

# The Role of Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* *Mawlūd*, An Islamic Tradition in Cape Town: A *Maqāsidi*-based *Thematic Analysis*

Thoerria Philander  
nuntjies@gmail.com

## Abstract

This qualitative study explores the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamā'āt*<sup>1</sup> in Cape Town in preserving the tradition of *Mawlūd al-Nabī*, focusing on the *Sharaf al-Anām Mawlūd*. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis and Auda's *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* framework (2008, 2021), 17 interviews were analyzed, yielding four main themes and 13 subthemes. The research applies Auda's multidimensional *maqāsid* methodology, including purpose identification, reflection on primary sources (Qur'ān and ḥadīth), framework development, and literature review. It highlights the legacy of Ḥājjah Maryam Bassīr Drāmat, interconnected practices of *Mawlūd Jamā'āt*, and the holistic benefits of *Mawlūd* events, emphasizing their role in fostering devotion, community bonds, and social well-being. The findings underscore the holistic benefits of *Mawlūd* events in fostering devotion, strengthening community bonds, and enhancing social and spiritual well-being.

**Keywords:** Cape Town, ladies, *Mawlūd*, *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, *Sharaf al-Anam*, thematic analysis

---

1 The Arabic term *Jamāt* presents a nuanced complexity, encompassing both singular and plural connotations, denoting either a singular group or multiple entities. In the South African context, this term has been adapted to refer to a Muslim community or to a collective of individuals congregating for religious or social purposes, thereby reflecting the country's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. This contextualised usage of *Jamāt* underscores the dynamic nature of language and its capacity to evolve through cultural exchange and borrowing.

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license, allowing distribution and reproduction in any medium with credit to the original author and source.

# 1. Introduction

The Muslim<sup>2</sup> community of Cape Town observes the *Mawlūd an-Nabi*<sup>3</sup> tradition annually, gathering at the mosque on the evening of the twelfth of *Rab' al-awwal*.<sup>4</sup> This significant event brings together both female and male members of the community, highlighting its importance in the community's religious and cultural practices. The cultural event, colloquially referred to as *Koemies Mawlūd*,<sup>5</sup> has been observed at the Cape since the seventeenth century, when Sufi masters, notably Shaykh<sup>6</sup> Yusuf al-Macassar, introduced it to the region. The annual perpetuation of this tradition showcases the enduring legacy of Sufism in the Cape Muslim community. This research paper explores the important role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*<sup>7</sup> in the preservation of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*<sup>8</sup> in Cape Town. Following the *Koemies Mawlūd*, ladies from the Cape Muslim community organize a series of additional *Mawlūd* events, extending over three to six months. These supplementary celebrations demonstrate the significant role of women in perpetuating and shaping the *Mawlūd* tradition within the Cape Muslim community. This study drew upon a subset of nine ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*, selected from a comprehensive list of 38 *Jamāts* documented in a *Boorhaanol*<sup>9</sup> September 2021 survey. This purposive sampling strategy enabled an in depth examination of the practices and experiences of these *Jamāts*, contributing to a richer understanding of the *Mawlūd* tradition at the Cape. Contrary to expectations, the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* rather than the widely popular *Barzanji Mawlūd*,<sup>10</sup> the latter, which is commonly preferred in other contexts, is recited (Mashur, 2017). This finding highlights the distinct preferences and traditions within the Cape Town *Mawlūd Jamāts* warranting further exploration and analysis. The *Sharaf al-Anam* is attributed to the esteemed Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar,

2 Arabic word meaning one who submits in reference to the submission of Allah.

3 Arabic phrase for the commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

4 Third month on the Islamic lunar calendar.

5 The term *Koemies* originates from the Cape Malay vernacular in South Africa, derived from the Arabic word *khidmah*, meaning service or devotion. In the Cape Malay culture, it refers to a devotional gathering or spiritual service, highlighting the blend of Islamic traditions and South African cultural influences.

6 Arabic word for a Muslim religious leader.

7 Arabic word for a group of people who gather for the same purpose.

8 *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* "Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd" refers to Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) birthday, symbolizing humanity's dignity. In Cape Malay tradition, it is recited during *Koemies Mawlūd* and other gatherings to honor his legacy.

9 A local newsletter published in Cape Town since the 1960s.

10 Arabic Islamic *Mawlūd* text written by Ja'far bin Hasan ibn 'Abd al-Karim ibn Muhammad al-Barzanji al-Kurdi (1690-1766).

who is credited with introducing Islam to the Cape in 1694 (Mission-of-mercy-message-of-love, 2014). This historical connection suggests that the *Mawlūd* has a rich religious and cultural heritage, tracing its roots back to this influential Sufi scholar and his migratory legacy.

This *Mawlūd* tradition was perpetuated by Sayed<sup>11</sup> Abdullah ibn<sup>12</sup> Qadi<sup>13</sup> Abdus Salaam, affectionately known as Tuan<sup>14</sup> Guru<sup>15</sup> of Tidore, who was exiled to the Cape in 1780. His students continued this practice, ensuring its survival and transmission to subsequent generations (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, p. 21). The *Sharaf al-Anam* is a devotional text comprising sacred invocations, including peace (*salām*) and salutations (*salāt*). It is also sometimes referred to as standing (*qiyām*) or to rise (*ashraqal*), Qur'anic verses (*āyāt*), religious poems (*qaṣā'id*; *sing. qaṣīdah*) and supplication (*duā*). This diverse compilation of spiritual texts and prayers constitutes the core of the *Mawlūd* ceremony, reflecting the rich liturgical and literary heritage of Islamic devotional practices. The preservation of the *Sharaf al-Anam* transcends mere recitation, functioning as an intergenerational conduit and a poignant testament to the enduring legacy of faith within the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. This cherished text serves as a symbolic link between past and present, perpetuating the spiritual heritage and communal identity of these women's devotional gatherings. In their veneration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) these women exemplify the harmonious integration of religious devotion and social engagement, thereby contributing to the diverse and vibrant fabric of Islamic heritage in Cape Town. Through their practices and traditions, they demonstrate a seamless blend of faith and community, enriching the religious and cultural landscape of the region.

## 1.1 Rationale of the Study

Traditionally, the *Barzanji* has been the preferred text for communal *Mawlūd* celebrations. However, a select few male *Mawlūd Jamāts* and a larger number of female *Mawlūd Jamāts* have opted to continue the lesser-known *Sharaf al-Anam* in their annual gatherings. This unusual textual preference highlights the diversity and complexity of

---

11 Arabic word for an honorific title used to refer to a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), particularly through his grandson Hussein.

12 Arabic word meaning "son of".

13 Arabic word referring to a judge or a magistrate in an Islamic court.

14 A Malay word that can be translated as sir or lord.

15 Malay word for teacher, mentor, coach, master, expert or spiritual leader.

*Mawlūd* traditions within the Cape Muslim community. The *Mawlūd Jamāts* play a vital role in the preservation of the Arabic Islamic text, *Sharaf al-Anam*, which is currently listed as an endangered text facing the risk of extinction (Maulud al-Nabi Sharaf al-Anam , n.d.). Their efforts are crucial in safeguarding this valuable religious and cultural heritage and ensuring its continued relevance and significance within the community. Existing historical documentation of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*' contributions to the *Mawlūd* tradition at the Cape has primarily focused on the participation of women in *rampies sny*<sup>16</sup> and the preservation of the *Barzanji*, neglecting their crucial role in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* (Isaacs, 2014). This oversight warrants the need for further research and documentation of their efforts in safeguarding this important Arabic Islamic text. The *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town have the potential to serve as a catalyst for inspiration and motivation, empowering women from the community to make significant contributions to the continued preservation of Arabic Islamic literary heritage. By recognizing and showcasing their efforts, a sense of ownership and responsibility among women can be fostered, encouraging them to play a more active role in safeguarding this vital cultural legacy.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study on the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town has four primary objectives. Firstly, it aims to contextualize the historical and cultural significance of *Mawlūd Jamāts*, particularly in relation to the legacy of *Hājjah Mariam Bassier Dramat* <sup>17</sup>. Secondly, it aims to illuminate the interconnectedness between the *Mawlūd Jamāts* and their event practices, highlighting how these events reinforce community bonds and cultural heritage. Thirdly, it aims to explicate the diverse components of the *Sharaf al-Anam*, including its literary and devotional aspects. Finally, it aims to outline the holistic benefits derived from participating in the events of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, including personal and social enrichment.

