

**Human Rights in the Muslim World:
Fundamentalism, Constitutionalism and
International Politics**

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Khan, a scholar specializing in Islamic law, endorses a moderate interpretation of the Qur'an and opposes what some label as "radical" or "political" Islam. He also believes that legal doctrines dating back to the time of Mohammed have been altered by governments and colonialism so that what now exists in practice is really "Muslim law" rather than true "Islamic law." He calls extremists "Muslim fundamentalists." This study is strong on historical, religious, and philosophical analysis, and the author's discussion of the "Medina Charter" of 622 is quite illuminating.

Basically, Khan presents an excellent account of the development of Islamic law, but he does not really examine human rights in any detail in terms of examples or case studies. His regional focus disproportionately emphasizes the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan, so readers will find little of note on current human rights issues in Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, or northern Nigeria.

This book also lacks any concluding chapter. Nevertheless, this fascinating book is a great read to examine before attempting to delve into contemporary human rights cases in the Muslim world. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Graduate students as well as upper-level undergraduates with some background in Islam. Copyright of this review belongs to the American Library Association.

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Non-Muslims in Muslim Societies: Contemporary Ijtihad The Rights of Non-Muslims in Society: A Reading of Al-Qaradawi's Thought

Mass oud Sabri*

Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qardawi is among the most prominent Islamic figures who expressed early interest in the issue of the rights of non-Muslim in Muslim societies. Al-Qaradawi's views on this topic are particularly important because of his academic and scholarly background, which indicates that his thoughts are directly an extension of jurisprudential proofs.

Following are the most important rights deduced by Al-Qaradawi from his studies religious texts and scholarly commentaries, from his important book on the subject *Ghary al-Muslmein fi el-Mujtama al-Islami*; Wahbah Pub., 1997. This review is based on this work.

The Right of Protection

In Islam, the primary right of the People of the Book is to be protected and safeguarded against any foreign aggression, and Muslims are compelled to protect them in the event such a transgression falls against them. Al-Qaradawi bases his standpoint about this on jurisprudential texts and the position of Imam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) while speaking to Qultoo Shah- a Tartar-regarding the freeing of prisoners of war (POWs). Qultoo Shah agreed to set Muslim POWs free upon Ibn Taymiah's request; however, the latter insisted that Christian POWs be released with the Muslims, which was what happened in the end. This stand by Ibn Taymiyah reflects the perspective of jurisprudence on the subject of right to external protection.

The Muslim state also defend minorities against internal injustice or oppression, such that they cannot be subject to any form of wrongdoing by the state or its sponsors; and overlapping evidence

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from the Qur'an and the Sunnah clearly prohibits any sort of injustice against noncombatant non-Muslims living peacefully within a Muslim state. To this effect, the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) was reported to have said, "He who unfairly treats a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims, or undermines his rights, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent; then I am his opponent on the Day of Judgement" (Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi). He (peace and blessings be upon him) is also reported to have said, *"He who harms a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims, or undermines his rights, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent; then I am his opponent on the Day of Judgment"* (Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi) He (peace and blessings be upon him) is also reported to have said, *"He who harms a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims has harmed me, and he who harms me has harmed Allah"* (At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat with a good chain of transmission).

Not only was this the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on the issue, but the Rightly Guided Caliphs also practiced this, with several authentic incidents to this effect reported by Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Types of Protection

Protection of body and blood. Al-Qaradawi asserts the consensus among scholars to protect the blood of non-Muslim minorities living within a Muslim state, and he explains that violating their blood is considered one of the gravest of sins. This is due to the hadith by the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him): *"He who kills a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with the Muslims will not smell the scent of Heaven, though its scent can be traced to as far as a march of 40 years"* (Imam Ahmad and Al-Bukhari in Al-Jizyah, among others).

Although scholars have differed over the issue of exchanging the life of a Muslim for that of a Dhimmi (a noncombatant non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with the Muslims and lives within a Muslim society), yet Al-Qardawi sides with the opinion that says a

Muslim can be killed if he wrongfully murders a Dhimmi with no right. He founds his view on this matter on texts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah that underline the principle of retribution and reprisal (*qisaas*).

This was also the view endorsed and exercised by the ottoman caliphate in all the regions and provinces falling under its jurisdiction for centuries, until the Muslim empire fell prey to its enemies and was knocked down.

Protection of Money and Property. This principle has been unanimously agreed upon among all Muslims of all sects throughout history.

Moreover, Islam regards whatever property or money considered by non-Muslims as valuables according to their faiths- and pledges to protect them, even if they pose no real value to Muslims.

Liquor and swine are an example of this, where they cannot be considered as money to Muslims; and if a Muslim squanders or spoils such property of another Muslim, he could not be called upon for compensation; yet if a Muslim spoils such assets belonging to a non-Muslim, he would be responsible for compensation, according to Imam Abu Hanifah.

Protection of Honor. The honor of Dhimmis is sacred in Islam, similar to that of Muslims. Imam Al-Qarafi Al-Maliki once said on this note, "He who transgresses against them (Dhimmis)- even with a mere word of injustice or backtalk- has jeopardized the covenant with Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the covenant of the religion of Islam" (Al-Furuq Part 3, p. 14). Moreover, there exist abundant additional texts to the same effect.

