

# REL POSTGRAD PRESENTATIONS



## Hajar's Well: Toward a new Hajarian Model



**20 MAY, 2025**

**10:00 AM - 10:25 AM**

**REL SEMINAR ROOM**

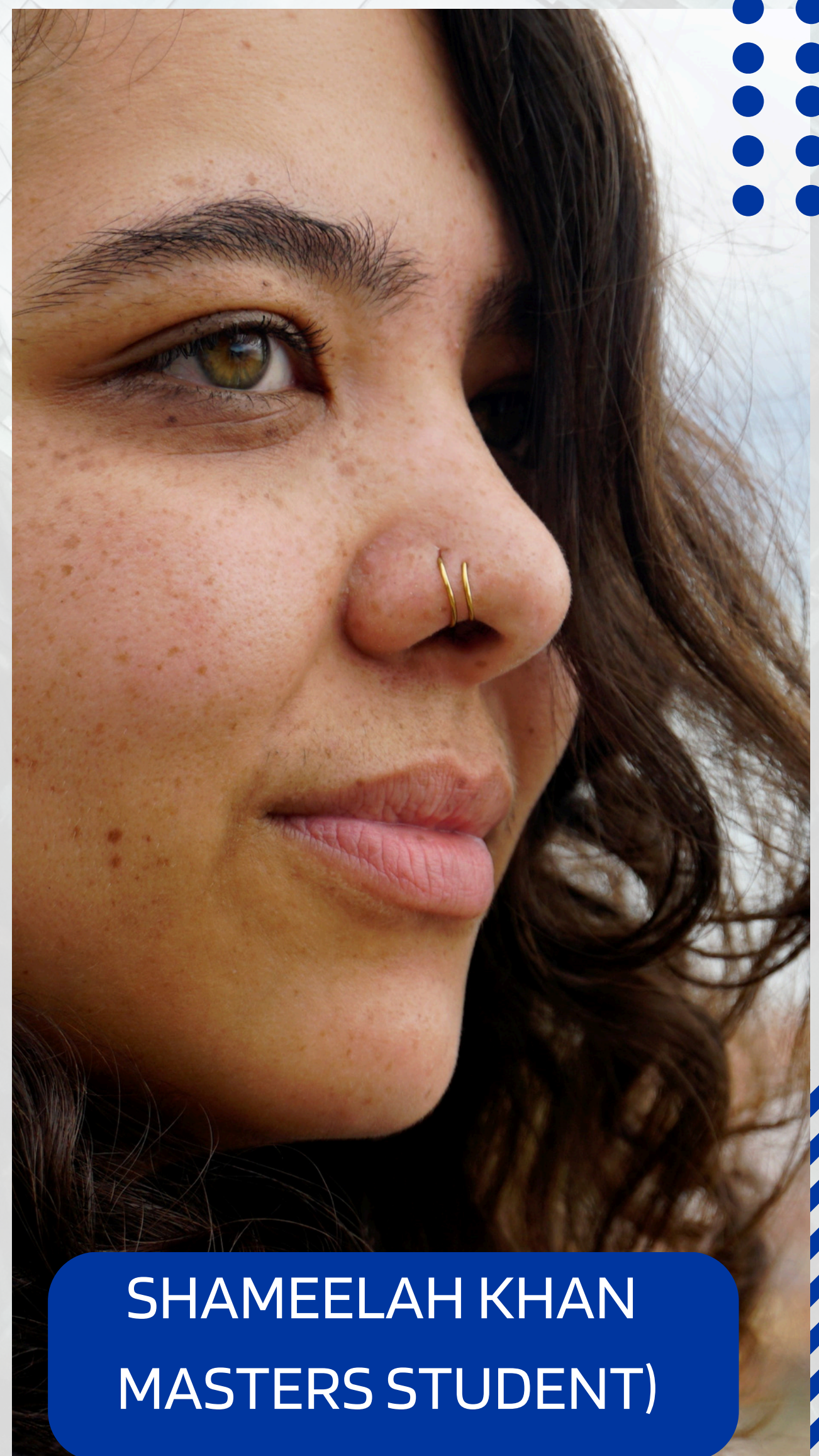
