

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FROM *SŪRAH AL-KAHF* FOR  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAMIC IDENTITY OF  
MUSLIM YOUTH IN CANADA

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to derive guiding principles from *Sūrah al-Kahf* to provide an encompassing framework for Muslim youth in Canada to preserve and develop their Islamic identity. Muslims in Canada are a unique population with an array of experiences and backgrounds united by a shared Islamic identity. Although Canada is often recognised as a multicultural nation allowing religious freedoms on a personal level, this multiculturalism has been criticised as being extremely liberal, accommodating the needs of religious minorities only if they conform to a Western secular context of religion. This is in direct contrast to the Islamic identity defined by its salient characteristics of a fundamental belief system, a united link to a global *ummah*, and an encompassing nature, making it inherently influential in all aspects of a Muslim's private and public life. The changing dynamic of the Muslim population in Canada and the importance of identity development at an early age results in the primary focus on Muslim youth. Muslim youth in Canada face a variety of threats in preserving and developing their Islamic identity. The most significant threats include peer pressure, assimilation, materialism, corrupt desires, religious doubt, loss of religion in society, and Islamophobia. The study begins with an introduction to the Islamic identity, an evaluation of the current state of Muslim youth in Canada, and background of *Sūrah al-Kahf*. Then, an inductive approach was used to analyse the four major narratives of the *sūrah*: the companions of the cave, the companion of the two gardens, Mūsa and Khiḍr, and the narrative of Dhū al-Qarnayn. This was done through a methodological process of gathering, comparing, and analysing the discussions of the *mufasssirūn* in both classical and modern *tafāsīr* in relation to the four main narratives. Through this process, the study extracted seven guiding principles for developing the Islamic identity of Muslim youth in Canada. These guiding principles deal specifically with the major threats faced by Muslim youth in preserving their Islamic identity. Through the first narrative, the companions of the cave, four guiding principles were **extracted relating** to the threats of peer pressure, assimilation, and Islamophobia. The second narrative of the companion of the two gardens provided a principle in dealing with **materialism and corrupt desires**. The third narrative of Mūsa and Khiḍr was the source for a principle dealing with the threats of religious doubt and the loss of religion in society. The fourth and final narrative of Dhū al-Qarnayn personified the application of all the previous principles illustrating the importance of providing the Muslim youth with an exemplary role model. These seven guiding principles provide applicable solutions that can be used to protect and develop the Islamic identity against specific threats. This study serves as a crucial step in finding solutions to the challenges and threats faced by Muslim youth as minorities in preserving their Islamic identity. These principles, if followed sincerely, can empower Muslim youth by transforming them into confident and successful leaders through their Islamic identity, ensuring their **success in both this world and the hereafter**.

## ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استخراج مبادئ توجيهية من سورة الكهف لتقديم خطة عملية للحفاظ على الهوية الإسلامية عند أبناء المسلمين في كندا وتنميتها، في ظل عيشهم في مجتمع متعدد الأعراق والثقافات والخبرات توحدهم الهوية الإسلامية المشتركة. تعتبر كندا دولة متعددة الثقافات تسمح بالحريات الدينية على المستوى الشخصي، إلا أنها انتقدت باعتبارها تعددية ثقافية ليبرالية، لا تلبّي احتياجات الأقليات الدينية إلا إذا كانت تتوافق مع السياق العلماني الغربي للدين، وهو ما يتناقض مع خصائص الهوية الإسلامية البارزة من العقيدة، ورابطة الأخوة بين أبنائها، واستيعاب حياة المسلم كلها، بما فيها مظاهر شخصيته. يواجه أبناء المسلمين في كندا مجموعة من التهديدات في الحفاظ على الهوية الإسلامية وتنميتها ومن أهم هذه التهديدات ضغوط الرفاق، والاندماج الثقافي والاستيعاب، والماديات، وفتنة الشهوات والشبهات، وفقدان الدين في المجتمع، والإسلاموفوبيا (كراهية الإسلام). بدأت الدراسة بالتعريف بالهوية الإسلامية، وتقييم الوضع الحالي لأبناء المسلمين في كندا، ومقدمات عن سورة الكهف، اتبع البحث المنهج الاستقرائي بتتبع مضمون المادة العلمية. واتبع المنهج التحليلي بتحليل القصص الأربعة الرئيسية في السورة، وهي: قصة أصحاب الكهف، وصاحب الجنتين، وسيدنا موسى عليه السلام والخضر، وقصة ذو القرنين، وقد تم ذلك من خلال جمع ومقارنة وتحليل أقوال المفسرين من كتب التفاسير القديمة والحديثة فيما يتعلق بالقصص الأربعة. ومن خلال هذه العملية، تمكن البحث من استخراج سبعة مبادئ توجيهية لتطوير الهوية الإسلامية لأبناء المسلمين في كندا وتختص هذه المبادئ بالتهديدات الرئيسية التي يواجهها أبناء المسلمين في الحفاظ على الهوية الإسلامية، حيث تم استخراج أربعة مبادئ توجيهية تتعلق بتهديدات ضغوط الرفاق، والاندماج الثقافي والاستيعاب والإسلاموفوبيا من القصة الأولى. واستخراج مبدأ يتعلق بتهديد الماديات، وفتنة الشهوات من القصة الثانية. واستخراج مبدأ يتعلق بتهديدي فتنة الشبهات وفقدان الدين في المجتمع من القصة الثالثة. وقد جمعت القصة الرابعة جميع المبادئ السابقة فهي مثال لكيفية تطبيقها وتنفيذها، كما وتوضح أهمية الأسوة الحسنة لأبناء المسلمين في كندا. توفر هذه المبادئ التوجيهية السبعة حلولاً قابلة للتطبيق لحماية الهوية الإسلامية وتنميتها ضد عدة تهديدات. يعتبر هذا البحث خطوة مهمة في البدء بإيجاد حلول لهذه التهديدات التي يواجهها أبناء المسلمين في البلاد الغير إسلامية بصورة عامة، وفي كندا على وجه الخصوص. وهو ما سيؤدي إذا اتبعت هذه المبادئ بإخلاص، إلى أن يصبح أبناء المسلمين قادة واثقين بحويتهم الإسلامية، وناجحين في الحياة الدنيا وفي الآخرة.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in Qur'ān and Sunnah Studies.

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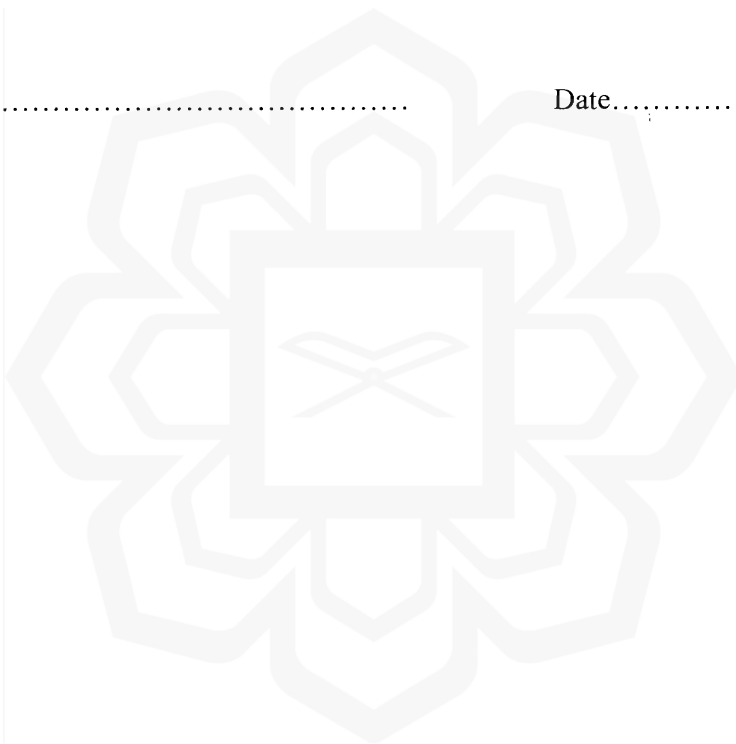
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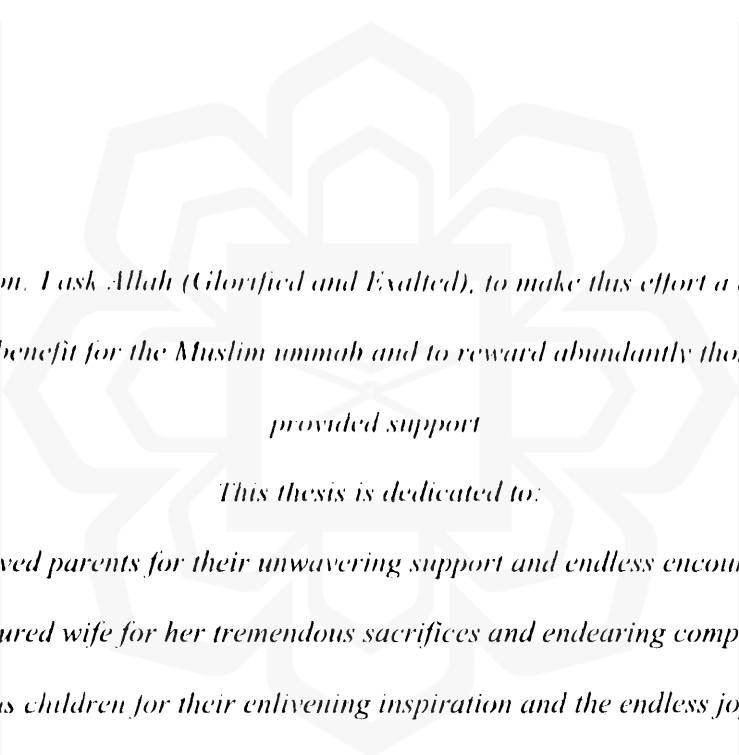
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*Dedication. I ask Allah (Glorified and Exalted), to make this effort a continuous source of benefit for the Muslim ummah and to reward abundantly those that have provided support*

