>Samuel Zwemer, “Three Journeys in Northern Oman,” *The Geographical Journal* 19 (1902).

<sup>19</sup>Samuel Miles, *The Countries And Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, 6th ed. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1919).

<sup>20</sup>William Heude, *A Voyage Up The Persian Gulf and A Journey Overland from India to England in 1817* (London: Spottiswoode, 1819), 23; Wardah al-Būsa‘īdī, “Oman Under the Lens of the British Travellers from the Seventeenth Until the Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Omani-British Relations* (Muscat: National Records and Archives Authority, 2018).

<sup>21</sup>Paul Harrison, *Doctor in Arabia*, Trans., Mohammed Amin, 1st ed. (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1989).

<sup>22</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia*.

<sup>23</sup>Ibrāhīm Salāmāh, “James Wellsted's Travels in Oman,” in *Omani-British Relations* (Muscat: National Records and Archives Authority, 2018).

Omanis] appeared to me to be a more religious people.<sup>24</sup> Although Bertram Thomas stressed the level of religiosity and zealotry that his Omani companions had towards their Islamic faith, he noted that this did not prevent them from being tolerant to him and coexisting with him, so much so that he was once offered by an Omani Bedouin to marry his daughter.<sup>25</sup> Despite the general view that Zwemer held about Islam and the Muslims, he commended Omanis for both their tolerance and being free from fanaticism.<sup>26</sup> Julian, a French traveller, points out that the Catholic Portuguese, the Muslim Arabs, the Persians, and the Jews coexisted and lived side by side because of Muscat's tolerant environment.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the British explorer and writer Wilfred Thesiger, also known as Mubārḳ bin London, noted that amongst the qualities of the Omani people is that they tend to quickly forgive their differences and pardon one another.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.5. Overlooking Racial Stratification

The British military officer and explorer Robert Mignan noted that Omanis do not see significant differences between themselves and followers of other religions or people of other races. As a manifestation of this, they share food with others and also allow others to use their kitchens and cooking utensils.<sup>29</sup> Wilfred Thesiger also gave credit to 'the new religion,' Islām, for overlooking racial and ethnic stratification.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.6. Protecting Other Religious Groups

It seems that the Omanis were not content with merely tolerating others but they went further by providing protection to the followers of other religions. Wendell Phillips, the economic advisor and representative of Ṣulṭān Sa'īd b. Taymūr, made this quality clear when he said: 'All religions not only enjoyed tolerance, but they also enjoyed protection'.<sup>31</sup> The quality of protecting others was also observed by Heude.<sup>32</sup> A practical implementation

<sup>24</sup>C Haig, *Memories of the Life of General F. T. Haig* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1902), 178-181.

<sup>25</sup>Bertram Thomas, *Arabia Felix*, 222.

<sup>26</sup>Samuel Zwemer, "Three Journeys in Northern Oman," *The Geographical Journal* 19 (1902).

<sup>27</sup>Ḥawwās Mas'ūdī, "Oman in the Eyes of French Travellers," in *Orientalism in Oman: A Vision and Analysis* (Muscat: al-Ghasham Printing House, 2012).

<sup>28</sup>Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands*, Trans. Ibrahim Mar'i, 8th ed. (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2010), 161.

<sup>29</sup>Robert Mignan, *A Winter Journey Through Russia, The Caucasian Alps and Georgia* (London: Rare Books Club, 1839), 239.

<sup>30</sup>Wilfred Thesiger, *Arabian Sands*, Trans., Ibrahim Mar'i, 8th ed. (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2010), 46.

<sup>31</sup>Wendell Phillips, *'umān-- Tārīkh Lahu Judhūr*, 1st ed. (Beirut: al-Dār al-'Arabīyah lil-Mawsū'āt, 2012), 209.

<sup>32</sup>William Heude, *A Voyage up the Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England in 1817* (London: Spottiswoode, 1819), 23.

of this principle is exemplified by an interesting story narrated by both Andy<sup>33</sup> and Shahriyār.<sup>34</sup> It is a story of a wealthy Jewish businessman whose excessive wealth in Ṣuḥār provoked the jealousy and anger of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph in Baghdad. As a consequence, the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph sent a group of his special forces to arrest the Jewish trader in Oman. When the Omanis received news of this, they came together to form a united front in order to protect and defend their Jewish fellow trader. They applied the utmost pressure on the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph until the latter eventually released the Jewish trader. Had there been any friction or lack of dialogue and harmonious coexistence between the adherents of the two faiths, then such examples of the followers of other religions being defended would not have existed.

#### 4. Dialogue and Coexistence with the Jews

Moreover, it seems that there was a thorough understanding of the importance of religious dialogue and coexistence with others from the initial days that Islām rose in Oman. The famous Omani historian as-Sālimī relates in *Tuḥfat al-A ‘yān*, an Omani history reference book, a story that took place in Ṣuḥār and confirms the early instances of religious dialogue and coexistence in Oman. The story goes back to the beginning of the seventh century CE. It reads: ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was a governor for the Prophet (SAW) in Oman. One day, a Jew among the Jews of Oman came to him, saying: ‘If I ask you a question, should I fear for my life?’ ‘Amr said: ‘No.’<sup>35</sup> The story indicates the presence of a Jewish community in Oman since the dawn of Islam in Oman, around 627 CE, as ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was only in Oman during the Prophet’s (SAW) life and went back to al-Madīnah as soon as he heard the news of the Prophet’s (SAW) demise in 632 CE. Moreover, the wording of the story gives the impression that these Jews were amongst the indigenous people in the Omani land and were given the security and safety of that time, as quoted earlier.