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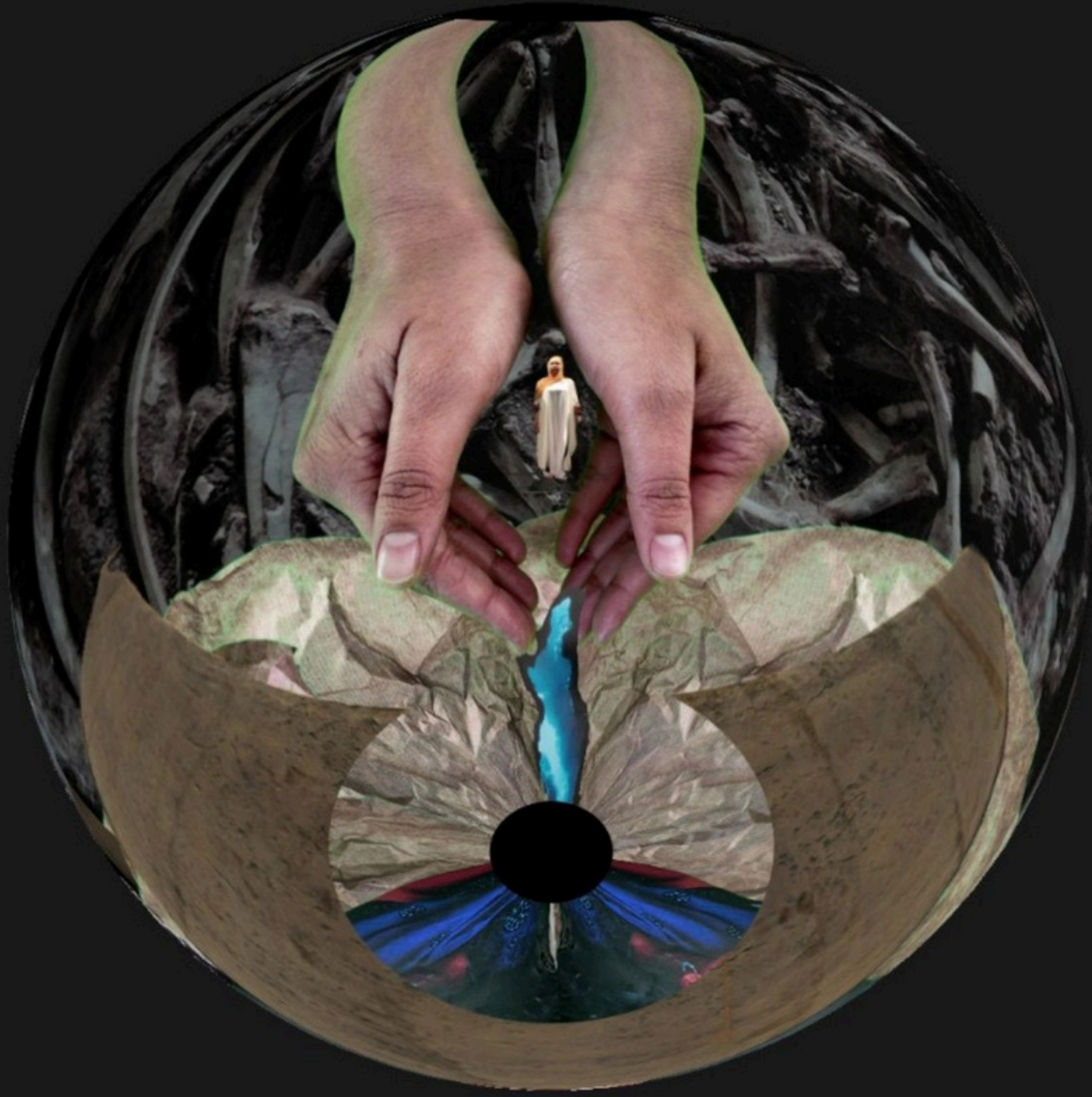
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**SHAMEELAH KHAN  
MASTERS STUDENT)**