*This thesis is dedicated to:*

*My beloved parents for their unwavering support and endless encouragement.*

*My treasured wife for her tremendous sacrifices and endearing companionship.*

*My precious children for their enlivening inspiration and the endless joy they bring.*

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## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

هـ	ب	ح	kh	ش	Sh	غ	Gh	ن	N
ط	B	د	D	ص	ṣ	ف	F	هـ	H
ث	T	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	Q	و	W
ت	Th	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	ك	K	ي	Y
ج	J	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	L		
ح	h	س	s	ع	ʿ	م	M		

Short Vowels	
ـَ	a
ـِ	i
ـُ	u

Long Vowels	
ـَـ	ā
ـِـ	ī
ـُـ	ū

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The rhetorical grandeur of the Qur'ān has been an immensely captivating subject from its initial revelation fourteen centuries ago. Its authoritative literary distinction in both *balāghah* (eloquence) and *faṣāḥah* (articulacy) has been the subject of study by scholars of all backgrounds, religions, languages, places, and times. The epitome of this literal mastery is outlined in one of the most beautiful verses of the Qur'ān explaining Islamic identity, or what it means to be a Muslim:

﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَاتَّخَذَ  
اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا﴾

And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (himself) to Allah (i.e., follows Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism); and he is a *Muhsin* (a good-doer). And follows the religion of Ibrāhīm (Abraham) *Hanīfah* (Islamic Monotheism - to worship none but Allah Alone). And Allah did take Ibrāhīm (Abraham) as a *Khalīl* (an intimate friend)!<sup>1</sup>

This verse summarizes the identity of a Muslim through three vital characteristics. The first is an internal submission to the Creator which is the essence of faith in the heart. The second is an external submission of the limbs through righteous deeds and actions. Finally, the third is a commitment to follow the path of Islamic Monotheism as the Messengers were commanded. This includes following closely the

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*, 4:125

last Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as he himself represents the path of Abraham (peace be upon him).

As the Muslim *ummah* (global community) today faces challenges on both micro and macro levels, this characterization of Islamic identity is crucial. Arguably, it is the subset population of the youth, especially as minorities, who face the greatest threats to their identities.<sup>2</sup> The external pressures faced by the Muslim community, specifically the youth in the formation and preservation of their Islamic identity, are tremendous. In the Province of Quebec for example, Asmahan Mansour, an 11-year-old Muslim girl, was ejected from a soccer tournament simply for wearing the *ḥijāb* (a Muslim headscarf or veil).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, a group of girls were expelled from a martial arts tournament in Montreal for wearing a headscarf.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, the Quebec Federation of Taekwondo insisted on banning headscarves under helmets for all competitors.<sup>5</sup> These notions of misguided anxieties towards Muslims are experienced by many youth in Canada. Of these the most prevalent are racism, Islamophobia, and peer pressure.<sup>6</sup>

