

ISLAM AND THE CHINESE TRADITIONAL CULTURE*

ANIS AHMAD**

Meritorious Professor of Comparative Religion
Vice Chancellor, Riphah International University, Islamabad.
<anis@riphah.edu.pk>

ABSTRACT

Some modern western scholars have put forth a thesis that with the demise of the former Soviet Union a new era has begun in which war and clash will take place between civilizations instead of countries. It has also been claimed that the clash of civilizations is inevitable. It is predicted that in the post Soviet scenario the Chinese and Islamic civilizations may collaborate and the new rival of the West shall be the Sino-Islamic block.

Without delving into an analysis or refutation of the above thesis the present paper tries to understand meaning of the culture and civilization and their relationship with particularistic and universal ethical values. The paper makes an effort to understand ethical foundations of the traditional Chinese culture as well as that of the Islamic culture. It also explores the future of universal ethical values and suggests a co-existence model for a better and sustainable human society in order to relieve humanity from the nightmare of a possible clash of civilizations.

* This is an enlarged and revised version of a paper presented in the International Conference on "Islamic Studies in China" held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2008.

** Prof. Dr Anis Ahmad is meritorious professor of comparative religion and Vice Chancellor of the Riphah International University, Islamabad. He is also editor of a quarterly journal *West & Islam*, Islamabad. He has taught in several Universities of the East and the West in various capacities. He has



THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS CAN ISLAMIC FINANCE HELP?*

MUHAMMAD UMER CHAPRA**

Adviser

The Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI)
The Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
<muchapra@isdb.org>

A B S T R A C T

The paper discusses the primary cause or causes of the financial crises that have plagued almost every country around the world over the last three decades. Of particular significance is the prevailing subprime mortgage crisis in the United States which is more severe than any in the past and has had devastating spillover effects worldwide. It argues that one of the major causes of these crises is the lack of adequate market discipline in the financial system. This leads to excessive lending, high leverage and ultimately the crisis. Unwinding gives rise to a vicious cycle of selling that feeds on itself and leads to a steep decline in asset prices accompanied by bank failures and economic slowdown. Risk-sharing along with the availability of credit for primarily the purchase of real goods and services and restrictions on the sale of debt, short sales, excessive uncertainty (*gharar*), and gambling (*qimār*), which Islamic finance stands for, can help inject greater discipline into the system and, thereby, substantially reduce financial instability.

* This paper was originally based on a lecture delivered under Ibn Khaldun Lecture series at the Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, London, on 10 November 2008, which has been published by various journals because of its crucial importance. This particular version is specially modified, revised and updated by the author in light of the academic evaluation, comments and suggestions of the peer-reviewers at the roster of quarterly *Insights*.

** After completing PhD from the University of Minnesota (1961), Dr Chapra has taught Economics in



AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE SUBCONTINENT DURING 18-19TH CENTURIES

GULFISHAN KHAN*

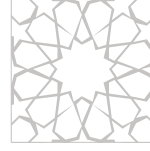
Associate Professor of History

Centre of Advance Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
<gulfishankhan@gmail>

A B S T R A C T

Qur'ān's repeated invitation to mankind to ponder upon the realities of the outer world as well as within themselves, as the signs and proofs of various articles of Islamic belief system has always fascinated Muslims with knowledge of astronomy, biology and other natural sciences. This tradition of learning, though at times its progress in the correct direction was impeded due to several factors, always had a central place in the Muslim civilization. The present paper presents an overview of the scientific thought in the subcontinent during the 18 –19th centuries. It is being argued that the subcontinent in the medieval times had a well-established scientific and technological tradition of its own which was vigorous and outward-looking. The encounter between European science and its counterpart in the subcontinent is not one of simple conquest and diffusion from the West to the East. Rather the intelligentsia of the subcontinent during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was in no respect different from early modern societies in Europe, China or elsewhere. With their own norms, ideals and standard of scholarship the medieval scientific community of the subcontinent surely had a deeply rooted culture of scientific learning. The reassessment presented here is based upon contemporary historical and biographical sources as well as modern scholarly researches on the subject.