# Hajar's Well: Toward a new Hajarian Model



**BY MS SHAMEELAH KAHN  
(MASTERS STUDENT)**

This research explores the figure of Hajar within the Islamic Tradition, challenging traditional androcentric interpretations termed by al-Hibri as the poisoned well. Utilising feminist hermeneutical approaches, this research proposes a Hajarian paradigm, which reconstructs Hajar's world through an immersive short VR film entitled Hajar's Well (2024). Imploring a methodology of collage as praxis, hermeneutics and hydrofeminism, this research aims to examine Hajar's embodiment, her agential action within the systemic constraint and survival, and her position within a contemporary context. The aim of the film and research is to highlight Hajar's relationship to the Zamzam water, reimagining the well as a central, life-giving space and as a site for collective memory. The film is comprised of collage as fragmentation and techno-assemblage within a third space known as the barzakh, exploring Hajar's experiences as a single mother, an immigrant and an enslaved person. Ultimately, the research and film aims to shift the root focus of the Islamic tradition from an Abrahamic lineage to a Hajarian one.

# REL POSTGRAD PRESENTATIONS



**Reclaiming the Full Humanity  
of Muslim Women:  
Disrupting Gender  
Deficiency in the Naqisaat  
Hadith using Muslim Feminist  
Hermeneutics and Traditional  
Interpretive Methods**

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**SAYED HAROON  
MASTERS STUDENT)**



# Reclaiming the Full Humanity of Muslim Women:

## Disrupting Gender Deficiency in the Naqisaat Hadith using Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics and Traditional Interpretive Methods



**BY MR SAYED HAROON  
(MASTERS STUDENT)**

This thesis undertakes a critical analysis of the Hadith that describes women as "intellectually and religiously deficient" (Naqisaat Hadith), using a combined methodology that draws from both Islamic feminist and traditional Islamic hermeneutical approaches. It investigates how religious interpretations influence Muslim women's identities, humanity, and lived experiences, emphasizing the deeply human and subjective nature of meaning-making in Islam. While Islamic feminist movements have challenged patriarchal interpretations within the tradition, meaningful integration with classical Islamic scholarship remains limited. This study addresses that gap by proposing a justice-oriented interpretive framework that brings these two paradigms into sustained conversation.

The thesis includes three main parts. The first outlines key theoretical concepts, exploring religion, gender, and the human, while situating Islamic feminism as both a response to and a product of broader feminist and Islamic discourses. The second section explores the hermeneutical tools of both paradigms, identifying conceptual and methodological gaps that limit their engagement. Drawing on concepts such as the hermeneutic circle and the role of subjectivity in interpretation, it critiques the marginalization of women in religious knowledge production and calls for more inclusive interpretive strategies. The third part applies this framework to the Naqisaat Hadith, using Gerald West's three modes of reading to gain a multi-layered analysis that includes linguistic, contextual, and ethical dimensions. By doing so, it demonstrates how texts perceived as oppressive through one mode of reading can yield liberating meanings when read through alternative, justice-focused lenses.

Ultimately, the thesis argues that a more inclusive and critical hermeneutic methodology can help reclaim the full humanity of Muslim women, challenge entrenched patriarchal readings, and contribute to a dynamic and evolving understanding of Islam rooted in its ethical core. It concludes with reflections on the implications of this approach for future scholarship and for the broader project of gender justice within the Islamic tradition.

By developing skills in interpretation, one may counteract misunderstandings and promote intercultural respect, bridging divides and fostering deeper connections (Gilhus, 281). As our perspectives and contexts from which we interpret the world evolve, so too do the new questions and interpretations that continually generate, shaping the way we engage with each other and the world around us.  
Identity, Quran, Sunnah, Hadith, Authority, Divine Intent, Social Justice.

