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**Correspondence: Taha**

**Nazir** PhD, Researcher,  
Writer, Social Activist and  
Media Professional.

<https://tahanazir.com/>,  
[info@tahanazir.com](mailto:info@tahanazir.com)

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**Analytical Review**

**THE IMAGE OF AL-ANDALUS IN THE COLLECTIVE  
PSYCHOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM  
INTELLECTUALS: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF  
HISTORICAL ROMANTICISM, MYTHICAL ELEMENTS,  
CULTURAL MEMORY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS**

**Saqib Almas<sup>1</sup>, Taha Nazir<sup>2</sup>, Israr Ahmed<sup>3</sup>, Nafasat Hussain<sup>4</sup>**

1. Legal-Media Advisor, Consortium Publisher, Canada.  
<https://consortiumpublisher.ca/>
2. Board Chair, Canadian Association of Journalists and Media  
Professionals, ON Canada. [www.canadianjournalists.ca/](http://www.canadianjournalists.ca/)
3. Chief Editor, Aghaaz Info Media System, Consortium Publisher,  
Canada. <https://consortiumpublisher.ca/>
4. Associate Editor Aghaaz Info Media System, Consortium  
Publisher, Canada. <https://consortiumpublisher.ca/>

**Running title:** Al Andalus, memory, and South Asian Muslim  
identity

**Abstract**

For South Asian Muslim intellectuals, Al Andalus remains a powerful symbol of cultural glory, loss, and historical longing. This review examines how its memory has been shaped through romanticism, myth, poetry, and collective memory in the Indian subcontinent. Drawing on the works of Mubarak Ali, Allama Iqbal, Reinhart Dozy, and modern theories of memory and identity, the study argues that Al Andalus functions not only as history but as a psychological and ideological symbol. It inspires pride in Islamic intellectual achievement and resistance to colonial erasure, yet also sustains nostalgia, grief, and victimhood in contemporary identity discourse. By combining historical, psychological, and postcolonial perspectives, the paper highlights both the empowering and limiting role of Al Andalus in South Asian Muslim thought.

**Keywords:** Al-Andalus, South Asian Muslim intellectuals, collective psychology, historical romanticism, cultural memory, postcolonial nostalgia, convivencia, mythical elements, Allama Iqbal, Dr. Mubarak Ali

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**Conflict of Interest Statement:** The author declares all potential conflicts of interest and affirms that any such interests have been appropriately disclosed in accordance with standard ethical guidelines.

**AI Tools and Assistance Statement:** Artificial intelligence tools were utilized to support content structuring, data analysis, and evidence synthesis. All outputs were critically reviewed and validated by the author, who assumes full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and conclusions of the work.

**Peer Review Statement:** This manuscript has not undergone external peer review, as it represents a structured synthesis and analysis of existing evidence. The methodological approach adheres to established standards to ensure rigor, transparency, and scientific validity.

### Data Synthesis and Analysis

Data were synthesized using meta-analysis (fixed/random effects) with heterogeneity assessed by  $I^2$  and Cochran's Q. Where pooling was not feasible, narrative and thematic syntheses were applied. Network meta-analysis and meta-regression were conducted where appropriate, in accordance with PRISMA and Cochrane guidelines.

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## Introduction:

References to Al-Andalus appear repeatedly in the writings and discourse of South Asian Muslim intellectuals, evoking both triumphalist pride in the rapid Islamic expansion of 711 CE and deep melancholy over its final collapse in 1492. This recurring motif transcends mere historical interest; it constitutes a core element of collective psychology, reflecting unresolved tensions between glory and loss, resistance and defeat. Dr. Mubarak Ali, a prominent Pakistani historian, describes Al-Andalus as an “ibrat nama” (a moral lesson or cautionary tale), while Allama Muhammad Iqbal immortalized its spirit in poems such as “Masjid-e-Qartaba,” where the mosque of Cordoba becomes a living symbol of Islamic civilizational grandeur.

This phenomenon is not purely historical but deeply psychological, rooted in postcolonial identity crises and cultural nostalgia. South Asian Muslims, having experienced centuries of colonial subjugation followed by partition and nation-building struggles, project their aspirations and traumas onto the Al-Andalus narrative. The image functions as a psychological anchor—offering solace in a glorious past while highlighting the fragility of Muslim political power. This extended analytical review systematically dissects the interplay of factual history, mythical embellishments, collective memory mechanisms, and long-term psychological consequences, providing a multi-layered understanding relevant to contemporary identity formation.