For centuries, the Jews of Oman continued to live side by side with the Omanis in the city of Ṣuḥār, where they enjoyed a harmonious life. Throughout their history in Ṣuḥār, they were not compelled to convert to the religion of the land, Islam, nor did they experience any ethnic or religious cleansing or discrimination. On the contrary, they coexisted with their fellow Muslim neighbours and were known to be traders and people of wealth. This fact is proved by the previously quoted story of a wealthy Jewish businessman, whose excessive wealth in Ṣuḥār provoked the jealousy and anger of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph in Baghdad. After being arrested by the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph, all Omanis came together to protect and defend their Jewish fellow trader. They applied the utmost pressure

<sup>33</sup>Andy, “Jews in Oman,” Blog, *Andy in Oman*, 2007, <https://andyinoman.wordpress.com/2007/12/09/jews-in-oman/>

<sup>34</sup>Burzuk Shahriyār, *‘Ajā’ib al-Hind: Barrih Wa Baḥrihī* (UAE: Cultural Complex, 2000), 108-109.

<sup>35</sup>‘Abdullah As-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat Al-A ‘Yān Fī Sīrati Ahli ‘Umān* (Muscat: al-Istiḳāmah Bookshop, 1997), 1:60.



on the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph until the latter eventually released the Jewish trader.<sup>36</sup> (Same as previously written)

In support of this notion, the English explorer James Wellsted reports that he visited Oman in 1835 CE. He counted in Ṣuḥār twenty Jewish families, adding that they had a religious centre as well as a small synagogue in the city.<sup>37</sup> Wellsted goes on to relate the reasons for which many Jews chose to settle in Oman, suggesting that, on their way to India in 1828 CE, a group of Jews decided to stay in Muscat due to the presence of religious tolerance and coexistence as well as the job opportunities available in the city.<sup>38</sup> He also adds that no dress code or clothing designed to make them stand out was imposed on the Jews of Muscat in order for them to be easily recognised and discriminated against on the basis of their religion or ethnicity.<sup>39</sup> Wellsted emphasises the experience of coexistence the Jews of Oman enjoyed by describing their social status as ‘well-integrated into society.’ They moved freely all over the place and their lives were not restricted. Wellsted further notes that although the Jewish community was mostly involved in professions relating to silver, banking, and liquor [alcoholic drink] sales, they were allowed to work in various other trades as well.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that the reference to Ṣuḥār being a melting pot of different cultures and religions as well as a business hub for followers of various religions is also made by some Omani scholars. Of them is the prominent Ibādī scholar Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kindī (died in 508 AH/1115 CE). Shaykh al-Kindī points out in his famous juristic encyclopaedia, *Bayān ash-Shar*, ‘ that Ṣuḥār was a market for many Arabs, Christians, Jews, Magus, Hindus, Negroes, Persians, and others.<sup>41</sup>

In witness of the historic coexistence with Oman’s Jewish community, around two hundred Jewish bodies lie in the heart of Ṣuḥār in what is known now as *al-Jambadah* or *Bayt al-Yahūdī*, meaning the Jewish Cemetery.<sup>42</sup> Its gravestones still stand high with Hebrew inscriptions. At the entrance of the cemetery is a memorial wall, decorated in Hebrew characters, spelling out a number of Jewish names.<sup>43</sup> Speaking of Sayyid Sa‘īd b.

<sup>36</sup>Burzuk Shahriyār, *‘Ajā’ib Al-Hind: Barrih Wa Bahrihī* (UAE: Cultural Complex, 2000), 108-109; Andy, “Jews In Oman,” Blog, *Andy In Oman*, 2007, <https://andynoman.wordpress.com/2007/12/09/jews-in-oman/>

<sup>37</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia*, 155.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>41</sup>Khulūd Al-Khāṭirī, “The Maritime Omani Heritage in Ibādī Jurisprudence,” in *The Maritime Omani Heritage* (Muscat: The Omani Studies Centre, 2018), 9.

<sup>42</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Journey to Oman*, Trans., Moḥammed Amīn, 1st ed. (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1986), 56.

<sup>43</sup>M Paolo, “Monumental Evidence of The Ancient Jewish Community At Sohar,” *ARAM Periodical* 11, no. 1999-2000 (2000): 131-144, doi:10.2143/ARAM.11.1.504455, 131-144.