# REL POSTGRAD PRESENTATIONS



## States of Violence: Reimagining Power, Law and Ethics.

(A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY PLACING  
BENJAMIN, BUTLER, ŽIŽEK AND ARENDT IN  
CONVERSATION)



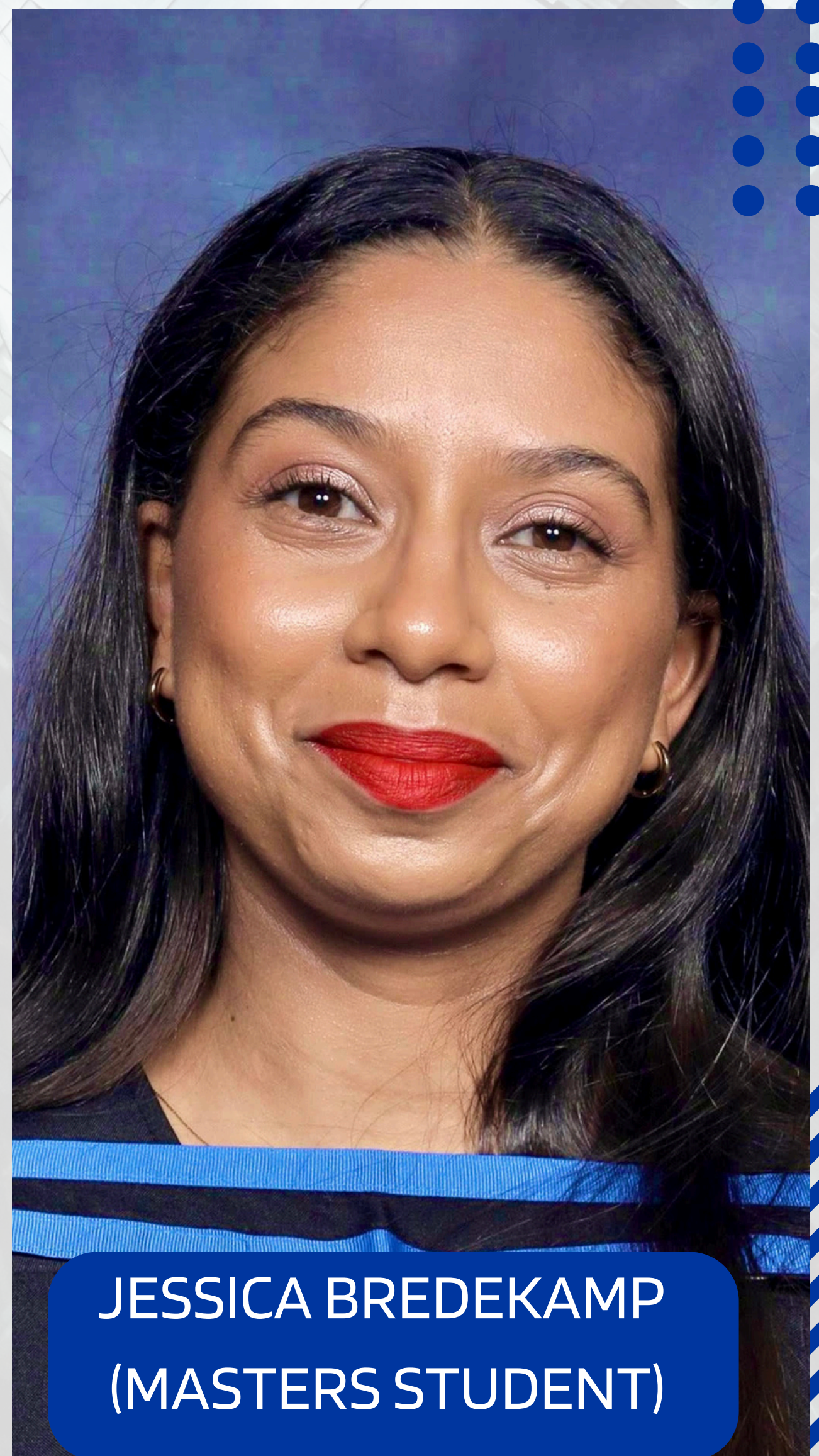
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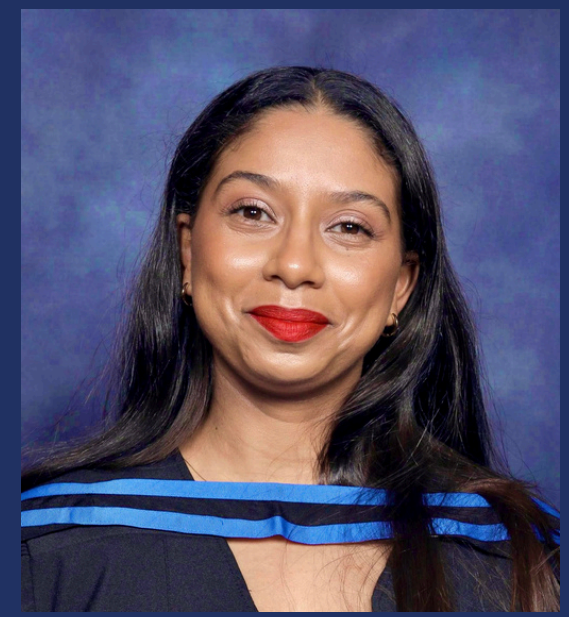