* Dr Mrs Gulfishan Khan acquired her PhD in Indian History from Oxford University, Oxford (1993). Her areas of interest include Eighteenth Century Indian History, Intellectual History, Indo-Persian



SAID NURSI'S APPROACH TO THE ENVIRONMENT A SPIRITUAL VIEW ON THE BOOK OF UNIVERSE

SALIH YUCEL* AND SELMA SIVRI

School of Philosophical, Historical and International Studies

Centre for Religion and Theology, Monash University

Clayton Campus, Victoria, Australia

<salih.yucel@arts.monash.edu.au> <ssiv26@student.monash.edu.au>

A B S T R A C T

Said Nursi uses the unique term “the Book of Universe” to define the environment from a spiritual perspective. However, Nursi’s approach to the environment seems more holistic than the materialistic one. This term means that everything in the universe holds wisdom in its creation and needs to be understood. With its harmony and immaculate order observable in the cooperation of all creations, through nutrient distribution and seasonal changes, it is a guidebook which points to Creator’s attributes and being. The universe has its own maintenance system, recycling its own waste products, hence reflecting Creator’s name *al-Quddūs*, the Absolutely Pure. According to Nursi, all creation has two faces: one that looks to the Creator, and one that looks at the creation. Since humans have been made the custodians of earth by the Creator, they have the responsibility to protect the environment, consume thriftily, and appreciate the blessings given; otherwise they risk throwing the balance of the universe off and degrading the blessings of the Creator.

* Dr Salih Yucel acquired his PhD from Boston University, Boston (2007). His areas of interest include *Tibb Nabawi*: Medicine of the Prophet, Memories of early Muslim immigrants in Australia after Second World War, Islamic thought in the modern world and contemporary Islamic movements, Interfaith and intercultural activities between Muslims and non-Muslims. He has contributed several research articles to various refereed and non refereed journals. He has translated *Iman-i Kamal [Mature Faith]* by Mustafa Kemal Bin Omer al-Erzurumi, from classical Ottoman Scripture into modern Turkish (Ankara: 1982).



THE GLORIOUS QUR'ĀN AND AGRICULTURE

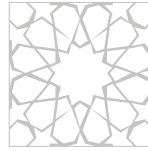
QAISER SHAHZAD*

Lecturer/Research Associate
Islamic Research Institute,
International Islamic University, Islamabad
<qaiser.shahzad@iiu.edu.pk>

A B S T R A C T

This short article presents an overview of how one of the most basic human activities namely agriculture is mentioned in the *āyāt* and the context of the Glorious Qur'ān. The article is divided into two parts; the first part analyzes the Qur'ānic technical vocabulary related to agricultural activity and the second part delves into Qur'ān's treatment of agriculture, classifies those *āyāt* of the Qur'ān that relate to agriculture and interprets a selection of these. For the purpose of this classification and interpretation we present a four-fold model. Both parts rely heavily on classical Arabic lexicons, *Ḥadīth* collections and the classical Qur'ān commentaries (*tafāsīr*).

* Qaiser Shahzad is doctoral candidate at the department of philosophy, University of the Punjab, Lahore. His areas of interest include Islamic Thought especially the mystical philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī, Medieval Philosophy especially the thought of J. S. Eriugena and Biomedical ethics. He has contributed research papers on Ibn 'Arabī and Biomedical ethics in various research journals. His latest publication is *Biomedical Ethics: Philosophical and Islamic Perspectives* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 2009).



MUSLIMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 11*

ANN-SOFIE NYMAN

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

Vienna, Austria

<office@ihf-hr.org>

Preface

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), on 7 March 2005, released a report, “Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the EU: Developments since September 11.” This 160-page report is based on information collected from a variety of official institutions, NGOs, mass media and individual religious and civil-rights activists in EU countries.

The report consists of three parts: introduction and recommendations to the EU member states; a general summary on the situation of Muslims in the EU; and an in-depth mapping of intolerant attitudes and facts on discriminatory actions directed against Muslims in the eleven countries of the European Union where the largest Muslim communities exist.

* This article is based on the Introduction, Summary and Recommendations for the EU member states, from, Ann-Sofie Nyman, “Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in the EU: Developments since September 11,” A Report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (Vienna: IHF, March 2005), pp. 7–27. It was originally posted at the IHF website and was available at <http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=4029>. However, all the data from the IHF website went offline except for the OSA Archivum and an announcement that IHF was forced to file for bankruptcy and consequently was close down on 7 December 2007. It is now available in PDF at: <<http://www.art1.nl/nprd/factsheets/Intolerance%20against%20muslims%20in%20the%20EU%2003-2005.pdf>>. We are publishing it with due acknowledgement and gratitude to the author, IHF and the Art1.nl.