Sulṭān's governing policy, James Wellsted praised the Sayyid's allowance of religious freedom to all religious minorities including the Jews across his vast empire.<sup>44</sup>

### 5. Dialogue and Coexistence with Christians

Ever since the arrival of the Portuguese on the Arabian Peninsula, the waves of Christian expeditions and missions to Oman have not ceased. Prior to this, very little is known of the Christian presence in Oman. 'Nothing of a definite nature is known of early Christianity in Oman, and it was onto a scene of paganism that Islam first came there... [Hence] Christian attempts to make converts during the first thousand years of Islam in Oman were few,' Philips states.<sup>45</sup> However, it could be that a number of Christians coming from Yemen reached the Arabian coast to Khūr Rūrī, the Frankincense port, near the city of Ṣalālāh. They could have also reached the famous port cities of Ṣūr, Qalhāt, and Muscat. As a result, one Bishopric at least was built on what is now Oman.<sup>46</sup>

Although the main purpose of the many European powers coming to south-eastern Arabia was to obtain political and economic gains, these expeditions with their various Christian affiliations would bring with them missionaries who sought to proselytise for their own denominations and convert native people to Christianity.<sup>47</sup> The ruthless Portuguese invasion and 'oppressive' regime are no exception to this rule.<sup>48</sup> Over the course of their active presence in Oman, the Portuguese would bring with them Catholic missionaries and they would destroy mosques and establish their own places of worship in Omani lands.<sup>49</sup> The Portuguese built their churches and chapels in restored castles and forts, even having a cathedral in their headquarters in Muscat, which was once used as an arms store.<sup>50</sup>

Owing to the tough and vicious Portuguese invasion, religious dialogue and coexistence between them and the indigenous Omani Muslims suffered greatly and is

<sup>44</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia*.

<sup>45</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971), 23- 26.

<sup>46</sup>Spencer Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London: Longman, 1979).

<sup>47</sup>Samuel Zwemer, *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson, 1900), 320; Mohammed ash-Shaykh, "The Impact of The French Consul Correspondences with the Foreign Ministry On Omani-British Relations," in *The Omani-British Relations Conference* (Muscat: National Records and Archive Authority, 2018); Baṣīrah, *The Omani Role In Building The Human Civilization*, video, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8xINUOsCWY>

<sup>48</sup>Sha'bān Fārsī, *Zanzibar, Historical Accounts* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1980), 12.

<sup>49</sup>Amal al-Khaṣṣūrī, *Oman in the Writings of The European Travellers*, 1st ed. (Muscat: al-Waraq Printing House, 2017), 30; Sulimān al-Kiyūmī, "The Omani Role in Supporting the British Geographical Discoveries in East Africa," in *Omani-British Relations* (Muscat: National Records & Archives Authority, 2018).

<sup>50</sup>Hawwās Mas'ūdī, "Oman in the Eyes of French Travellers," in *Orientalism in Oman: A Vision and Analysis* (Muscat: al-Ghasham Printing House, 2012), 100.

‘believed to be one area of failure in Christian dialogue’ as Skinner argues.<sup>51</sup> A missionary report about Oman concludes by saying: ‘Though tolerant of other religions, they [Ibādī Omanis] appeared to me to be a more religious people ... Their ideas of Christianity must, in the past, have been derived from the Portuguese. These Romanists are styled ‘polytheists’ in the Arab history of Oman, and left behind them at least one monument of their Mariolatry in a chapel with an inscription to the Virgin, which still exists, though now used for very different purposes (probably a gun store, as later described by an American missionary), in one of the ruined Portuguese forts at Muscat.’<sup>52</sup>

Despite the atrocities committed by the Portuguese, the Omanis allowed room for dialogue when the Portuguese requested it, that is, when the Catholic Portuguese invaders were defeated in Muscat by the Ibādī Omani leader, Imām Nāṣir b. Murshid (elected in 1034 AH/1624 CE). They asked the Imām’s leader that they surrender and sign a treaty with him in order for them to be allowed to stay and live in Oman. Although having the upper hand and being in a strong position, the Imām’s leader accepted the invitation for a dialogue and to negotiate their existence on one precondition. The condition stipulated by the Imām’s leader was that the Portuguese would have to restore the *Shī‘ah* properties they had taken in Ṣuḥār. Finally, the treaty was signed and the Portuguese were given security and allowed to stay in Oman after agreeing to restore the *Shī‘ah* properties they took from them in Ṣuḥār.<sup>53</sup> This is also an example of tolerance and coexistence with other Muslim denominations. The fact that some theological differences exist between the two Islamic schools of thought, *Ibādīsm* and *Shī‘ism*, did not prevent the leader of the Omani army from caring about all Omani citizens and treating them equally in spite of their religious affiliations. Besides the signing of the aforementioned treaty with the Catholic Portuguese, Imām Nāṣir himself signed another treaty with the Protestant English, approving of their existence and protecting their religious freedom. The treaty, concluded in Ṣuḥār in 1646 CE, states: ‘That we [Christians] may have licence to exercise our own religion...’.<sup>54</sup>

After the complete expulsion of the Portuguese from Oman in 1650 CE, Henry Martyn was the first known Christian missionary to come to Oman in modern times. He arrived in Muscat in 1811 CE and was so renowned for his religious zeal that he proclaimed the motto ‘Let me burn out for God.’ Despite this religious zeal, Henry was well received and peacefully coexisted with the people of the land to the extent that he mastered Arabic and was able to translate the New Testament into Arabic.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup>Raymond Skinner, “Ibādīsm in Oman and Developments in the Field of Christian-Muslim Relationships” (Master’s Thesis, Durham University, 1995), 47.