16 *Rampies sny* is a Cape Malay Muslim tradition women observe during *Mawlūd* celebrations. It involves cutting citrus leaves, scenting them with essential oils to symbolize purification and blessings, and placing them in sachets. These are distributed to men at the mosque during *Mawlūd an-Nabi* evening celebrations.

17 An honorific title given to a Muslim who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

This section sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the unique contributions of *Mawlūd Jamāts* to Cape Town's religious and cultural milieu.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review explores the preservation of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* by ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town. Despite extensive searches, no published articles specifically addressing this topic were found prior to 1999. However, limited references to ladies preserving the *Barzanji Mawlūd* and the *rampies sny* tradition at the Cape were found in books, magazines, and newspapers, highlighting a significant research gap.

Stanton (2015) traces the origins of *Mawlūd an-Nabi* to the Shi'a Fatimid<sup>18</sup> dynasty in the 1100s, in Egypt. Criticism of *Mawlūd* emerged due to its veneration of the Prophet (PBUH), considered as *shirk*<sup>19</sup> by some. Similarly, Walker (2024) notes Saladin Yusuf al-Ayubi's proclamation of Sunni Islam in Egypt in 1171. According to Bouchiba & Laakili (n.d.) the first *Barzanji Mawlūd* celebration in 607AH/1207 CE in Irbil, Upper Mesopotamia<sup>20</sup> is attributed to Saladin's brother-in-law, al-Malik<sup>21</sup> Muzaffar al-dīn<sup>22</sup> Gökburī. Similarly, Kaarlsholm (2014) highlights Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar's re-introduction of *Mawlūd* at the Cape in the 1690s. Moreover, Da Costa & Davids (1994) briefly mentions the ladies' *Barzanji Mawlūd* held at the al-Zawiyah mosque<sup>23</sup> in Walmer Estate, a suburb of Cape Town, where they walk in procession whilst reciting *salawāt* (supplications) for Muhammad (PBUH). (da Costa & Davids, 1994, pp. 109,112). In addition, Mogamat Hoosain Ebrahim (2014) mentions over seventy ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in the Cape, stretching as far as Worcester in the Boland region of the Western Cape province, where they prepared *rampies* and recite Malay tunes. He confirms that Shaykh Yusuf brought the *Sharaf al-Anam* to the Cape (Mission of mercy, message of love, 2014).

---

18 Refers to the Fatimid Caliphate, a Shi'a Islamic dynasty that ruled over a vast territory in North Africa, Egypt and parts of the Middle East from the tenth to the twelfth centuries CE.

19 Arabic word for associating partners with Allah.

20 A historical land between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers in what is now northwestern Iraq, northeastern Syria, and southeastern Turkey.

21 Arabic word referring to majesty, authority, or rulership.

22 Arabic attributive name meaning of the faith or the religion,

23 This mosque was established by Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks in 1919.

Furthermore, the *Boorhanol* Islamic movement identifies 38 ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*, with 30 reciting the *Sharaf al-Anam*. The first female-only *Sharaf al-Anam* ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāt*, established in 1928, is still in existence (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, pp. 23,34,42,43,44,45). In Cape Town, the preference of this *Mawlūd* can be attributed to Tuan Sayed 'Alawi, and its popularity among Indonesian slaves who had a strong musical tradition. The companions of Tuan Guru composed various *qaṣā'id* and litanies (*award; sing. wird*), all starting with the *Sharaf al-Anam*, the most popular *Mawlūd* of the 'Alawiyah *ṭarīqa*.<sup>24</sup> The Arabic style of this *Mawlūd* is in line with both classical and modern Arabic writers, facilitating ease of learning and memorization (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, pp. 21,26,27).

The *Sharaf al-Anam's* authorship is debated, with potential authors including Shaykh Moegsien Solomon bin Ismaeel, Imām<sup>25</sup> Abd al Rahman ibn Jawzi, Ibrahim al-Kulsi <sup>26</sup>ibn Hud (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, p. 26) or Ahmad ibn al-Qasim al-Harari (Mashur, 2017). Mashur (2017) lists the *Sharaf al-Anam* as a popular religious literary text, noting its linguistic beauty and its recitation in Indonesia. The *Sharaf al-Anam* is also the national *Mawlūd* of Yemen, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, p. 26), but is also closely associated with the celebration of the birth of the Prophet (PBUH). Similarly, the *Barzanjī*, like the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*, are both closely associated with the celebration of the birth of the Prophet (PBUH), were pioneered by Saladin al-Ayubi in 580AH/1184CE in Egypt and this disseminated globally by Abu Sa'id al-Kokburi. Katz (2008) notes the stigmatization of professional Muslim women in Sanaa, Yemen, for engaging in *Mawlūd*, while their communities value its religious significance. Likewise, Kaptein (1993) describes Egyptian influence on Indonesians' *Mawlūd* practices in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He specifically notes the publication of a book in Bandung summarizing five *Mawlūds*, including the *Sharaf al-Anam*, and the role of Shaykh Djamil Djamboek, a pioneer of the modernist Islamic movements in Indonesia from 1875-1930, in teaching its correct recitation. Furthermore, Tarsitani (2007) notes the development of *Mawlūd* texts into poetic genres in Harar, Ethiopia, while Kaarlsholm (2014) refers to Goolam Vahed's research on Indian Muslims

24 Also known as the *Ba'Alawi ṭarīqa*, a Sufi order centered in Hadhramawt, Yemen,

25 A Muslim religious leader.

26 Title meaning scholar or learned one.

in Durban, noting that reform movements aimed at “cleansing Islam of perceived cultural impurities,” including *Mawlūd*, have been active since 2007. Additionally, Vahed (2003) notes instances of reform movements in Durban opposing *Mawlūd* as un-Islamic, countered by those emphasizing its role in fostering love for the Prophet (PBUH).

Stanton (2015) highlights how the Wahhabi movement<sup>27</sup> in the late 1700s and the Salafi movements<sup>28</sup> in the late 1800s created divisions<sup>29</sup> within Sunnism as a result of their rejection of *Mawlūd* celebrations.

This research underscores the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* tradition in Cape Town, aiming to offer a more inclusive perspective on their contributions to the region's cultural and literary heritage. Thus, this study provides a closer look at the composition of the *Sharaf al-Anam* while also focusing on a comprehensive understanding of the practices of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* and the benefits derived from attending their events, filling a gap in existing literature on this topic.

### 3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This section delineates the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of this study, examining the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town. The research employed a qualitative approach, focusing on the in-depth exploration of the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*. Primary data was collected through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, with both female and male participants. The data analysis was conducted using the reflexive thematic approach. Furthermore, the analysis was guided by Jasser Auda's multidimensional objectives of an Islamic law (*maqāsidi al-sharī'ah*) framework, which operates across three tiers: the general, partial, and specific *maqāsidi* of the *sharī'ah*. This framework played a pivotal role in structuring the analysis and providing a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the data for this study.