The guidance of the Qur'ān is timeless and *Sūrah al-Kahf* is filled with relevant knowledge in developing and protecting this identity. It is recommended to be read weekly as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Whoever recites *Sūrah al-Kahf* on Friday will have a light between this Friday and the next.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Abdullah A. Omar, “Islamic Identity in the Canadian Multicultural Context,” *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2012): 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jasmin Zine, “Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity,” *Anthropology Education Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 4 (2001): 404.

<sup>7</sup> Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, Taḥqīq Muḥammad 'Abdul Qādir al-'Aṭā, (Bayrūt, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2003), Vol 3, 353, Ḥadīth no. 5996. Classified as authentic by al-Albānī.

Not only is this *sūrah* everlastingly relevant but is also prescribed to be memorized and internalized during times of extreme tribulations as the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“If anyone learns by heart the first ten verses of the *Sūrah al-Kahf*, he will be protected from the *Dajjal*.”<sup>8</sup>

The four narratives in *Sūrah al-Kahf* contribute to the development of the Islamic identity and its three characteristics: internal submission, external actions, and following an example or leader. The first narrative of the companions of the cave, demonstrates specifically how youth can uphold and develop their identities in the most difficult of times and circumstances. The second narrative of the companion of the two gardens, reflects the trials and temptations of materialism as a significant threat to the Islamic identity. The third narrative of Mūsā and Khidr (peace be upon them) signifies the value and importance of sound knowledge which is essential to fulfil the second tenet of the Islamic identity, righteous actions. Finally, the story of Dhū al-Qarnayn portrays the importance of sound and sincere leadership along with its potential impact. These four narratives in *Sūrah al-Kahf* possess a wealth of guidance related to the Islamic identity. Appropriate research must be undertaken to extract principles providing a practical framework for identity development. That is precisely what this study aims to do by deriving guiding principles from *Sūrah al-Kahf* for the development of the Islamic identity of Muslim youth in Canada.

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<sup>8</sup> Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Sahīḥ Muslim*, Taḥqīq Naẓar bin Muḥammad, (Riyāḍh, Dar Ṭaybah, 2006), Vol 1, 363, Ḥadīth no. 257.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Canada has always been known on the world stage as a tolerant and multicultural nation. However, this liberal multiculturalism has been criticized as being designed for well-integrated European ethnic groups inherently unsympathetic towards fostering the Islamic identity.<sup>9</sup> In the middle of this cultural and religious infusion are the Muslim youth. They experience varying challenges and degrees of difficulty in preserving their Islamic identity and practicing certain aspects of their religion.<sup>10</sup> This is reflected in the notion that one of the primary concerns of Muslim parents in the West regarding their children is their religious identity.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, there is a need now, more than ever, for guidance in developing and preserving the Islamic identity of Muslim youth as minorities.<sup>12</sup>

There has been an abundance of research on Muslim minorities residing in Western liberal democracies particularly after the events of 9/11. While the concept of identity construction along with the pressures and challenges faced by Muslim youth has been repeatedly addressed, little research has been done to build on this. In relation to the Islamic identity, this study aims to analyse a *sūrah* from the most vital source of guidance for Muslims, the Qur'ān.

Until now, to the best knowledge of the researcher, there has not been any specific study attempting to extract guiding principles of Islamic identity development as outlined in *Sūrah al-Kahf*. This study will attempt to extricate these principles from one of the most important and relevant *suwar* (plural of *sūrah*) of the Qur'ān, especially

<sup>9</sup> Omar, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Zame, 401.

<sup>11</sup> Osman Umarji, "Will My Children Be Muslim? The Development of Religious Identity in Young People," Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research (March 23, 2020). · <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/osman-umarji/will-my-children-be-muslim-the-development-of-religious-identity-in-young-people/> · (accessed 25 April, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

for Muslim youth. It will attempt to methodologically lay the foundation for a framework of identity development for Muslim minorities that could be cemented through future research.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) What does the concept of Islamic identity refer to?
- 2) What is the current state of Muslim Youth in Canada and what are the major challenges they face in preserving the Islamic identity?
- 3) What principles are presented in *Sūrah al-Kahf* that enable the development of the Islamic identity?
- 4) How can these principles offer solutions to the main challenges faced by Muslim youth in Canada in developing their Islamic Identity?

### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- 1) To define the concept of Islamic identity.
- 2) To understand the current state of Muslim youth in Canada in relation to the Islamic identity.
- 3) To extract guiding principles from *Sūrah al-Kahf* to preserve and develop the Islamic identity.
- 4) To present a framework for these guiding principles that could help Muslim youth in Canada to preserve and develop their Islamic identity.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH:**

The Muslim diaspora in Canada is a diverse and multicultural population. Research has demonstrated however, that the challenges they face are similar in nature.<sup>13</sup> This is especially true for the subset population of youth. The difficulties they face in developing and preserving their identities are shared between them despite their diversities. This study will provide principles from one of the most relevant *suwar* of the Qur'ān for Muslims, regardless of their geographical locations or time in history. These principles can then provide a practical framework through which the Islamic identity can be nurtured and developed. These guiding principles from *Sūrah al-Kahf* can help to empower Muslim youth in facing the immense pressures, challenges, and threats to their unique Islamic identity today. The significance of this study can be far reaching as it does not have to be limited to just a specific population in Canada. It can be expanded or generalized to apply to Muslim minorities everywhere. Potentially, it could be of immense value to any individual seeking the means to develop their faith and strengthen their identity, particularly during turbulent or challenging times.

## **1.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The proposed study is not without its limitations. The subjects of analysis in the study are limited to a specific subset of the population, the youth. This is because the youth are the future of any given society. This is also because identity formation is often associated with youth. Identities are usually formed at younger ages when we are still developing as individuals. A second limitation is geographical in nature as the study aims to analyse youth in Canada. These are however necessary limitations. For the study

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<sup>13</sup> Zine, 399.

to contribute positively to the current body of research a specific approach must be taken. It is impossible to study all subsets of a population at a given time in multiple geographical locations each varying in culture, tradition, and environment.

The binding theme remains the profound chapter of *al-Kahf*. Any significant findings and principles will potentially be universal in relation to time and place. This means that the results and benefits may be limited in the context of this study to Muslim youth in Canada, but can be universally generalized to any population of any country. This is due entirely to the timeless nature of the Qur'ān as it is a guidance for all of mankind until the Last Day.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this research study is critical to its ability to present effective and relevant findings. This is because the study aims to apply the Qur'ān to the context of a Western postmodern society. Due to this, a research design involving a diverse approach must be taken. An inductive approach will first be taken by building on previous research discussing the construct of the Islamic identity in the West. A coherent framework will be theorized through this inductive research to understand the intricacies of identity, and more specifically the Islamic identity of young Muslims in Canada. A structured evaluation of primary and secondary Western sources commenting on the Islamic identity, specifically in relation to Muslim youth in Canada, will uncover the notions that surround this construct. Only then can the second step be taken in extracting principles to develop identity. That is to say that without knowing the current state extremely well, suggestions and frameworks to improve that state cannot be given. Once this is achieved, an analytical method will be used to examine *Sūrah al-Kahf* itself. This will be done by gathering, comparing, and analysing the

discussions of *mufassirūn* (scholars of Qur'ānic exegesis) in both classical and modern books of *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'ān). Research of *tafāsīr* (books of Qur'ānic exegesis) and related commentaries will provide material needed to absorb completely the intricacies of this *sūrah*. This extensive and exhaustive process will identify and extract principles that can serve to guide the development of the Islamic identity in different contexts. Through this multidimensional methodology, the research objectives will be met not only building on previous works but also contributing to the development of a vital and often overlooked construct, the Islamic identity.

The proposed research is primarily library-based and will accommodate qualitative research methods. Inductive, analytical, and interpretive approaches will complement each other in the collection and analysis of data. The second chapter will make use of existing studies revolving around the theme of identity. The content will be analysed to reach a coherent definition of the term along with its function and importance. The third chapter will make use of historical data along with case studies dealing with Muslim youth in Canada. This data will be collected from Western literature, primarily, but not limited to Canada. Finally, the fourth chapter will utilize and collect relevant data on *Sūrah al-Kahf* from classical and contemporary collections of *tafāsīr* including, but not limited to, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-‘Sadī, and al-Shinqīṭī. A comparative analysis of these works uncovering the depths of this chapter will help in extracting related guiding principles for the development of the Islamic identity.