## Theoretical Framework

The study employs four interlocking theoretical lenses:

- **Collective Memory** (Maurice Halbwachs): Shared memories are socially constructed and serve group identity needs.

- **Invented Traditions** (Eric Hobsbawm): Historical narratives are selectively reconstructed to legitimize present-day aspirations.
- **Postcolonial Nostalgia and Hybridity** (Homi Bhabha, Edward Said): Romanticized pasts help negotiate colonial trauma and cultural hybridity.
- **Imagined Communities** (Benedict Anderson): Al-Andalus becomes an imagined golden age that binds dispersed Muslim intellectuals across time and space.

These frameworks reveal how South Asian Muslim thinkers transform Al-Andalus into a psychological and ideological resource.

## Historical Background and the Rise of Al-Andalus

The Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula began in 711 CE under Tariq ibn Ziyad, leading to nearly eight centuries of Islamic rule that produced one of medieval Europe's most advanced civilizations. At its peak under the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba, Al-Andalus excelled in science, philosophy, medicine, agriculture, and architecture. Cities like Cordoba, Toledo, and Granada became beacons of learning, preserving and advancing Greco-Roman, Persian, and Indian knowledge while fostering *convivencia*—a pragmatic model of coexistence among Muslims, Christians, and Jews.



## Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula - Wikipedia

### **Figure 1: Muslim Conquest of the Iberian Peninsula (711–719 CE) – Historical Timeline**

**Map** This detailed map illustrates the rapid early Muslim advances across Iberia following the Battle of Guadalete (711 CE), key cities conquered, and the establishment of Al-Andalus under Umayyad rule, extending to later periods up to the fall of Granada in 1492. It visually captures the timeline from initial conquest to consolidation. **Source:** Wikipedia / Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula – [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim\\_conquest\\_of\\_the\\_Iberian\\_Peninsula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_the_Iberian_Peninsula) (public domain historical cartography, updated scholarly versions 2024).

### **Historical Facts versus Mythical Elements**

While the conquest was historically transformative, several popular narratives contain mythical embellishments. Tariq ibn Ziyad, of Berber origin, delivered a famous motivational speech (“Burn the ships!”) that is absent from contemporary sources and first appears in Ibn Khallikan’s 13th-century biography—centuries later. Modern historians have largely debunked it as a later motivational myth. Similarly, the notion of a purely tolerant paradise is idealized; while *convivencia* enabled remarkable intellectual exchange, periods of tension, taxation (jizya), and occasional conflict existed.

Nevertheless, the factual achievements remain extraordinary: Al-Andalus produced figures like Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Maimonides, and countless advancements in astronomy, mathematics, and surgery (over 200 instruments documented). These realities were selectively amplified in South Asian discourse to counter colonial narratives of Muslim “backwardness.”

### **Convivencia and Interfaith Intellectual Exchange**

One of Al-Andalus’s most celebrated aspects is the *convivencia* model, where scholars of different faiths collaborated in translation houses and academies. This pragmatic pluralism produced translations of Aristotle, Plato, and Indian mathematical texts that later fueled the European Renaissance.



[en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

Social and cultural exchange in al-Andalus - Wikipedia

**Figure 2: Convivencia – Social and Cultural Exchange in Al-Andalus** This medieval manuscript-style illustration depicts a Christian knight and a Muslim scholar engaged in a game of chess, symbolizing intellectual and cultural dialogue across religious lines in medieval Iberia. It visually represents the spirit of coexistence and knowledge exchange that defined parts of Al-Andalus society. **Source:** Wikipedia / Social and cultural exchange in al-Andalus – [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_and\\_cultural\\_exchange\\_in\\_al-Andalus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_and_cultural_exchange_in_al-Andalus) (medieval illumination, public domain).

### The Reconquista, Fall of Granada, and Double Standards

The Christian Reconquista (1085–1492) culminated in the fall of Granada and the subsequent expulsion or forced conversion of Muslims and Jews. Dr. Mubarak Ali notes that while religious zeal was invoked, political and economic motives dominated—mirroring patterns seen in other medieval conquests. South Asian intellectuals often highlight perceived double standards: European powers romanticized their own crusades while condemning Muslim rule as “invasion.”