---

27 A puritanical Islamic reform movement founded by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the 18th century which was adopted by the Saudi royal family in 1744.

28 A socio-religious reform movement established within Sunni Islam during the late 19th century, resisting European Imperialism. Sunni is an Arabic word coming from the Arabic word, Sunnah, referring to the followers of the tradition of the Prophet (PBUH).

29 A specific division within Sunnism emerged over *Mawlūd an-Nabi*, with Sufis celebrating it as devotion to the Prophet (PBUH) and Salafis rejecting it as innovation (*bid'ah*). This divide, originating in regions like the Middle East and South Asia, has since spread globally, deepening rifts among Sunni Muslims.

### 3.1 Methodology: The Empirical Approach

This study is a qualitative exploration of the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town, utilizing an in-depth approach that prioritizes capturing participants' voices and perspectives.. While this study's small participant pool limits its generalizability, it systematically describes the phenomena and identifies trends in an under-researched area (Bhandari, 2023). Data analysis was subjective and labor-intensive, complicated by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, this study provides valuable insights into the preservation of the *Sharaf al-Anam* by the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, examining the motivations, contexts, timing, and processes involved in this religious and cultural practice. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the significance of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* in sustaining this important tradition.

#### 3.1.1 Research Design and Data Collection

The use of open-ended questions in this study enabled the uncovering of issues that may have otherwise remained hidden, yielding a rich, detailed, and descriptive dataset. This approach allowed participants to share their thoughts and experiences in a nuanced and unrestricted manner, providing a depth of insight that would have been difficult to achieve through more structured or closed-ended methods. The resulting data offers a comprehensive, contextualized understanding of the phenomena under investigation, revealing subtle themes and patterns that may have been obscured by more rigid research designs. Semi-structured interviews were employed as an effective qualitative collection method, enabling the gathering of open-ended data that explored thoughts, feelings, and beliefs related to the preservation of *Sharaf al-Anam* by women in the Cape Town Muslim community. This approach allowed for a deeper exploration of personal and sometimes sensitive issues, often delving into the nuances of participants' experiences and perspectives. The semi-structured interview format also provided a

flexible and adaptive framework, enabling the researcher to pursue diverse lines of inquiry that emerged during the conversations, yielding a rich and detailed dataset that captured the complexities and depth of the participants' experiences (George, 2023). The interviews were conducted during the day at locations most convenient for the participants, either at their homes or at a mosque, allowing for a natural and comfortable setting. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours, with one participant requiring an additional follow-up interview to gather more information, given her significant role as the current leader of her local *jamāt*. Data was collected in real-world contexts over two years, with face-to-face interviews being the primary method of data collection. The prolonged data collection period was caused by the restrictions imposed on the free movement in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic and the broader global lockdown, which limited the researcher's ability to conduct interviews in a more condensed timeframe.

This study employed the chain referral sampling method, also known as snowball sampling, to recruit participants with unique characteristics relevant to the topic. The recommended sample group shared similar traits, specific characteristics, and specific interests. This approach was chosen because the research population is a scarce and specialized group, not representative of the wider South African public. Initially, a convenience sample was used to identify the first few participants, who then referred others with similar traits and characteristics, allowing the sample to snowball until the desired number of participants was reached (Akman, 2023). Non-probability sampling was used because the research required a specific target population, and subjective selection was necessary to ensure the sample was representative of the desired group. This approach enabled the researcher to tap into a niche population and gather data from a group that might have otherwise been difficult to access through other sampling

methods (Elliott, 2020). The sample included seventeen participants, comprising thirteen females and four males. The sample represented a diverse range of individuals from the research sample group, including both members and non-members, leaders and non-leaders of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. Participants were categorized as follows: nine female leaders of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, three female non-leaders, one female community member not officially part of any *jamāt*, three male imāms at mosques, and one male community member who is a lecturer at an educational institution in Cape Town. This diverse sample allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research objectives.

Gender	Female leaders of <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>	Female non-leaders of <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>	Male and female community members	Male <i>imāms</i>
Females: 13	9	3	1	
Males: 4			1	3
Total: 17	9	3	2	3

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

### 3.1.2 Procedures of Data Analysis

The reflexive thematic approach and the *maqāsīd al-sharī'ah* framework by Jasser Auda were the two theoretical frameworks applied in this study to examine the data, yielding four distinct themes that emerged from the participants' narratives. These themes were categorized and labelled as follows: (1) A brief history of the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town; (2) interconnectedness and activities of the *jamāts*; (3) *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*; and (4) benefits of participating in the events of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. These themes offered a nuanced understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and values of the research participants. These themes were further subdivided into a total of thirteen subthemes with the following distribution: theme one (two subthemes), theme two (two subthemes), theme three (six subthemes), and theme four (three subthemes). This hierarchical coding structure allowed for a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the

data, revealing subtle patterns and insights that may have otherwise remained obscure. The two subthemes nested under theme one were: legacy of *Ḥājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat, and the succession of leadership within the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. The two subthemes nested under theme two were: the utilization of the mosques by the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, and their dress code. The six subthemes nested under theme three were: a brief history of the *Sharaf al-Anam* at the Cape, invoking blessings by sending *salām* and *salāt* to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), narrations (*riwāyāt*) recitation, Quranic *āyāt*, religious poems (*qaṣā'id*) and invocations (*duā*). The three subthemes nested under theme four were: the physical benefits derived from attending a *Mawlūd*; the psychological, emotional and spiritual well-being achieved; and the social or communal benefits obtained when joining *Mawlūd* events. Each theme was examined to gain a deeper understanding of its impact on the activities of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* in their attempts to preserve the *Sharaf al-Anam* in Cape Town. Despite its ninety-five-year history, the role of *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* remains an under-researched topic. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by exploring the contributions and significance of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving this important religious and cultural tradition.

### 3.1.2.1 Conceptualizing Themes and Coding Techniques

Main Themes
1. A brief history of the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i> in Cape Town
2. Interconnectedness of the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i> and their activities
3. The <i>Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd</i>
4. The benefits of attending the <i>Mawlūd</i> events of the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>

Table 2: Four main Themes

<b>Subthemes</b>
1.1 <i>Hājjah</i> Mariam Bassier Dramat, icon of the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
1.2 The succession of leadership in the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
2.1 The utilization of the mosque by the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
2.2 Dress code of the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
3.1 A brief history of the <i>Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd</i>
3.2 Sending <i>salām</i> and <i>salāt</i> to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
3.3 The <i>riwāyāt</i> recited by the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
3.4 The <i>Qur'anic āyāt</i> found in the <i>Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd</i>
3.5 The <i>qaṣā'id</i> chanted by the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
3.6 The <i>duā</i> made by the <i>Mawlūd Jamāts</i>
4.1 The physical benefits derived from attending the <i>Mawlūd</i>
4.2 The psychological, emotional, and spiritual benefits derived from attending the <i>Mawlūd</i>
4.3 The social benefits derived from attending the <i>Mawlūd</i>

*Table 3: Thirteen Subthemes*

## 3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study examines the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town through a dual theoretical lens. It employs both reflexive thematic analysis and the *maqāsid* approach, integrating the six-stage model of reflexive thematic analysis and two essential elements of the *maqāsid* theory (concepts and commands) derived from primary Islamic sources, the Qur'an and hadith. This integrated approach formed the core of this research, providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

### 3.2.1 Reflexive Thematic Approach

Reflexive thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis approach that takes into account the researcher's experiences, pre-existing knowledge, and critical examination of the data. Throughout this process, the researcher acknowledges how their social positioning (e.g., gender), influences the research process, including the gathering and analysis of data. This approach allows the researcher to explore, interpret, and present their own values and beliefs about themselves and the world. The researcher's interaction with the data makes

the analysis contextual and situational. In this study, the lived experiences of *Mawlūd Jamāts* were analysed using an inductive process, revealing patterns of the gendered experiences previously overlooked in research on preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* in Cape Town. The themes were identified, conceptualised, and refined through a semantic approach, focusing on the experiences of *Mawlūd Jamāts*, the interconnectedness, and activities of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, the *Sharaf al-Anam*, and the benefits of attending annual *Mawlūd* events. This approach enabled a more descriptive analysis, remaining close to the participants' meanings. The experiential analysis approach was chosen for its ability to capture the participants' lived experiences, and language was used to communicate layered meanings, with participants comfortably code-switching between English and Afrikaans during interviews (Devine, 2021).