## 1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW:

This study proposes to deal with two complementing themes: the notion of the Islamic identity and guiding principles for its development. As a result, the literature reviewed also reflects these two constructs. First, the very concept of the Islamic identity must be explored and understood and only then can guiding principles for its development be established.

In his article, "Islamic Identity in the Canadian Multicultural Context," Abdullah Omar explores the concept of the Islamic Identity within the Canadian multicultural context.<sup>14</sup> He begins with a discussion of the concept of Canadian multiculturalism and its relation to the development of the Islamic Identity. The article then presents core elements of the Islamic identity which include the testimony of faith, a shared belonging to a global community, and a shared lexicon of expressions using the Arabic language. It concludes with outlining some of the external pressures such as Islamophobia and racism, faced by young Muslims in developing and preserving these identities. This article is extremely valuable to the proposed study. It gives insight to the notion of the Islamic identity in a Canadian context. The definition of the term identity itself has been discussed and detailed as characteristics that make an individual or group unique. Major challenges facing Muslim youth in Canada in building and preserving these identities exemplify the salient contribution of his study. There has however not been any discussion or insight regarding the process of developing and sustaining these identities.

<sup>14</sup> Abdullah A. Omar, "Islamic Identity in the Canadian Multicultural Context", *Cultural and Pedagogical Inquiry*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2012).

This process has been subsequently presented in a study carried out by the Yaqeen Institute titled, “The development of Religious Identity in Young People.”<sup>15</sup> The concern of the religious identity of young Muslims in the West is specifically addressed. Its approach is inherently unique as it discusses not these identities themselves, rather the process through which they are formed. Identity is first discussed as an abstract term and meaning is then given to it in a methodological process. Behaviours, environment, and cultural contexts are all discussed in providing critical background for the formation of these identities. Most of the focus remains on the concept of socialization and its contribution to identity development. This includes parents, peers, institutional and cultural socialization, all of which undoubtedly play a vital role in the construction of the identity. It is concluded that the greatest factor contributing to this development is socialization, more specifically, parents. This study provides highly relevant research based on Western academic theories including both Muslim and non-Muslim sources. While this may seem like a limitation it may be what heightens its relevance specifically within a Western framework. This is critical when dealing with identity formation of Muslim youth in Canada. The study however limits its discussion to the formulation of the identity. The natural progression of providing guiding principles for the development of this identity awaits us.

In his book, *Islam in the West: Beyond Integration*, Zijad Delic delves into the issue of the Canadian Muslim identity.<sup>16</sup> The issue of integration and assimilation are key principles in understanding and developing the Islamic identity. While dealing with the notion of Canada as a generally inclusive society, the author

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<sup>15</sup> Osman Umarji, “Will My Children Be Muslim? The Development of Religious Identity in Young People,” Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research (March 23, 2020). <<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/osman-umarji/will-my-children-be-muslim-the-development-of-religious-identity-in-young-people>> (accessed 25 April, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Zijad Delic, *Islam in the West: beyond Integration* (Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press, 2018).

reiterates that many new minority groups follow a classical pattern of either isolation or assimilation. He then presents a third alternative, constructive integration. This is a fundamentally Canadian concept of social and cultural integration allowing minority groups to fully engage with their society. The act of an encompassing assimilation is perhaps one of the key factors contributing to specific ethnic, cultural and religious groups losing part of what they came with. Once again Delic's book deals with a specific part of identity formation in relation to integration and assimilation. He does not touch upon how these identities can be preserved and developed specifically by Muslim youth.

Another related empirical study outlining the integration of Muslims in Canada is Kazemipur's book, *The Muslim Question in Canada: A Story of Segmented Integration*.<sup>17</sup> This is highly relevant as it is believed that integration and assimilation are closely related to the Islamic Identity. The author explores to what degree Muslims are willing to adopt Canadian culture rather than keeping their customs distinct. There is another category mentioned in which both options could be combined. This is an ideal situation as to be successful in any society some degree of integration must take place. At the same time, it is also important to remain distinct in preserving one's religious identity. This is a combination seen in the first story presented in *Sūrah al-Kahf* and a detailed analysis of this will be presented. The book is limited in its discussion on the topic of integration without any discussion on how identities can be preserved.