**Collective Psychology and Cultural Memory in South Asian Context** Allama Iqbal’s “Masjid-e-Qartaba” transforms the ruins of Cordoba into a metaphor for eternal Islamic spirit amid temporal decline. Dr. Mubarak Ali draws parallels with World War I imagery—soldiers realizing life continues without them—evoking the psychological pain of “fallen glory.” This collective memory serves identity construction: it counters postcolonial inferiority complexes by

reclaiming a narrative of past excellence. Yet it also risks fostering victimhood narratives that hinder pragmatic engagement with modernity.

**Psychological Impacts: Positive and Negative Dimensions** Positively, the Al-Andalus image inspires cultural confidence, intellectual revival movements, and resistance to cultural erasure. Negatively, excessive romanticism can promote escapism or rigid identity politics. Contemporary research (e.g., Akasoy 2010) cautions against over-idealizing *convivencia*, yet affirms its relevance as a multicultural model for today's plural societies.

## Discussion

The romanticization of Al-Andalus in South Asian Muslim psychology reflects a universal human tendency to mythologize history for present needs. It functions as both empowerment and burden—fueling pride while perpetuating grief. In an era of globalization and identity polarization, this collective memory demands critical re-examination: separating empirical history from myth to extract genuine lessons in pluralism, resilience, and knowledge production.

## Future Directions and Policy/Intellectual Recommendations

Future scholarship should prioritize de-mythologized, comparative studies (Al-Andalus vs. Ottoman or Mughal experiences) and integrate digital humanities for wider dissemination. Intellectuals are encouraged to move beyond nostalgia toward applied lessons—promoting interfaith dialogue, scientific revival, and inclusive identity frameworks that transcend victimhood.

## Conclusion

Al-Andalus remains a cornerstone of South Asian Muslim collective psychology—an imagined yet potent symbol of lost glory, multicultural achievement, and cautionary wisdom. Through historical romanticism, mythical layering, and psychological projection, it continues to shape identity, aspirations, and narratives. A balanced, empirically grounded engagement with this legacy can transform nostalgia into constructive cultural agency, enabling South Asian Muslim intellectuals to navigate contemporary challenges with wisdom drawn from both fact and memory. Only by critically embracing this “fallen paradise” can the community move beyond postcolonial trauma toward renewed civilizational contribution.

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### **Ethical Statement**

This is a research-based manuscript prepared and structured in a scientific narrative review format. Modern AI-assisted tools were used to access current and authentic information from digital archives, bibliographic databanks, online libraries, research articles, academic repositories, and encyclopedias.

### **Preprint Notice**

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### **Literature Search and Information Management**

Literature retrieval was conducted using a structured and reproducible search strategy in accordance with PRISMA-S reporting standards. Search strategies were independently evaluated using the PRESS framework to ensure methodological quality, accuracy, and completeness. Grey literature was systematically identified using the CADTH *Grey Matters* framework to enhance coverage of unpublished, non-indexed, and policy-relevant sources, thereby minimizing publication bias and improving comprehensiveness.

### **Risk of Bias and Evidence Quality**

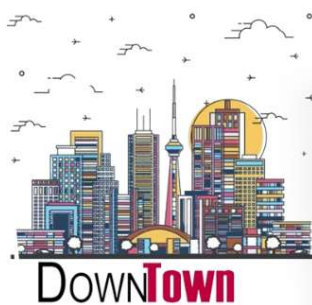
Risk of bias was assessed using validated, design-specific tools (RoB 2, ROBINS-I, QUADAS-2/3, AMSTAR 2, Newcastle–Ottawa Scale, and CASP). The certainty of evidence and strength of recommendations were evaluated using the GRADE framework, ensuring a standardized and reproducible assessment across study designs.

### **Review Typology and Reporting**

Review designs were classified into standard categories (scoping, umbrella, rapid, qualitative, and mixed-methods), with reporting aligned to established guidelines (PRISMA-ScR, PRIOR, PRISMA-RR, ENTREQ, and PRISMA/MMAT) to ensure methodological rigor and transparency.

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