### **3.2.1.1 The Six Stages of Thematic Analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2006) introduce the concept of “analytical sensitivity” which denotes a researcher’s ability to interpret data beyond its superficial content, uncovering deeper meanings and connections. This skill enables researchers to identify relationships among the data, existing research, theoretical frameworks, and other broader contexts. To harness this skill, researchers must situate it within a systematic framework, such as the six-stage model for qualitative research. This model comprises: (1) familiarisation with the data, (2) coding, (3) generating initial themes, (4) developing and reviewing themes, (5) refining, defining, and naming themes, and (6) writing up the findings (Devine, 2021, p. 45)

By adopting this structured approach, researchers can systematically cultivate their analytical sensitivities and uncover rich insights from their data.

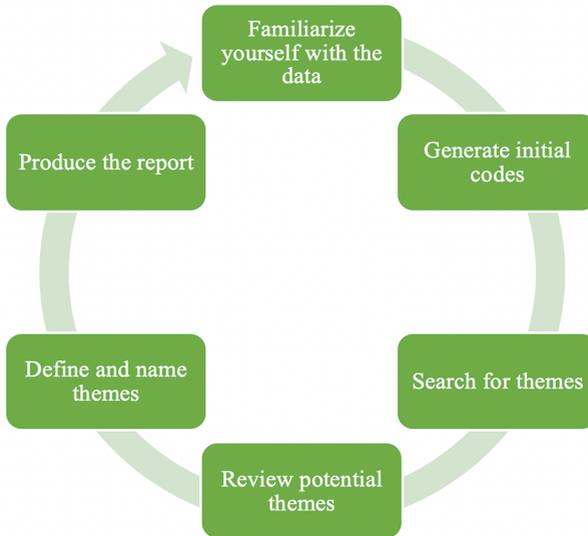


Figure 1: The Continuous Cycle of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012) (Ozgehan, 2022)

### 3.2.2 *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*: A Theological Approach

The theological method to studying the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town was grounded in the *maqāsid* approach to Islamic law as advocated by Jasser Auda. The ultimate *maqāsid* of the *sharī'ah* is the achievement of societal wellbeing (*masālih*) and the prevention of societal harm (*mafāsīd* or *madār*) (Kamali, 2012, pp. 18,36). *Maqāsid* has traditionally been classified into three levels, with the highest level termed essentials (*darūrāt*) which encompass five essential categories, highlighting the preservation of religion/faith (*hifẓ al-dīn*), life (*hifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*hifẓ al-nasl*) and wealth (*hifẓ al-māl*). Some scholars, including Auda, recognize a sixth category; the preservation of honour (*hifẓ al-'ird*) (Afridi, 2016, p. 280). This study focuses on the first four categories (Auda, 2008, p. 3). Auda's multidimensional approach to *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* involves three levels: general, partial, and specific *maqāsid* (Auda, 2008, p. 5). This study applied all three levels in its analysis.

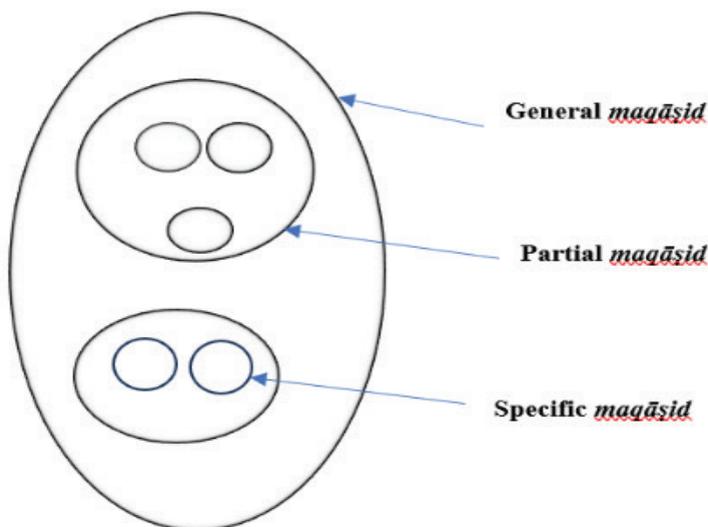


Figure 2: *The Three Levels of Maqāsidi* (Auda, 2008, p. 7)

Additionally, Auda's framework consists of seven interconnected and overlapping essential elements: objectives (*maqāsidi*), concepts (*mafāhim*), universal laws (*sunan*), values (*qiyam*), groups (*fi'at*), commands (*awāmir*) and proofs (*hujjaj*) (Auda, 2020) (7.15 min). This study concentrated on two of these elements (concepts and commands) which form the core of the research for this paper. Specifically, the concept of *salām*, often misunderstood as *salāt* for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was highlighted in this study as integral to understanding the role of *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* in Cape Town.

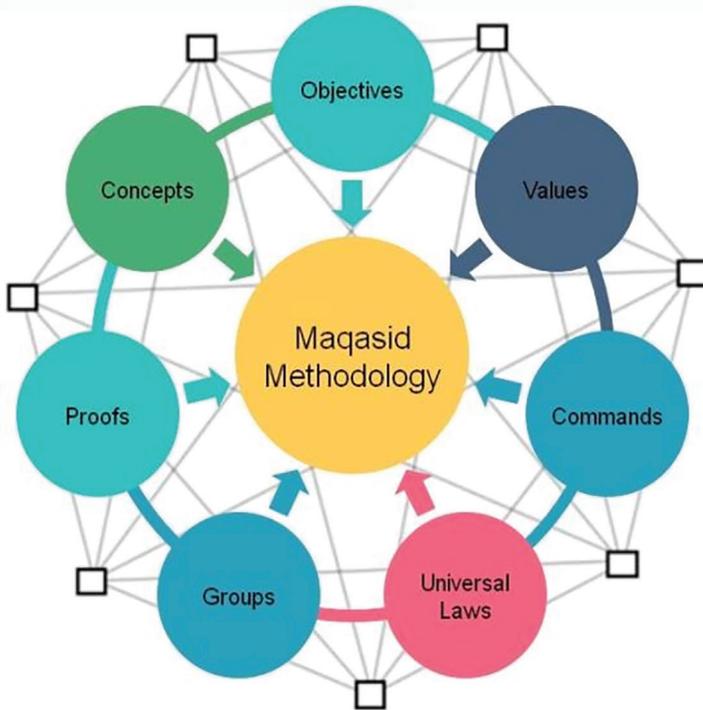


Figure 3: Jasser Auda's Seven-Element Framework (Abu Rayash & Sabbah, 2023)

In general, the integration of reflexive thematic analysis and the *maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* approach provides a strong foundation for examining the role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam* in Cape Town. The reflexive thematic approach allows for the exploration of participants' lived experiences, while the *maqāsid* framework offers theological insights grounded in Islamic principles. Together, these methods enable a nuanced understanding of both the social and spiritual significance of *Mawlūd Jamāts*, setting the stage for the discussion of findings in the following sections.