<sup>52</sup>C. Haig, *Memories of the Life of General F. T. Haig*, 178- 181.

<sup>53</sup>Abdullah As-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat Al-A‘Yān Fī Sīrati Ahli ‘Umān* (Muscat: al-Istiḳāmah Bookshop, 1997), 2:10.

<sup>54</sup>Ian Skeet, *Oman before 1970, the End of an Era* (London: Faber, 1985), 212.

<sup>55</sup>Wendell Phillips, *‘umān-- Tārīkh Lahu Judhūr*, 1st ed. (Beirut: al-Dār al-‘Arabīyah lil-Mawsū‘āt, 2012), 373.

The Christian missionary Major-General Haig came to Oman and visited Muscat in the 1880s. He wrote a report describing what he witnessed when living with the Omanis: 'They are tolerant to other religions... The people generally were evidently pleased with the novel spectacle of an Englishman conversing with them on religious questions in their own language.'<sup>56</sup> In 1888, Bishop Mackey of Uganda called for the establishment of a Christian Mission in Oman, since he saw Muscat as 'The key to central Africa. I do not deny that the task is difficult; and the men selected for work in Muscat must be endowed with no small measure of the Spirit of Jesus, besides possessing such linguistic ability as to be able to reach not only the ears, but the very hearts of men. We need desperately six men, the pick of the English universities... The Arabs have helped us often, and have hindered us likewise. We owe them therefore a double debt, which I can see no more effective way of paying than by at once establishing a strong mission at their very headquarters – Muscat itself.'<sup>57</sup> The call to establish 'a strong mission' at the Omanis' headquarters, Muscat, was responded to by Bishop Thomas Valpy French who came to Muscat in 1891 CE to open a new mission field.<sup>58</sup> Despite French's short life in Muscat, just before his death, he was able to inspire two young American missionaries, Samuel Zwemer and James Cantine, to found The Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America in Oman in 1893.<sup>59</sup>

Subsequently, in 1909 CE, Dr Sharon Thoms, father of Dr Wells Thoms, started his missionary work as the 'first medical missionary to Oman.'<sup>60</sup> Dr Thoms was able to effectively intermingle with Omanis and his medical service was a means to win their hearts. This was recorded by another Christian missionary 35 years after Dr Thoms' death in 1913 CE, saying: 'Sharon Thoms was an ideal man for those pioneer days and his friendships, accumulated in the course of his travels through the country round, endure to this day, while in the towns of Muscat and Muttrah he was universally beloved. His death in January 1913 was a heavy blow to our work.'<sup>61</sup> This love was also proved by the local Omanis themselves, through the statement of an Omani woman who met his son, Dr Wells Thoms, 28 years after being treated by his father. When Dr Wells told her that Dr Sharon was his father, 'She actually wept for joy. She said that they had never known a man like him. His memory is still green even in far-off Nezwah!'<sup>62</sup> The unexpected accidental death of Dr Sharon while setting up a telephone line between Muscat and Maṭraḥ was also a heavy blow, not only to the missionary community but also to the local community. Thus, in memory of his life and in recognition of his service to Omanis, Sultan Sa'īd b. Taymūr

<sup>56</sup>C. Haig, *Memories of the Life of General F. T. Haig*, 178- 181.

<sup>57</sup>Samuel Zwemer, *Arabia, the Cradle of Islam*, 303.

<sup>58</sup>Raymond Skinner, "Ibāḍism in Oman and Developments in the Field of Christian-Muslim Relationships," 44.

<sup>59</sup>Amal al-Khansūrī, *Oman in the Writings of The European Travellers*, 1st ed. (Muscat: al-Waraq Printing House, 2017), 31; Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 27.

<sup>60</sup>Wendell Phillips, *'Umān-- Tārīkh Lahu Judhūr*, 377.

<sup>61</sup>C. Mylrea, "Muscat-Muttrah and Oman, Then and Now," *Neglected Arabia* no. 200 (1943): 3-10.

<sup>62</sup>Wells Thoms, "Over the Green Mountains in Oman," *Neglected Arabia* no. 191 (1941): 5.

donated a piece of land for the Mission's hospital to be named after Dr Sharon, titled The Sharon Thoms Memorial Hospital.<sup>63</sup>

Dr Sharon Thoms was a great source of inspiration to his young son Wells Thoms to return to Oman one day as a missionary doctor. Just prior to his death, he said to him: "Perhaps someday you will be a doctor here, and then if there is a mission hospital out here and there has been found an effective cure for leprosy you will be able to give them a home and treat them."<sup>64</sup> This fatherly bequest remained at the back of the son's mind for many years after his father's death, until he came back to Oman as a doctor to carry on his father's mission and fulfil his fatherly bequest. Upon being told this emotional story, Reverend Raymond Skinner, author of *Christians in Oman*, broke into tears.<sup>65</sup> Besides the father's bequest, the love that Dr Wells and his father had for Omanis is what pushed him to return to Oman, as he himself says: 'Many forces drew me back – my father's love of the people and enthusiasm for the country... but more than any other single thing, it was a pitiful group of lepers who used to huddle together outside the city wall of Matrah asking for alms'.<sup>66</sup>