**JESSICA BREDEKAMP**  
**(MASTERS STUDENT)**



# States of Violence: Reimagining Power, Law and Ethics.

*(A philosophical inquiry placing Benjamin, Butler,  
Žižek and Arendt in conversation)*



**BY MISS JESSICA BREDEKAMP  
(MASTERS STUDENT)**

The aim of this dissertation is to explore various ways of reimagining the state, governance, power and ethics in relation to violence in its overt, implied, social and institutionalized forms.

An initial mapping of the philosophical frameworks, understandings and potential solutions to the problem of violence in general which the state attempts or alleges to govern.

The violence inherent to the state in both its creation and preservation which writes violence into the legal system, each upholding the other.

Some minor questions regarding whether violence is an essential component to humanity, society and the individual,

And a look at both revolutionary violence and the pursuit of non-violence by tearing the system down or finding solutions that refuse to place violence back into the process and society.

These broad topics will be examined using four main philosophers who tackle these ideas and problems directly; Walter Benjamin, Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek, and Hannah Arendt. (With the potential to explore Jacques Derrida, and Hayden Weaver - amongst others - in the analysis and critique.)

# REL POSTGRAD PRESENTATIONS

OF SPIRIT, POWER, AND  
PROSPERITY:  
PENTECOSTALISM AND  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
PRACTICES IN URBAN  
KENYA



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**ELIAS NG'ETICH**  
**(PHD STUDENT)**