### 3.3.2.1 *Maqāsid* of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*

The role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* in Cape Town aligns closely with the general *maqāsid* principal category, particularly concerning the text's inclusion of Qur'anic *āyāt*, which

represents Allah's commands, an essential element of Auda's theory. Within the *Sharaf al-Anam* text, the concepts of *salām* and *salāt*, which are prevalent throughout the text, are derived from Qur'anic *āyāt*. These concepts intertwine with a third Qur'anic concept, and another concept found in the *ḥadīth* blessings (*barakah*) and greetings (*tahiyyah*). Notably, the concept of *salām* in various derivatives appears at least 136 times, while *salāt* in various derivatives appears at least 83 times. Two prominent derivatives of *salām* are Muslim and Islam. Furthermore, a derivative of *salāt*, frequently recorded in the *Sharaf al-Anam*, is the command for a singular person, often prefixed with Allah's name, highlighting the importance of divine guidance in this religious and cultural practice (Summary of the *Sharaf al-Anam*, pp. 10,60). The preservation of these Qur'anic *āyāt* and their associated concepts by the *Mawlūd Jamāts* not only serves to uphold religious practices but also aligns with the broader *maqāsidi* principle of promoting societal benefits and preventing harm, thereby enriching the spiritual and communal fabric of Cape Town's Muslim community.

#### 4. Data Analysis

This section undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the fundamental themes within the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*, the chosen *Mawlūd* by the *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town. It meticulously explores four principal themes, each accompanied by a total of 13 subthemes. The first theme of history and leadership explores the origins of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* and encompasses two subthemes focussing on the revered figure *Hājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat and the succession of leadership among the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. The second theme, the interconnectedness and activities of ladies at *Mawlūd* events, includes two subthemes; the *Jamāts*' utilisation of the mosque; and their dress codes. The third theme, *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*, has six subthemes, including a brief historical background of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*, the sending of *salām* and *salāt* to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), specific *riwāyāt* recitation, the presentation of

Qur'anic *āyāt*, renditions of *qaṣā'id* with diverse melodies (*lāghāt*; sing. *lāghoe*) chanted by women, and the practice of *duā*. The fourth theme, benefits of attendance, explores the advantages of participating in the *Mawlūd Jamāts*' events, with three subthemes highlighting the physical, psychological (including emotional and spiritual benefits) as well as the social advantages. This detailed analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the *Sharaf al-Anam* and underscores its significance within the Cape Muslim community, highlighting both cultural preservation efforts and the personal benefits derived from participating in these annual celebrations.

#### 4.1 Brief History of Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town are comprised of *Muslim* women, like *Hājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat, who was from the city, as well as those from its surrounding areas, who gather at designated times throughout the year to recite the *Sharaf al-Anam*. The *Sharaf al-Anam* is observed over two seasons following *Koemies Mawlūd*. The *jamāts* are interconnected, maintaining specific succession plans, ensuring the continuation of their practices over generations. These gatherings typically occur in local mosques across Cape Town. Each *jamāt* distinguishes itself with unique attire, fostering a sense of identity among its members. While *Mawlūd* celebrations have been observed in Cape Town since the seventeenth century, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* have a distinct history spanning 95 years. They were established in 1928 by *Hājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat, marking a pivotal moment in the community's religious and cultural landscape.

##### 4.1.1 *Hājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat, Icon of the Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

*Hājjah* Mariam Bassier Dramat is recognised as the pioneering leader of the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*, having taught numerous women the *Sharaf al-Anam* in various areas of Cape Town, as far afield as Worcester. The *Mawlūd Jamāts* branched out from Bo-Kaap the area of Cape Town where *Hājjah* Mariam was based. Her influence continued to grow even when she was bedridden toward the end of her life. During this period, she handed over the leadership of the *jamāt* to her granddaughter,

*Hājjah* Mariam Hendricks Abdurahman. Following her passing on 13 May 1986, the *Mawlūd* tradition continued, with her *jamāt* celebrating its 95th anniversary in 2022. *Hājjah* Mariam's founding of *al-Fadeelah Mawlūd Jamāt* during her teenage years further indicated her commitment and dedication to preserving Muslim religious traditions and promoting social cohesion among women. Her willingness to share her knowledge of the *Sharaf al-Anam* with students from her area and beyond indicates her contribution to cultural and spiritual expressions of *maqāsidi* in various communities. The recitation of the *Sharaf al-Anam* by *Hājjah* Mariam and her students serves as a means of strengthening their spiritual bonds with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), aligning with Qur'anic principles that emphasise reverence for the Prophet (PBUH), as evident in *Surah al-Ahzāb* (Q. 33:56).

#### 4.2.2 The Succession of the Leadership of Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The succession of leadership within the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* follows a structured pattern rooted in familial ties and historical continuity, reflecting a legacy of female leadership across generations. This succession process is pivotal in maintaining the integrity and continuity of the *Mawlūd* tradition within Cape Muslim communities. Traditionally, leadership transitions within the *jamāts* often adhere to a matrilineal lineage, whereby leadership passes from the original founder or their direct students to subsequent generations. For instance, in the Worcester *Mawlūd Jamāt*, leadership has traditionally moved from mother to daughter, and then to sister-in-law and granddaughters, often ensuring familial succession. Similarly, in the Wellington ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāt*, leadership is typically transferred from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, highlighting the adaptability of leadership roles within family structures. Another illustrative example is *Hājjah* Mariam's granddaughter assuming leadership of *al-Fadeelah Mawlūd Jamāt* following her grandmother, thereby preserving the teachings and practices initiated by the founder. In another instance, leadership continued within the same family

lineage, with another granddaughter leading after the passing of the initial leader. This succession model underscores the resilience and adaptability of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, facilitating the establishment of new groups in different regions while maintaining continuity in *Mawlūd* practices. The transmission of knowledge and leadership across generations and communities has not only preserved the religious and cultural significance of *Mawlūd*, but also the overall wellbeing of the community by reinforcing its collective identity. By ensuring succession of leadership, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* safeguard the perpetuation of meaningful traditions, contributing to the spiritual enrichment and communal cohesion of their members. This structured approach to leadership succession reflects a deep commitment to preserving and perpetuating the values and practices inherent in the *Mawlūd* celebration.

### 4.3 The Interconnectedness of Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* demonstrate a profound interconnectedness through their collective efforts, akin to the flourishing branches of a tree expanding in various directions. Rooted in the teachings of Islam, particularly emphasised in *Surah al-Imrān* (Q,3:103), which encourages unity and collaboration among believers while cautioning against division, the *jamāts* exemplify these principles in their actions. Despite potential challenges such as personal differences or ideological variations, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* remain united by their shared purpose of sending *salām* and *salāt* to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This shared emphasis creates a collective spiritual dynamic wherein the presence of the Divine is palpable. These phenomena reflect the manifestations of Divine love and pleasure, fostering an atmosphere of profound spiritual connection and communal devotion. The Qur'anic verse found in *Surah al-Imran* in verse 103, underscores the *maqāsid* of unity and sisterhood, highlighting the interconnectedness and collective commitment of the *jamāts*' members. This unity aligns with the general *maqāsid* of preserving faith and promoting harmony within the community. By nurturing this interconnectedness, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* of Cape Town contribute to the multifaceted objectives of *maqāsid* in Islamic teachings, reinforcing the importance of communal bonds and shared

spiritual endeavours. Through their collaborative efforts, the *jamāts* exemplify the power of unity and collaboration in achieving shared goals and fostering a sense of community and belonging among its members. This interconnectedness not only strengthens their collective identity but also enriches their spiritual journey during *Mawlūd* events, embodying the essence of Islamic teachings in practice.