Dr Wells Thoms is considered the single most famous American missionary doctor to have ever come to Oman. To this day, he is still well known by most Omanis and there are still people living who were personally treated by him. There are many examples of the coexistence and dialogue Dr Wells experienced while interacting with his host Omani community in general, and with Imām Muḥammad b. 'Abdullah al-Khalīlī in particular. Imām Muḥammad al-Khalīlī, the penultimate Omani Imām (died in 1954 CE), was a much-loved religious leader who ruled the interior of Oman for around 35 years. He was known for being very welcoming, lenient, and tolerant. The following account is given by Dr Wells Thoms himself. He narrates his first visit to the Imām, the religious and spiritual leader of the Ibāḍī Imāmāte. The story serves as a good example of a fruitful dialogue between the Muslims and the Christians. The account shows how respectful and welcoming the Ibāḍī Imām was with the Christian missionaries. In his account of meeting the Imām for the first time, Dr Wells Thoms says: '... The coffee and *ḥalwah* were next passed and then the rose water was sprinkled over us. While this was going on, he asked us numerous questions about our purpose in leaving our country to live and work in Muscat. When we answered him that Jesus, the Anointed one, whose followers we were, ordered his followers to go to all nations to teach men His doctrines, heal the sick and share with all men the good news of the *Injīl* (the Arabic word for the Gospel), he said, 'Do you believe that God is One?' When we said 'yes' he said, 'You are not an idolater or *kāfir*, you are 'the people of the book.' We believe you are mistaken in some of your doctrines but we respect you because you fear God, the Praised and Exalted One; therefore, you may proceed in safety

<sup>63</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 27.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>65</sup>Raymond Skinner, An Interview with Reverend Raymond Skinner at His House, Al Muatasim Said Al Maawali interview, in person (Tunbridge Wells, England, 2018).

<sup>66</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 27.

in our land. May God give you skill and wisdom to heal the sick man. I will send another guide to take you to your patient...’ This began a long and happy acquaintance with this most unusual Muslim spiritual leader. He lived very simply. He and his one wife and daughter lived in two or three rooms in part of the great round tower fort of Nizwah. His only visible possessions were a few worn rugs, two score books, a few mattresses, pillows and blankets, a rifle, a dagger and a few changes of raiment. He was known to be a just and strict disciplinarian... He was kind and sympathetic to the poor, orphans and widows... He himself was incorruptible and remained a poor man until the day of his death.’<sup>67</sup>

This multi-religious dialogue primarily demonstrates Omani generosity and the good reception, the Imām offered to his Christian guests. It also shows how spontaneous and transparent the Imām was by posing straightforward questions, which demonstrates his simplicity. Furthermore, the theological conversation and interfaith dialogue that followed shows, on the one hand, how well-versed each one of them was in his own theology. On the other hand, it demonstrates how proud they each were of their religion and beliefs. Despite the differences that each belief system holds, the Ibāḍī Imām explicitly expressed his respect to the missionary doctor, due to the latter’s fear of God, as the Imām says: ‘We believe you are mistaken in some of your doctrines, but we respect you because you fear God.’ Part of the Imām’s tolerance with the missionary doctor is that he not only gave him safety, security, and a personal guide to take him around in his territories, but he also prayed to God that he would be given the skill and wisdom to treat patients. All this good treatment resulted in a strong relationship between the two – a relationship described in the doctor’s report as ‘a long and happy acquaintance with this most unusual Muslim spiritual leader’. The missionary report goes on to speak of the Imām’s simple life, proving his argument by describing his few possessions. Dr Thoms also provides the reader of his report with the personal qualities of the Imām that amazed him, such as justice, strictness in implementing the law, and kindness and sympathy to the poor, orphans, and widows. Finally, Dr Wells Thoms concluded his report with this powerful and emotional description of the Imām: “He himself was incorruptible and remained a poor man until the day of his death.”<sup>68</sup>

The easy-going and tolerant nature of this Imām is further conveyed in a letter written by the wife of Dr Wells Thoms, Beth Thoms Dickson, who accompanied her husband on his second visit to see the Imām in 1952 CE. She wrote “...I was pleasantly surprised by his open, friendly, unostentatious manner...”<sup>69</sup> Despite the Arab and Islamic attitudes when dealing with unrelated woman, and despite being a woman coming from the West, the Imām received her in an ‘open, friendly, unostentatious manner.’

Then, Beth Thoms relates, in the same letter, an interesting story between the Imām and her husband, Dr Wells. The story represents the Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue in Oman and reflects the open-minded characteristics of the Imām with the Christian

<sup>67</sup>Wendell Phillips, *Oman, A History* (London: Longmans, 1967), 186- 188.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 188.