I was Ready

RUQAIYYAH WARIS MAQSOOD

Author of numerous books; formerly Head of Religious Studies
at various UK inner-city secondary schools
<ruqaiyyah@ruqaiyyah.karoo.co.uk>

Introduction

Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood (Rosalyn Rushbrook) was born into a Christian family in 1942 in London. She earned an honors degree in Christian Theology from the University of Hull in 1963 and acquired a post-graduate teaching certificate the following year. She spent her professional life working as the Head of Religious Studies for a variety of inner city schools in the UK. She was a devout Christian and used her faith to write books to teach others about her religion. However, while studying intensely about the life of Jesus (peace be on him) in the light of Christianity, she began to question her own faith. In 1986 she accepted Islam. She retired in 1996 to focus more on her writing and lecturing. Her books about Islam have helped thousands of people learn about Islam. There are over forty books that she has penned which cover a range of Islamic issues from marriage to raising teenagers to life after death,¹ in addition under

1. Her books include: *Collins need to Know? Islam: Understand the religion behind the headlines* (London: HarperCollins, 2008); *Islam: A Dictionary* (Birmingham: IPCI, 2006); *GCSE Islam — The Do-it-Yourself Guide* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2002; reprint Birmingham: IPCI 2004.); *Readings in Cross-Cultural Dawah*, ed., Ridzuan Wu (Singapore: Darul Arqam, 2001); *What Every Christian Should Know About Islam* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2000); *The Mysteries of Jesus (A Muslim Examination of the Origins of the Christian Church)* (Oxford: Sakina Books, 2000); *The Problem of Evil* (Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2000); *The Sign of the Gnat* (Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2000); *The Beloved Prophet* (Knebworth: Able Publishing, 1999); *Living Islam* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 1998); *A Basic Dictionary of Islam* (Goodword Books, New Delhi, 1998); *The Beautiful Promises of Allah* (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 1998); *The Muslim*



SOHAIB N. SULTAN, ANNOTATION AND
REVISION; YUSUF ALI, TRANSLATION
THE QUR'AN AND SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD
SELECTIONS ANNOTATED AND EXPLAINED
SKY LIGHT ILLUMINATIONS SERIES
WOODSTOCK, VT: SKYLIGHTS PATHS PUBLISHING, 2007
PP. XXXVIII-204. ISBN 13: 978-1-59473-222-5. PRICE: US\$ 16.99

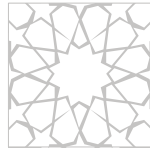
Muhammed Haron

Department of Theology and Religious Studies
University of Botswana, Garborone, Botswana
<haronm@mopipi.up.bw>

It is an established fact that any person wishing to have a reasonable understanding of the Qur'ān should be familiar with the life of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) and that both the Qur'ān and the Prophetic *Sunnah* form the primary sources of Islam. Taking into account these rudimentary facts, one welcomes contributions that attempt to shed light on both sources and more importantly texts that demonstrate how closely the two are connected. Sohaib Sultan, as the author of a decidedly recommendable work *The Koran for Dummies*,¹ according to Jane I. Smith who wrote the preface for the text under review (pp. ix–xiii), made another worthy contribution by presenting this annotated and explained selection of *āyāt* of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic statements; this text appeared as one of the long list of books in the Skylight Illumination Series.

Sultan introduced his fifteen chapter annotated text by explaining the basics of Islam, tracing the compilation of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*

1. Sohaib N. Sultan, *The Koran for Dummies* (Hoboken, NJ: Hungry Minds Inc. 2004)



SAYED KHATTAB AND GARY D. BOUMA

DEMOCRACY IN ISLAM

NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2007. PAGES: VIII+264. HARDBOUND

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-42574-2. NO PRICE GIVEN

TAUSEEF AHMAD PARRAY

PhD Candidate, Department of Islamic Studies

Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

<tauseef.parray21@gmail.com>

The book, *Democracy in Islam*, sets to resolve the question whether Islam is compatible with democracy. While the book speaks about the issue of Islam and democracy—which is part of a larger global contestation affecting nation states and politico religious stripes—it demonstrates that the political agendas promoting democracy and human values can be grounded in the primary sources of Islam—the Qur’ān and the life pattern (*Sunnah*) of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him)—its law, culture and history.

The Book covers a wide range of themes and relates them to the main theme: Islam’s compatibility with democracy. But there are four issues which are given particular attention: The principles of Islam’s political theory and the notion of democracy therein; the value of Islamic legal ideas and its contribution to the European legal philosophy and law; Islam and human rights; and the Notion of *Jihād* and its qualifications. The book comprises of Seven charters preceded by “Introduction” and followed by “Notes (References),” “Bibliography” and “Index.”

Democracy in Islam opens with “Introduction” (pp. 1–6) explaining the idea behind writing the book on the issue of Islam and democracy.