#### 4.3.1 The Utilization of the Mosque by the Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* traditionally host their *Mawlūd* events in the mosques of their respective communities, a religiously and culturally significant space. During these events, they gather and occupy the main arena of the mosque, typically reserved for men, and enjoy unrestricted access and movement throughout the mosque. These occasions serve as opportunities to initiate other women into these sacred spaces, allowing them to sit in the most revered space of the mosque, the *mihṛāb*.<sup>30</sup> The utilisation of mosques, the social hub of the Muslim community, by the *Mawlūd Jamāts* fulfils the general *maqāsid* of fostering social cohesion and unity, as highlighted in *Surah al-Hujurāt*<sup>31</sup> (Q. 49:10). By appropriating the main prayer area during the *Sharf al-Anam* events, they also exemplify a partial *maqāsid* related to cultural expression and community enrichment. This distinctive cultural practice demonstrates their deep religious devotion and reinforces their communal identity. As mentioned, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* provide women with the opportunity to enter and occupy the main arena and sacred spaces within the mosque, aligning with the specific *maqāsid* goals of empowerment, inclusivity, and fostering a profound sense of belonging among women in the community.

---

30 Arabic word for a niche in which the imām often stands when leading the jamāt in prayer.

31 Arabic phrase meaning “the private chambers”.

### 4.3.2 The Dress Code of the Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*' sartorial choices feature a distinctive dress code comprising 'abāyāt (sing. 'abāyah),<sup>32</sup> head coverings and flowers in various colours pinned to the upper body, serving as a visual identifier to differentiate between the various *jamāts*. The colours range from maroon, green, blue, purple, pink, yellow, silver, gold, cream, and white. The garments are modest, covering the *awrah*,<sup>33</sup> and exemplify the Qur'anic principle of beautification when attending the mosque gatherings (*Surah al-A'rāf* Q,7:31). By adhering to a strict dress code, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* embody the general *maqāsid* of modesty, piety, and maintaining an Islamic identity. Despite similar dress codes, as mentioned, the *jamāts* exercise personal expression through strategic deployment of coloured flowers, demonstrating unity in diversity. This subtle yet meaningful fashion choice allows individual *jamāts* to assert their uniqueness while remaining part of a larger collective, illustrating the complex interplay between conformity and individuality. The specific *maqāsid* of righteousness and piety is upheld through the members' conscientious choice of modest dress. This commitment reflects their dedication to Islamic values and reinforces their spiritual and communal bonds during the *Mawlūd* events.

### 4.4 The *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*

The *Sharaf al-Anam* is the preferred *Mawlūd* text for the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in Cape Town. This preference stems from its rich historical background, the specific rituals it incorporates, and the spiritual and communal benefits it offers. The *Sharaf al-Anam* is a poetic, sacred composition that praises Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), celebrates his life, and bestows blessings upon him.

32 Arabic word for long, loose-fitting dresses worn by women.

33 Arabic word for "private parts" that should be guarded when in the presence of strange men.

#### 4.4.1 A Brief History of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd*

The *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* is the most prominent '*Alawiyah Mawlūd*', which appears to have been the most widely practiced *Mawlūd* throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Cape Town (*Boorhaanol Islam*, 1998, p. 11). It holds a significant place in the religious and cultural history of Cape Town's Muslim community. It was brought to the region by early Muslim settlers and preserved and passed down through generations. The text is recited in Arabic, reflecting its origins and the linguistic traditions of the community. The *Sharaf al-Anam* is not merely a religious text, but also a cultural artefact that encapsulates the historical journey of the Muslim community in Cape Town. Its recitation during *Mawlūd* celebrations serves as a reminder of the community's heritage and the continuity of their religious practices. The text comprises various components, including the *Qablah*<sup>34</sup> *Salawāt*, 17 (sets of narrations in the form of prose or poetry (*riwāyāt*; *sing. riwāyah*), the *ashraqal*, and a concluding *duā*. The *riwāyāt* section covers aspects of the Prophet's (PBUH) birth and early life, Qur'anic *āyāt* and *qaṣā'id*. Its *qaṣā'id* are presented in multiple *lāghoes*, which were composed by various community members including Imām Gasant of the Auwal<sup>35</sup> mosque, Shaykh Typie Jabaar of Wynberg, Shaykh Moegierien of Simonstown, and Imām Kiamdien from Paarl. The hosting *jamāts* of the traditional recitation of the *Sharaf al-Anam* are referred to as the *sit*<sup>36</sup>*jamāts*, distinct from the *jikke*<sup>37</sup> *jamāts* (Moulood un-Nabi, 2021, pp. 22,29,32).

#### 4.4.2 Sending *Salām* and *Salāt* to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The *Sharaf al-Anam* commences with the invocation of blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), referred to as *Qablah Salawāt*, and its accompanying *duā*. The Arabic root of the word *salām*, *salama*, which is a fundamental concept in Islamic theology and culture, conveys notions of peace, safety, and submission. The *ashraqal* is recited at the conclusion of

---

34 Arabic word for introductory.

35 Arabic word meaning first.

36 Afrikaans word for sit.

37 Colloquial name for *dhikr* (lit. "remembrance"), or phrases or prayers repeatedly recited in remembrance of Allah.

the *riwāyāt*, holding profound significance with its multifaceted dimensions. The recitation of the *ashraqal* often evokes powerful emotional responses, commonly leading to tears and a deep sense of connection. The Arabic words *shams* (sun) and *qamr* (moon), are particularly impactful, as is the attribution of beautiful words to the Prophet (PBUH) in the phrase “*ya nabi salām alayka ya rasūl salām alayka.*” This practice is in accordance with Allah’s command in *Surah al-Ahzāb* (Q. 33:56) to send peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Through their continuous recitation of the *Sharaf al-Anam*, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* fulfil the specific *maqāsid* of Auda’s approach, expressing devotion to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and seeking blessings from Allah. This reinforces their faith and connection with the Prophet (PBUH), fostering a sense of piety and reverence.

#### 4.4.3 The *Riwāyāt* Recited by the Ladies’ *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The ladies’ *Mawlūd Jamāts* recite selected *riwāyāt* from the *Sharaf al-Anam*, which contains accounts of Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) birth and his early life. These recitations have been preserved in the original Arabic, with some *riwāyāt* incorporating Qur’anic *āyāt*. The *riwāyāt* are recited following the *salām*, and children are often encouraged to participate due to their melodious voices. This practice aligns with the *maqāsid* of preserving faith, as it commemorates the birth and early life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the seal of Prophet-hood (*Sūrah al-Ahzāb*, Q.33:40). The recitation of the *riwāyāt* also contributes to the preservation of Islamic history, since it contains valuable information about the Prophet’s (PBUH) life. The enthusiastic renditions of *riwāyāt* evoke a profound spiritual experience among the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, deepening their connection with the Prophet (PBUH). Moreover, the involvement of children in reciting *Riwāyāt* nurtures their love for the Prophet (PBUH). Notably, despite language barriers, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* demonstrate remarkable dedication to preserving their religious heritage by maintaining correct recitation in the original Arabic of the *riwāyāt*.