<sup>69</sup>Beth Thoms, *A Visit to Nizwa* (Kalamazoo, 1990), 1.

missionaries in his own Ibādī capital. The story reads: ‘One day when Wells was with the Imām he said to Wells: “You know the *Mullāh* [religious students] have complained to me about you, they don’t like Bible verses to be on patients’ cards and they are disturbed you are handing out Tracts. About the verses first. I asked the *Mullāh* who came to complain – ‘What does the verse say?’ He [the *Mullāh*] read, ‘The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ I said, ‘What’s wrong about that?’ He answered ‘It’s from the *Injīl*’ ‘Let it be’ I told him, ‘it only points to the Qur’ān – you can tell the people that’. In this account, the Imām tells Dr Wells Thoms about an event that took place between him and the *Mullāh*. In the story, the Imām defended what the missionaries did by acknowledging the Biblical statement written on the patient’s cards, ‘The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’. Moreover, the Imām explains that he sees no problem with putting a verse from the Bible on patients’ cards when he replied to the *Mullāh* ‘Let it be [i.e. from the *Injīl*]’. The Imām further asked the *Mullāh* to tell the laypeople, if they are still unhappy with the Biblical verse on their cards, then to tell them that it is from the Qur’ān. This might be a reference from the Imām to a similar verse in the Qur’ān that reads, ‘He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good.’<sup>70</sup>

‘Then about the tracts’, the Imām went on saying to Dr Thoms, ‘I suggest you sell them for a small sum instead of giving them away. Like any commodity in the *Sūq* if people buy, it’s their choice’. Beth Thoms comments on this by saying: ‘It was an amicable solution by a wise and tolerant leader.’<sup>71</sup>

In summary, the evidence of the top Ibādī leader being so tolerant can be seen from describing the Imām as being ‘open,’ ‘friendly,’ and having an ‘unostentatious manner.’ This is further proven by the Imām approving Dr Thoms to put the Bible verses on the patients’ cards and asking the *Mullāh* to say that they are from the Qur’ān. Although the Ibādī Imām fundamentally disagrees with Dr Wells Thoms in some Christian theologies and believes that Dr Wells is ‘mistaken’ in some of his doctrines, as quoted formerly, he allowed for the Bible Tracts to be sold and resold in the Ibādī capital city, Nizwá. This suggestion of his was described by Mrs Beth Thoms as ‘an amicable solution by a wise and tolerant leader.’

## 6. Another Interesting Story with a *Mullāh*

It was related that when Dr Wells Thoms came to Nizwá to treat the Imām, Shaykh Saif b. Rāshid al-Ma‘walī, a student of the Imām and late Ibādī scholar (died in 1422 AH/2001 CE), objected to it, saying to the Imām: ‘How come you let a non-believer enter the stronghold of Muslims, Nizwá Fort?! And how come you let a non-believer touch your body and you are the Imām and leader of Muslims?!’ The Imām understood the amount of enthusiasm that his young student had and, therefore, he asked him to step aside. Dr Wells Thoms entered the fort and treated the Imām.

<sup>70</sup>Qur’ān (Dubai: Muḥmmad bin Rāshid Holy Qur’ān Printing Centre, 2016), 45.

<sup>71</sup>Beth Thoms, *A Visit to Nizwa* (Kalamazoo, 1990), 3.

A few decades later, after the Imām's death, Shaykh Saif himself became old and sick. He needed some urgent treatment and so travelled to India for that purpose. One night, while Shaykh Saif was asleep in an Indian hospital, he saw the Imām in a dream smiling at him and saying: 'Oh Saif, you were condemning us for being treated by a non-believer and you are now yourself being treated by non-believer, and you are allowing them to touch your body!' Thereupon, Shaykh Saif got up from his sleep happy and relieved with the dream, saying: 'We were young at that time and carried away by our enthusiasm.'<sup>72</sup>

### 7. Dialogue and Coexistence with Hindus

The presence of some religious minorities over the course of Omani history is not confined to *Ahl al-Kitāb*, the People of the Scripture, namely, the Jews and the Christians. In reality, there are other small religious minorities living in Oman side by side with their fellow Muslim citizens, giving Omani society a unique social fabric and religious spectrum. This includes the Magus, members of an ancient Persian religion, as referred to earlier, as well as those who are locally called *al-Bānyāns*. *Al-Bānyāns* are Hindu traders who have Indian origins and have lived in Oman for generations.<sup>73</sup> They made their living from trade and business. More specifically, they are famous for importing foodstuffs from India for sale in Oman. They are still living in Oman and have not been forced to convert to the religion of the majority, Islam, despite the fact that many of them have chosen to embrace Islam. Those who chose to convert to Islam chose for themselves the title of *aṣ-Ṣā'igh* as a surname, because of their proficiency in the gold and silver industries.<sup>74</sup> *Al-Bānyāns* were allowed to peacefully coexist and establish business partnerships with Omani locals. More importantly, the Hindu *Bānyāns* were also allowed to practise their religion, Hinduism, and further allowed to have their own places of worship,<sup>75</sup> as well as their own funeral places in Muscat and Ṣuḥār.<sup>76</sup> A fuller account of the religious tolerance and life of coexistence guaranteed to *Bānyāns* was recounted by the British explorer James Wellsted.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, in appreciation of their role in society, many of them have been granted full Omani citizenship and are known today for their wealth and business across the country. Moreover, their religious leaders have been given the title 'Shaykh,' which is usually used for religious scholars of Islam.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Ṣulṭān al-Ma'walī, "Ash-Shaykh Saif b. Rāshid Al-Ma'walī: His Life and Legacy," (BA, Islamic Sciences Institute, 2005), 45.

