



ISLAM AND THE WEST

HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES' PERSPECTIVE

HRH CHARLES, THE PRINCE OF WALES*

ED. & ANNO., ABDURRAHMAAN SAALEH

A B S T R A C T

Islamic teachings preached and practiced by Allah's all Messengers/Prophets, more specifically by the last and final of them Muḥammad (peace be on them all), are premised on freedom of religion, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, which were codified in the very Constitution (known as *Mithāq Madīnah*) of the Islamic State initiated by Muḥammad (peace be on him). It is a known historical fact that Non-Muslims enjoyed these freedoms and flourished under the Prophet's rule as well as under the Rightly Guided Caliphs and later Muslim Caliphs for centuries, yet, non-Muslim opinion leaders, Eastern and Western, ever since Prophet's life belying the facts belligerently opted to wage wars and campaigns of disinformation against Islam. Amidst recent waves of such campaigns, e.g. Clash of Civilisations thesis's hue and cry, imposition of New World Order, Muslim Cleansing in Balkans, and other on-going conflicts like Kashmir, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria, the Crown Prince of UK in his 1993 address at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, courageously endorsed the facts, stating if there is much misunderstanding in the West about the nature of Islam, there is also much ignorance about the debt our own culture and civilisation owe to the Islamic world. He called seeing Islam as the enemy of the West, as an alien culture, society and system of belief, a failure that made us to ignore or erase its great relevance to our own history. He, highlighting the fact that level of misunderstandings remains rather growing dangerously high, stressed that it is vital need of the hour that the Islamic & Western Worlds work together to understand each other to build mutual trust, tolerance and respect to live peacefully in an increasingly interdependent world. The Crown Prince, in his PhD (honorary) acceptance speech, in 2006, at Al Azhar University, Cairo, referred to various parts of his address at Oxford and further highlighted the commonalities and hazards between the two civilisations. The degree to which Muslim and Western policy makers are familiar with the historical facts referred to by HRH and the impact that views of the Crown Prince might have on the Western and Muslim policy makers are valid queries for researchers.

* Charles, Prince of Wales (Charles Philip Arthur George) was born on November 14, 1948 at Buckingham



Introduction

Islamic teachings preached and practiced by Allah's all Messengers and Prophets, and more specifically by the last and final of them, Muḥammad, (peace be on them all),¹ are premised on freedom of religion, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, which were codified in

Palace as the first grandchild of the Queen Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon (1900–2002) and Albert Frederick Arthur George (1895–1952) reigned as King George VI (r. 1936–1952). He was educated at Cheam and Gordonstoun Schools, which his father, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, had attended as a child, as well as the Timbertop campus of Geelong Grammar School in Victoria, Australia. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, Charles served in the Royal Navy from 1971 to 1976. He is the longest-serving heir apparent in British history, having held the position since 1952. His interests encompass a range of humanitarian and social issues. He founded The Prince's Trust in 1976, sponsors The Prince's Charities, and patronises numerous other charitable organisations. He also heads a foundation that advocates alternative medicine. Prince Charles is also a patron or president of several educational, social and religious organisations, including: The Royal Asiatic Society, The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, The Norfolk Churches Trust, The King James Bible Trust, The Jewish Museum, The Field Studies Council, The Exeter Cathedral Third Millennium Campaign, The Cornwall Historic Churches Trust, The Churches Conservation Trust, The Britannia Association, Christ College Foundation, British Council, The Saudi-British Society, The British-Kuwait Friendship Society, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford. He inaugurated the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, in the 2000s, which is dedicated to Islamic studies in a plural multicultural context. In 2008, *The Daily Telegraph* declared him to be the hardest-working member of the Royal Family. He carried out 560 official engagements in 2008, 499 in 2010, and over 600 in 2011. He has authored a number of books, including *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* in 1989 and the children's book *The Old Man of Lochnagar* in 1980. See, for more details, the Prince of Wales' official website, available online at: <<https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/>>. Besides selection of the two speeches, paper's Title, Abstract, Introduction, and all annotations in the footnotes, are added, and revised in the light of peer-reviewers comments, by the editor.

1. It is pertinent to note here that according to Islamic teachings all the true Prophets (*anbiyā'*) and Messengers (*rusul*) commissioned by the Almighty Creator Allah invited mankind towards one and the same *dīn* (way of life) namely Islam, i.e. Submission to none but the Creator in all affairs of individual as well as collective spheres of life. All the true Prophets and Messengers (peace be on them) and their followers called themselves Muslims. See, for example, the Qur'ān 2: 130–133; 3: 19, 52, 85; 5: 44; 10: 71–72, 83–86, 90; 12: 101; 27: 30–31; 42: 13; 51: 35–36. According to the Qur'ān, the basic tenets and principles being the same, the details of the practical injunctions (*Sharā'i'*) revealed to each Messenger (peace be on him) had some variations. See, for example, the Qur'ān 5: 44–48; 22: 26–34. Various Religions with different names, creeds, dogmas and rituals came into being when the later followers of some true Prophets/Messengers changed the teachings propagated by them after their demise. See, for example, the Qur'ān 2: 213; 3: 19–20; 4: 157; 10: 19; 45: 15–18. For more on the subject, see for example, Abū 'l-Fidā' Ismā'il b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa 'l-Nihāyah*, ed., 'Alī Shayrī (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1408/1988), vol. 1, pp. 74ff and vol. 2, pp. 2–308; Sayyid Abū 'l-A'la Mawdūdī, *Towards Understanding Islam*, tr. Khurshid Ahmad (Leicestershire, UK: The Islamic Foundation, 1982).