#### 4.4.4 The Quranic *Āyāt* Found in the *Sharaf al-Anam*

During their *Mawlūd* events, the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* recite various Qur'anic *āyāt*, which are incorporated into some *riwāyāt* of the *Sharaf al-Anam*. The first *riwāyah* recited by the *Mawlūd Jamāts* consists of melodiously rendered Qur'anic *āyāt*, specifically from *Surah al-Fath* (Q. 48:1-3), the last two *āyāt* of *Surah al-Tawbah* (Q. 9:128, 129), *Surah al-Fatiha* (Q.1:2) and *Surah al-Ahzāb* (Q.33:56). The third *riwāyah* contains *āyāt* from *Surah al-Ahzāb* (Q. 33:44-48) and a portion of the *āyah* in *Surah al-Shūra* (Q. 42:22). The recitation of these Qur'anic *āyāt* reflects the general *maqāsidi* of preserving and promoting the faith of *Mawlūd Jamāts*' members. Through these recitations, *Mawlūd Jamāts* foster a deep connection with the Qur'an, which aligns with the partial *maqāsidi al-sharī'ah* of Auda's approach. This practice deepens their love and devotion to the Qur'an, Islamic teachings and ultimately to Allah. The melodious and emotional recitation of the Qur'an is in line with specific *maqāsidi*, providing spiritual guidance to Muslims, creating a sense of unity, and nurturing an emotional attachment to the teachings of the Qur'an and their love for Allah and the Prophet (PBUH).

#### 4.4.5 The *Qaṣā'id* Chanted by the Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

The *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* includes *qaṣā'id*, which are recited on various occasions, including during *Mawlūd* celebrations. While the entire *Mawlūd* is recited with *lāghāt*, the popularity of *qaṣā'id* makes them more renowned and memorable. Two famous *qaṣā'id* in the *Mawlūd* are: "one thousand *salawāt* on Prophet Muhammad" (PBUH), and the *qaṣīda* believed to have been recited by the Prophet's grandfather when he took young Muhammad (PBUH) to the *Ka'ba*<sup>38</sup> to express gratitude to Allah. These *qaṣā'id* are recited with specific *lāghāt*, intended to enhance the recitation's beauty and impact on listeners. Some *jamāts* have their unique *lāghoe*, while others adhere strictly to a common melody or tune. The *maqāsidi* of *qaṣā'id*, aligns with promoting of Islamic values and teachings, thereby preserving Islamic

---

38 Arabic word for the cube shaped sacred building found in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, referred to as the house of Allah.

traditions. This aligns with the preservation of faith and intellect, two essential elements of the *sharī'ah*. The *qaṣā'id* within this *Mawlūd*, as performed by the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, serve as a means of praising Allah and sending salutations to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), reinforcing fundamental Islamic beliefs and teachings. This practice also plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Islamic heritage and culture in Cape Town. The *Mawlūd Jamāts* express their devotion to Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) in a unique and impactful way by reciting the *qaṣā'id* melodiously.

#### 4.4.6 The *Duā* Made by the Ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*

*Duā* is a personal and collective supplication to Allah, seeking assistance and guidance in all aspects of life, physical and spiritual. It is a direct means of communication with Allah, an integral part of worship, and highly encouraged. Gratitude and appreciation are expressed through *duā*, demonstrating reliance on Allah and humility before Him. Making *duā* is believed to bring the supplicant closer to Allah, rekindling their connection. The ladies of the *Mawlūd Jamāts* conclude the *Qablah Salawāt* and the *Mawlūd* with *duā*, seeking Allah's forgiveness, mercy and wellbeing for all. This *duā* follows the emotional *ashraqal*, softening the heart and making the supplication sincere, and acceptable to Allah. The leader or appointed member reads the *duā*, aligning with the *maqāsid* of faith, intellect, and overall wellbeing.

The practice of *duā* by the *Mawlūd Jamāts* fulfils the general *maqāsid* of preserving and promoting Islamic practices, supported by the partial *maqāsid* of emotional and spiritual connection.

#### 4.5 The Benefits of Attending the *Mawlūd*

Participating in the *Mawlūd an-Nabi* events organised by ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* yields a multifaceted array of benefits, including physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social advantages. These benefits collectively contribute to the overall wellbeing and enrichment of the participants, fostering a holistic and inclusive experience.

#### 4.5.1 The Physical Benefits Derived from Attending the *Mawlūd*

Attending the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*' events offers physical benefits through the provision of a diverse range of foods and beverages, including rice and meat dishes, cakes, water, soft drinks, juices, hot beverages, savouries, bread, sweet dishes, sweet treats, and fruit. Additionally, some *Mawlūd Jamāts* distribute educational gifts, such as books (*kitābs*) containing *Sūrah Yāsīn*<sup>39</sup> and various *'ad'iyah* (sing. *duā*), as a form of *sadaqatul jāriyah* (perpetual rewards). This act of donating food and gifts aligns with the *maqāsid* of benefitting others and contributing to the collective wellbeing of the Muslim *ummah* (community). Furthermore, it achieves the partial *maqāsid* of fostering compassion and harmonious relationships within the community, thereby promoting social cohesion and solidarity among the attendees.

#### 4.5.2 The Psychological, Emotional and Spiritual Benefits Achieved from Attending the *Mawlūd*

The ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts*' events have a profound impact on attendees, inspiring and motivating them to establish their own *jamāts* in their hometowns and communities. This inspiration is often sparked by the *nasīha* (advice) presented by experienced members of the *jamāt*, which fosters a sense of community and knowledge sharing. Through these events, members have the opportunity to teach and learn from one another, transforming the experience into an enriching educational encounter that extends beyond mere entertainment. The *maqāsid* of Islamic teachings are fulfilled through the numerous benefits of attending the *Mawlūd Jamāts*' events, including contributing to individual wellbeing, fostering love and appreciation for the Prophet (PBUH), promoting spiritual growth, preserving faith, encouraging gratitude and facilitating intellectual development. By attending these events, individuals are empowered to become active participants in the preservation and promotion of Islamic values and traditions.

---

39 The 36th chapter of the Qur'an.

#### 4.5.3 The Social Benefits Attained from Attending the *Mawlūd*

The social benefits of the *Mawlūd* events organised by the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* range from personal to collective empowerment, fostering a range of skills and values essential for community building and harmony. Through active participation, these ladies develop crucial skills such as teamwork, conflict management, negotiation, critical thinking, public speaking, event planning, financial management, program design, graphic design, and leadership. These collective skills are vital for the successful organisation of *Mawlūd* events. Moreover, the reunification with old acquaintances, family, and friends at these events strengthens social bonds among the *Mawlūd Jamāts*. The general *maqāsid* of promoting wellbeing and harmony within the community are achieved through the *Mawlūd Jamāts* learning to work together, manage conflict and cultivate negotiation skills, thereby fostering amicable relations. Additionally, the partial *maqāsid* of cultivating love and appreciation for the Prophet (PBUH) and his (PBUH) teachings are evident as the ladies encourage one another to perform good deeds, act as role models, and remind each other to seek closeness to Allah through sending peace and salutations to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The commitment to spreading messages of love, peace, compassion, and unity, as taught by the Prophet (PBUH), is reinforced when attendees come together at their *Mawlūd* events. Furthermore, the specific *maqāsid* of preserving life and future generations is ensured through the practice of attending and participating in the events of the *Mawlūd Jamāts*.