# OF SPIRIT, POWER, AND PROSPERITY: PENTECOSTALISM AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN URBAN KENYA



**BY MR ELIAS NG'ETICH  
(PHD STUDENT)**

The tumultuous socioeconomic climate in Africa has created an opportunity for Pentecostal Christianity to emerge as a significant topic of scholarly inquiry. Ongoing debates and discussions highlight the complexities surrounding the role of this social-religious movement in Africa's development. Focusing on Christ Is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) in Kenya, this study examines the congregation's perspectives and activities related to social development and their impact on the country's progress. It assesses whether CITAM's doctrines and actions promote social advancement in Kenya. Founded in 1959, CITAM has experienced substantial growth, spreading across major towns in Kenya and demonstrating considerable influence in this field. The church has expanded from an initial gathering of about 20 to 30 attendees in the morning in 1959 to an estimated 50,000 members by June 2023 and currently employs over 500 regular staff members. Unlike other Pentecostal churches in Kenya, CITAM is distinguished by its incorporation of a social action strategy into its identity and mission. This approach, which is not merely a departure from tradition but a groundbreaking initiative, represents a significant step forward in the field of social development and differentiates CITAM from its counterparts. The church engages with social development by advocating for divine prosperity, positing that Jesus provides solutions to all of humanity's issues. CITAM's notable social presence in Kenya warrants a reevaluation of its role in the realm of social development. The study employs sociological and discursive methods to investigate CITAM's social initiatives in urban centres, using social capital and critical discourse analysis as theoretical lenses. Both empirical (case study) and discursive (analysis of sermons) methodologies were utilised. The research included in-depth interviews and participant observation. This dissertation offers valuable insights into the expanding literature on religion and development, thereby enhancing our understanding of how and why Pentecostal Christianity promotes social development.

# REL POSTGRAD PRESENTATIONS



**What is the nature of the liberation theology of Malcolm X, Ali Shariati and Achmad Cassiem as developed in each of their contexts?**



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**HAMZAH RAZA  
(PHD STUDENT)**



# What is the nature of the liberation theology of Malcolm X, Ali Shariati and Achmad Cassiem as developed in each of their contexts?



BY MR HAMZAH RAZA (PHD STUDENT)

The thesis's main aim lies in producing a comparative study of Islamic liberation theology between three figures: Ali Shariati, Malcolm X, and Achmad Cassiem. I seek to examine the contexts and discourses that shape their liberation theologies. This entails tracing their genealogies that have roots and inspiration both within and outside of the Islamic tradition. Outside of the Islamic tradition, I seek to explore the potentiality of what other discourses and political ideas impacted the formulation of their Islamic liberation theology, and to what extent. I intend to explore the impact of modern critical discourses such as Marxism, Fanonism, Christian liberation theology, and Black liberation theology. Without losing sight of the influence of these powerful outside intellectual forces on particular formulations of Islamic liberation theology in these different contexts, my research seeks to trace a genealogy of sustained liberation theology within Muslim tradition. This continuous tradition of liberation theology allows us to recognize how Muslims over time have interpreted Islam as a religion of justice that advocates for the marginalized. These Muslims have engaged with scripture and broader Islamic tradition in light of the demands and needs of their specific contexts. This leads me to my next objective, which is to speak of the particularities of the Islamic liberation tradition as embodied and presented by Malcolm X, Ali Shariati, and Achmad Cassiem. This will take into account their life experiences. In this context, I seek to explore their intellectual influences, the specific texts they interacted with, and also specific geographical, sociopolitical, and historical contexts within their lives. This will thus allow me to engage with the conceptual core of an emerging modern Islamic liberation theology, that is also attentive to specificities and uniqueness that marks the varying contexts and other particularities of its respective interpreter.

## Focal Research Questions:

What are some key symbols of Islamic liberation theology? What are dynamic elements of Islamic liberation tradition? What are its constant elements? How did modernity affect the social function of religion? As Islamic liberation theology interacts with other liberation theologies and critical modern discourses, do certain religious values such as taking care of the marginalized become more emphasized in certain points of time? Do certain religious values become less emphasized? What texts, contexts, and interpreters influence such a shift?

## Sub Questions:

What is liberation theology? What are the specific contextual theologies of Malcolm X, Ali Shariati, and Achmad Cassiem? How do the 20th century Islamic liberation theologies of Malcolm X, Ali Shariati, and Achmad Cassiem articulate themselves according to the dynamic needs of their contexts? How do their liberation theologies situate themselves within a broader tradition of Islamic liberation theology? Do they, and if so, to what extent, do they draw from Christian liberation theology and Black liberation theology? Do they, and if so, to what extent, do they draw from critical modern discourses such as Marxism, feminism, Fanonism, and other ideas?