<sup>73</sup>Anton Abdu, "The Omani Civilizational Development as Recorded by Past and Contemporary Orientalists," in *Orientalism in Oman* (Muscat: al-Ghasham Printing House, 2012).

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Hilāl al-Ḥajrī, *British Travel-Writing on Oman: Orientalism Reappraised*, 1st ed. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2006), 152.

<sup>76</sup>J. Peterson, "Oman's Diverse Society: Northern Oman," *The Middle East Journal* 58, no. 1 (2004): 39.

<sup>77</sup>James Wellsted, *Travels In Arabia*, 29-31.

<sup>78</sup>BBC, "Faith in Oman," Ep. 1., *BBC World Service*, 2014, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01wgcd3>



The depth of the Hindu *Bānyāns*' coexistence in Oman extends back as far as the seventeenth century. This was manifested in the writing of the German traveller Camphor, who visited Muscat for only two days in 1688 CE. Despite the short two-day visit to Muscat, the presence of the *Bānyāns* was visible enough to draw Camphor's attention and get him to record the following observation when describing the city of Muscat: 'It was resided, beside the Arabs, by the *Bānyāns* as well as the Jews.'<sup>79</sup> In another account of Camphor's description of Muscat's demographic composition, he pointed out the extent to which *Bānyāns* were very close to the ruling elite when he mentioned that they were entrusted to be the translators and interpreters for the ruling family.<sup>80</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

It has been established by now that the historic Omani experience of multi-religious coexistence and dialogue is not a reaction to foreign pressure or a stronger external authority, nor is it following a global fashion or trend. It is also not the result of weakness or inability on the Omani part. It has been established over the course of this paper that the Ibādī nation of Oman coexisted with and enjoyed dialogue with other religious minorities, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, when they were in a position of power and absolute control. The paper set out to prove that this bright experience is a natural result of the principles and values that the people of Oman have embraced over the course of Oman's history. As established in this paper, these principles have been witnessed and well documented by the Western travellers, explorers, political agents, tourists, missionaries, and more. Among these Omani values are the values and principles of justice, friendliness, honesty, hospitality, simplicity, tolerance, overlooking racial and ethnic stratification, and protecting other religious minorities. These deeply rooted principles and historic examples are what has made Oman an oasis of peace and tranquillity in the midst of conflicting powers in an increasingly hostile world. This is also what has led Oman to play a mediating role, bridging the gap and bringing the different disputing parties together to find a middle ground and a working relationship, rather than a conflicting one. The paper also proposes that the world should not look at Oman as just a regional mediating entity that they resort to when things get complicated. Instead, the world should try to learn from the Omani experience and the Omani values upon which this multi-religious experience of dialogue and coexistence is based. On the other hand, the modern-day Sultanate of Oman should not be content with having its own unique experience, rather it should try its best to export this experience to the rest of the world.

<sup>79</sup>E. Camphor, *Muscat in 1688*, 1st ed. (Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1984), 14.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

### Bibliography

- Abdu, Anton. "The Omani Civilizational Development As Recorded by Past and Contemporary Orientalists." In *Orientalism in Oman*. Muscat: al-Ghasham Printing House, 2012.
- Andy, Andy. "Jews in Oman." Blog. *Andy in Oman*, 2007. <https://andyinoman.wordpress.com/2007/12/09/jews-in-oman/>
- Atheer. "Brief History of the Relationship between Oman and Baluchistan." *Atheer*, 2019. <https://www.atheer.om/en/7162/brief-history-of-the-relationship-between-oman-and-baluchistan/#ixzz5d2BkrDGH>
- Al Barwani, Thuwaybah., and Tayfour Albeely. "The Omani Family: Strengths and Challenges." *Marriage and Family Review* 41, no. 2007 (2007): 119-142.
- Basirah. *The Omani Role in Building the Human Civilization*. Video, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8xINUOsCWY>
- Brence, Laila. "Amr Bin Al-Aas." *Defence Journal* 19, no. 7 (2016): 69-70. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1773054187/fulltextPDF/DD7DBB675E564CBFPQ/1?accountid=27575>
- Al-Būsa'īdī, Wardah. "Oman under the Lens of the British Travelers from the Seventeenth until the Nineteenth Centuries." In *Omani-British Relations*. Muscat: National Records and Archives Authority, 2018.
- Camphor, E. *Muscat in 1688*. 1st ed. Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1984.
- Fārsī, Sha'bān. *Zanzibar, Historical Accounts*. Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1980.
- Haig, C. *Memories of the Life of General F. T. Haig*. London: Marshall Brothers, 1902.
- Al-Ḥajrī, Hilāl. *British Travel-Writing on Oman: Orientalism Reappraised*. 1st ed. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2006.
- Harrison, Paul. *Doctor in Arabia*. Translated by Mohammed Amin. 1st ed. Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1989.
- Heude, William. *A Voyage up The Persian Gulf and a Journey Overland from India to England in 1817*. London: Spottiswoode, 1819.
- Al-Hinā'ī, Sālim. "A Telephone Interview." al-Mu'taṣim Sa'īd al-Ma'walī Interview. In person. Sultan Qaboos University, 2019.
- Al-Ḥusaynī, Sulaymān. *Evangelical Missions to Oman and the Contemporary Islam-Christianity Relationship*. London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2006.
- Al-Khalīlī, Aḥmed. *Liqā'Āt Samāḥat Ash-Shaykh*. 1st ed. Muscat: al-Anfāl Bookshop, 2008.