The data revealed the unwavering seriousness, dedication, commitment, endurance, and perseverance of the ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in upholding the traditions of Islam in Cape Town. Their contributions to the preservation of *dīn* bear testament to the enduring legacy of *Hājjah* Mariam, who's *jamāt* diligently commemorated and celebrated *Mawlūd an-Nabi* in Cape Town's mosques for 95 years. The values of generosity and concern for others demonstrated through mutual gifting at their events, align with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and are universally admirable qualities encouraged by Islamic teachings. This legacy has stood the test of time and will continue to endure. The resilience exhibited by this tradition, even in the absence of its initiator, reinforces its significance as a source of spiritual sustenance and unity. The careful succession of leadership within these groups ensures the continuity of their practices, fostering a resilient and interconnected community that continues to thrive and uphold its values through the annual recitation of the *Sharaf al-Anam*. Through their structured gatherings, distinctive dress codes, and ritualistic practices, the *Mawlūd Jamāts* not only preserve their traditions but also enrich their personal and social lives. Notably, the *Sharaf al-Anam* transcends linguistic barriers, with English and Afrikaans translations and transliterations presented alongside the original Arabic text, broadening its reach and accessibility to a wider audience. This transcultural effort bridges understanding, strengthening the connection between the tradition and its practitioners. The tradition continues to inspire not only the *Mawlūd Jamāts*, but also Muslims across Cape Town and beyond.

## 5. Conclusion

This research underscores the pivotal role of ladies' *Mawlūd Jamāts* in preserving the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* tradition, which promotes the conveyance of *salām* and *salāt* upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The efforts of these *Jamāts* significantly enrich the Islamic heritage of the Cape, aligning with the *maqāsidi* of the *sharī'ah* by safeguarding essential values such as faith, life, intellect, and lineage, as reflected in Auda's

comprehensive framework. This study suggests that enhancing Arabic language proficiency among *Mawlūd Jamāts* could deepen understanding of the *Sharaf al-Anam*, while increased mosque engagement may further enrich spiritual and communal experiences.

The study successfully addressed its four main objectives: providing a historical overview of *Mawlūd Jamāts* with an emphasis on *Hājjah Mariam Bassier Dramat*; exploring event practices that foster community; analyzing the literary and devotional aspects of the *Sharaf al-Anam*; and presenting the holistic benefits of *Mawlūd* events on community well-being, encompassing physical, social, and communal aspects.

While this research offers valuable insights, its qualitative nature limits its scope. Future research integrating quantitative data could provide additional perspectives. In addition, examining the specific impact of the *Sharaf al-Anam Mawlūd* tradition on women in *Mawlūd Jamāts* and exploring pedagogical methods for transmitting this tradition across generations would yield further understanding. Broadening the research to encompass similar traditions in diverse global contexts and examining their intergenerational transmission could offer a richer perspective on the sustainability of Islamic knowledge sharing. This study represents a foundational step in exploring Muslim women's contributions to Islamic tradition, paving the way for deeper investigation into the impact of Islamic practices on communities worldwide.

## References

- Abu Rayash, A., & Sabbah, E. (2023, January). *Composite Maqasid methodology highlighting 7 elements of the web of meanings (modified from Auda 2021)*. Retrieved July 24, 2023, from Researchgate.net.
- Afridi, M. A. (2016, June). *Maqasid al-Shari'ah and preservation of basic rights*. Retrieved July 22, 2023, from jesoc.com.
- Akman, S. (2023, April 2). *What is snowball sampling: Methods and examples*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from forms.app.
- Auda, J. (2008). *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic law. A system's approach*. Surrey: The International Institute of Islamic Thought. Retrieved May 10, 2023

- Auda, J. (2020, April 29). Episode 7: Maqasid Methodolody. *Horizon Leadership Academy*. Retrieved May 10, 2023
- Auda, J. (2023, August 10). *Re-envisioning Islamic scholarship by Prof. Jasser Auda*. Retrieved August 21, 2023, from Research synergy foundation.
- Bhandari, P. (2023, January 1). *Articles by Pritha Bhandari-page 6Scribbr*. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from scribbr.co.uk.
- Bouchiba, F., & Laakili, M. (n.d.). *The celebration of the birth of the Prophet (al-mawlid al-Nabawi) in the in the Muslim world and the west: debates, practices and representations*. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from journals.openedition.org.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Braun, V and Clarke, V (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology*. Retrieved July 5, 2024, from psychology.ukzn.ac.za.
- da Costa, Y., & Davids, A. (1994). *Pages from Cape Muslim History*. Retrieved July 3, 2023, from naqshbandi.org.za.
- Devine, R. (2021, November 12). *Reflexive Thematic Analysis-The What, Why and How-Richard*. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from richarddevinesocialwork.com.
- Elliott, R. (2020, June 18). *Probability and non-probability samples*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from Geopoll.
- George, T. (2023, June 22). *Articles by Tegan George-page-5-Scribbr*. Retrieved July 5, 2024, from Scribbr.com.
- Isaacs, R. (2014, December 5). *Moulood, a firm Cape tradition*. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from vocfm.co.za.
- Kaarlsholm, P. (2014). *Zanzibaris or Amakhuwa? Sufi networks in South Africa, Mozambique and the Indian Ocean*. Retrieved July 23, 2023, from forskning.ruc.dk.
- Kamali, M. H. (2012). *Maqasid-al-Shari'ah-ijtihad-and-civilisational-renewal*. Retrieved July 22, 2023, from iiii.org.

- Kaptein, N. (1993). *The Berdiri Mawlid issue among Indonesian Muslims in the period from circa 1875 to 1930*. Retrieved August 13, 2023, from researchgate.net.
- Katz, M. H. (2008, August). *women's Mawlid performances in Sanaa and the construction of "Popular Islam."*. Retrieved August 13, 2023, from researchgate.net.
- Mashur, F. M. (2017). *Interpretation and overinterpretation of Ja'far ibn Hasan Al-Barzanji's Mawlid Al-Barzanji*. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from neliti.com.
- Maulud al-Nabi Sharaf al-Anam*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2024, from eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP609-5-4.
- Mission of mercy, message of love*. (2014, December 3). Retrieved July 8, 2024, from Mawlidsa.org.
- Moulood un-Nabi*. (2021). Cape Town: Boorhaanol Islam Movement. Retrieved April 30, 2024
- Ozgehan, U. (2022, May 30). *Thematic Analysis with MAXQDA: Step-by-Step Guide*. Retrieved July 24, 2023, from MAXQDA.com.
- Stanton, A. L. (2015). *Celebrating Muhammad's birthday in the Middle East*. Retrieved August 12, 2023, from academia.edu.
- Summary of the Sharaf al-Anam*. (n.d.). Atlas trading company. Retrieved July 22, 2023
- Tarsitani, S. (2007). *Mawlund: Celebratin the birth of the Propher in Islamic religious rituals and wedding ceremonies in Harar*. Retrieved August 24, 2023, from persee.fr/doc/etho\_00.
- Vahed, G. (2003, October 1). *Contesting "Orthodoxy": The Tablighi- Sunni conflict among South African muslims in the 1970s and 1980s*. Retrieved July 23, 2023, from semantic scholar.org.
- Walker, P. E. (2024, May 27). *Saladin*. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from Britannica.com.

***Thoerria Najjar Philander*** began her educational journey at Boorhaanol Creche (age 5) and subsequently attended St. Paul's Primary and Trafalgar High (matriculating in 1985). Thoerria graduated as an Oral Hygienist from the University of Western Cape (1989) and served as a chief Oral Hygienist and lecturer at MEDUNSA and Pretoria University (1990s). She earned a BA degree (2006) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (2008) from the University of South Africa. Thoerria completed her BA Honours degree in Islamic Studies (2019) and a Master degree in Applied Islamic Thought at Islamic Peace College South Africa (2023).