An article by Jasmin Zine titled, "Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity," is perhaps one of the most relevant.<sup>18</sup> Zine presents an ethnographic analysis of the experiences of Muslim youth in Canada

<sup>17</sup> Abdolmohammad Kazemipur, *The Muslim Question in Canada: A Story of Segmented Integration* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Jasmin Zine, "Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity," *Anthropology Education Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 4 (2001): pp. 399-423.

who are committed to maintaining an Islamic lifestyle by preserving their Islamic identity while facing external pressures by the dominant culture. She explores the challenges they must deal with including peer pressure, racism, gender mixing, and Islamophobia. This study is crucial for the proposed research as it provides insight into the most prominent challenges Canadian Muslim youth deal with in trying to maintain their Islamic identity. In her conclusion she mentions how previous studies have shown the ways in which religious identity serves as an anchor for Muslim youth as they navigate through society. In other words, the Islamic identity is an “anchor” in maintaining an Islamic lifestyle and remaining firm on the path of Islam. This shows the importance of the Islamic identity, and it is surprising that more research has not been undertaken as to how this identity can be developed and maintained. This is a limitation faced not just by Zine’s study but by almost all research surrounding this subject.

Another Master’s thesis, “*Al-Qawā’id al-Tarbawīyyah kamā Tuzhīruhā al-Qiṣṣat al-Qur’āniyyah fī Sūrat al-Kahf*” (The Pedagogical Principles as portrayed in the Quranic Stories of *Sūrah al-Kahf*) by Ahmad Yūsuf explores the intricacies of the *sūrah*.<sup>19</sup> The author introduces *al-Kahf* and explores its background. He then extracts principles from the stories of the *sūrah* that can guide the development and education of a Muslim. He provides a detailed discussion of one the most important guiding principles for Muslim youth in Canada, righteous companionship. He relays the importance of the selection of companions or friends entailing the characteristic of good sound faith. He also discusses the rights and manners of how a friend should be treated. Dialogue and conversation, along with its etiquette are also discussed. These are vital

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<sup>19</sup> Ahmad Yoūsuf, “*Al-qawā’id al-tarbawīyyah kamā tuzhīruhā al-qiṣṣat al-qur’āniyyah fī Sūrat al-Kahf*” (Master’s thesis: University of Yarmouk, 2011).

principles that directly affect the Islamic identity of Muslim youth, especially in the Western context. The etiquette of the teacher and student is also analysed from the story of Mūsā and Khidr (peace be upon them). From the story of Dhū al-Qarnayn the principle of leadership is defined. Finally, the practical applications of these principals are presented. These principles and their applications are undoubtedly great tools which must be further elaborated in the context of the young Muslim in Canada. The research is limited however to issues of education and does not discuss identity at all.

An study of the intricate stories of *Sūrah al-Kahf* has been presented in a master's thesis by Nadzrah Ahmad titled, "Al-Shakhṣiyyah al-Insāniyyah kamā Tuṣawwiruhā Sūrat al-Kahf" (The Human Personality as portrayed by *Sūrah al-Kahf*).<sup>20</sup> This study extracts the salient characteristics of the human personality perceived in the stories and characters in *Sūrah al-Kahf*. It is an intricate presentation of the relationship between this vital *sūrah* and the development of the personality or values of a person. The author analyses the contrasting types of personalities through the study of the stories and characters. A great deal of detail is presented on the *sūrah* itself and its four main stories. The background and exploration of the depth of the *sūrah* is critical in understanding its core values extracting principles as she has done. The methodology follows through in not just presenting conclusions on the human personality and its development, but also the practical application of the findings. The research is somewhat limited to the stories as this is where characters are portrayed, and the human personality can be observed. There is no discussion explicitly on the concept of the Islamic identity or any subsets or groups of populations such as youth. This study is valuable as a similar approach or methodology could be taken in the proposed study

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<sup>20</sup> Nadzrah Ahmad, "Al-Shakhṣiyyah al-Insāniyyah kamā Tuṣawwiruhā Sūrat al-Kahf" (Master's thesis: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2003).