- Al-Khalīlī, Sa‘īd. *Tamhīd Qawā‘Id Al-Īmān*. Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1986.
- Al-Khanṣūrī, Amal. *Oman in the Writings of the European Travelers*. 1st ed. Muscat: al-Waraq Printing House, 2017.
- Al-Khāṭirī, Khulūd. “The Maritime Omani Heritage in Ibādī Jurisprudence.” In *The Maritime Omani Heritage*. Muscat: The Omani Studies Centre, 2018.
- Al-Kiyūmī, Sulimān. “The Omani Role in Supporting the British Geographical Discoveries in East Africa.” In *Omani-British Relations*. Muscat: National Records and Archives Authority, 2018.
- Mas‘ūdī, Ḥawwās. “Oman in the Eyes of French Travelers.” In *Orientalism In Oman: A Vision and Analysis*. Muscat: al-Ghasham Printing House, 2012.
- Al-Ma‘walī, Ṣulṭān. “Ash-Shaykh Saif b. Rāshid Al-Ma‘Walī: His Life and Legacy.” BA, Islamic Sciences Institute, 2005.
- Mignan, Robert. *A Winter Journey through Russia, the Caucasian Alps and Georgia*. London: Rare Books Club, 1839.
- Miles, Samuel. *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*. 6th ed. London: Harrison and Sons, 1919.
- Mylrea, C. “Muscat-Mutrah and Oman, Then and Now.” *Neglected Arabia* no. 200 (1943): 3-10.
- An-Nīsābūrī, Muslim. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ at-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2004.
- Paolo, M. “Monumental Evidence of the Ancient Jewish Community at Sohar.” *ARAM Periodical* 11, no. 1999-2000 (2000): 131-144. doi:10.2143/ARAM.11.1.504455.
- Peterson, J. “Oman's Diverse Society: Northern Oman.” *The Middle East Journal* 58, no. 1 (2004): 39.
- Phillips, Wendell. *Journey to Oman*. Translated By Moḥammed Amīn. 1st ed. Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1986.
- Phillips, Wendell. *Oman, A History*. London: Longmans, 1967.
- . *‘Umān-- Tārīkh Lahu Judhūr*. 1st ed. Beirut: al-Dār al-‘Arabīyah lil-Mawsū‘āt, 2012.
- . *Unknown Oman*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971.
- Salāmah, Ibrāhīm. “James Wellsted's Travels In Oman.” In *Omani-British Relations*. Muscat: National Records and Archives Authority, 2018.
- As-Sālimī, ‘Abdullah. *Kashf Al-Haqīqah*. 2nd ed. Muscat: aḍ-Ḍamrī Bookshop, 1991.
- . *Tuḥfat Al-A‘Yān Fī Sīrati Ahli ‘Umān*. Muscat: al-Istiḳāmah Bookshop, 1997.

- Shahriyār, Burzuk. *'Ajā'ib Al-Hind: Barrih Wa Bahrihī*. UAE: Cultural Complex, 2000.
- Ash-Shaykh, Mohammed. "The Impact of the French Consul Correspondences with the Foreign Ministry on Omani-British Relations." In *The Omani-British Relations Conference*. Muscat: National Records and Archive Authority, 2018.
- As-Siyābī, Aḥmed. *Insights into the Life of Imām Al-Julandā b. Mas'ud*. Video, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01PkxtGC-3M&t=657s>
- . *The Role of Omanis in Building the Human Civilization*. Video, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8xINUOsCWY>
- Skeet, Ian. *Oman before 1970, the End of an Era*. London: Faber, 1985.
- Skinner, Raymond. "Ibāḍism in Oman and Developments in the Field of Christian-Muslim Relationships." Master's Dissertation, Durham University, 1995.
- Thesiger, Wilfred. *Arabian Sands*. Translated By Ibrahim Mar'i. 8th ed. Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2010.
- Thomas, Betram. *Arabia Felix*. Translated By Mohammed Ameen. 1st ed. Muscat: Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, 1981.
- Thoms, Beth. *A Visit to Nizwa*. Kalamazoo, 1990.
- Thoms, Wells. "Over the Green Mountains in Oman." *Neglected Arabia* no. 191 (1941).
- Trimingham, Spencer. *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*. London: Longman, 1979.
- Wellsted, James. *Travels In Arabia*. London: Dār Al Sāqī, 2002.
- Zwemer, Samuel. *Arabia, The Cradle of Islam*. Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson, 1900.
- . "Notes on Oman." *National Geographic*, no. 1911 (1911): 89-98.
- . "Three Journeys in Northern Oman." *The Geographical Journal* 19 (1902).