Social Welfare Against Disability, Old Age, and Poverty

Islam guarantees non-Muslims living under its societal umbrella their necessary welfare benefits, which enable them to live decently and support those they sponsor, since they are considered among the Muslim state's subjects or citizens the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have said, "*You are all sponsors and (thus) responsible for those you sponsor*" (Ibn Umar)

The Rightly Guided Caliphs and those who succeeded them continued to implement these policies towards non-Muslims living within the Muslim community. During the caliphate of Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), Khalid ibn Al-Waleed sent a letter to the non-Muslim population of Al-Hira in Iraq at the time, assuring them that none of their rights were to be undermined by the Muslim army's procession in their direction. 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was also reported to have seen a senile Jewish man asking for alms, and hence took him to the treasury and authorized a monthly pension for him and the likes of him. By this, Abu Bakr and 'Umar had jointly formulated a social welfare legislation for Muslims as well as non-Muslims, which was then unanimously picked up by all Islamic sects.

The Right to Freedom of Belief

Additionally, Islam does not force Dhimmis to embrace Islam and recognizes their freedom to choose their own faith. This freedom is stressed in the following Qur'anic verses: *[Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error]* (Al-Baqarah 2: 256) and *[Wilt thou (Muhammad) then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!]* (Yunus 10: 99). History does not deny this fact about Islam, nor do Westerners.

Islam, throughout history, has safeguarded and protected houses of worship for non-Muslims and sanctified their religious rituals. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) wrote the peace treaty to the people of Najran, he asserted to them that they should receive the protection of Allah and His Prophet on their property, faith, and choices. Similarly, 'Umar's letter to the people of Iliya in Palestine, upon the Muslim conquest, promised them the liberty to choose the faith they deemed appropriate; in addition there are analogous accounts attributed to Khalid ibn Al-Waleed.

Permitting non-Muslims to build their own houses of worship in towns mainly populated by Muslims also falls under this scope, where early in Muslim history several churches were built in Egypt during the first Hijri century. An example of this is the construction

of the Mar Marcus Church in Alexandria (between AH 39 and 56), and the construction of the first church in Fustat in the Roman Alley during the reign of Maslamah ibn Mikhled (between the years AH 47 and 68). Ruler Abdul Aziz ibn Marwan also authorized constructing a church in Helwan while founding the city, besides allowing a number of bishops to erect hermitage cells. Historian AI-Maqrizi once said, "All modern day Cairo churches were undoubtedly restored in Islam."

As for the villages and areas which are not considered among the Muslim provinces, non-Muslims were not repressed against practicing and illustrating their religious rituals, including the renovation of old churches and cathedrals, and were free to expand building such houses of worship as their population grew.

This form of religious tolerance is strictly a bread of Islam, as the infamous French scholar Gustave Le Bon once said (as al-Quradawi quotes him in his book)

From the verses of the Qur'an we previously mentioned, we find that Muhammad's forgiveness towards the Jews and the Christians was ultimately phenomenal; and such tolerance was unprecedented by the founders of other religious, such as Judaism and Christianity in particular. We shall also see how his successors followed in his footsteps on this path.

Other Europeans also paralleled such discourse, such as Robertson and others.

The Right to Work and Earn Profits

Islam has guaranteed to non-Muslims living its umbrella the right to engage in any form of commercial activities, including buying, selling, leasing, and otherwise, with the exception of exercising riba (taking interest on loans, etc). This rule was derived from a letter from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to the Magians of Hajar, where he said, "You may choose between neglecting riba or facing war with Allah and His Prophet." The selling of liquor and swine in Muslim provinces are also to be added to the list of the

impermissible; otherwise, non-Muslim may practice any form of commercial activities. Adam Mitz, as al-Qaradawi sites, once said Islamic jurisprudence does not forbid Dhimmis from entering any field of labor they choose, and they were well-established in trades which yield large profits; excelling as bankers, landlords, and doctors. Moreover, they managed to organize themselves, such that the most prominent bankers in the Levant (Syrian and Palestine) were Jews, whilst the best physicians and writers were Christians, and the chief of the Christian population in Baghdad was the caliph's personal doctor, as the caliph also gathered in his court the chiefs and heads of the Jewish population.

The Right to occupy State Ranks

Islam did not prohibit Dhimmis from occupying state positions, since it perceived them as an integral part of the state fabric. Islam also did not encourage their isolation, and the people of the Book were allowed to join all offices apart from those marked with a religious trait; for example, the imamate, leadership of the state and the army, judge of disputes between Muslims, administrator of the dispensing of charity and alms.

The imamate; or caliphate, is a senior leading position in both the mundane world and the religious, a succession of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him); and, obviously, such ranks could not be open to non-Muslims.

Similarly, the leadership of the army cannot be considered a purely civil duty, since it is strongly related with jihad, which tops the ladder of Islamic duties.

Moreover, the judiciary is operated through Islamic jurisprudence, and non-Muslims cannot be asked to carry out the rules of a doctrine they do not believe in.

The guardianship over alms and charity also falls under the scope of Islamic duties and logically could not be entrusted to the disposal of the non-Muslim minority within the Muslim state.

Other than the above, all state offices were always open to Dhimmis on condition that they fulfilled the necessary requirements and prerequisites for the positions applied for; that is, integrity, honesty, and loyalty to the state. This is to assure that these sensitive posts be entrusted to faithful individuals, other than those Muslims are warned against in the following verse: *[O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin: rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if ye have wisdom]* (Aal 'Imran 3: 118)

Imam Al-Mawardi even authorized Dhimmis to undertake executive ministries rather than delegate ministries. Executive ministers are those who implement and execute the imam's orders.

Conversely, delegate ministries are those which the imam entrusts to the minister to devise certain political, administrative, and economic matters according to his own personal judgment.

During the Abbasid era, Christians undertook the ministry more than once; for example, Nasr ibn Haroun in AH 369 and Eissa ibn Nastorus in AH 380. Mu 'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan had also appointed a Christian clerk named Sarjoun.

Perhaps Muslim tolerance in this regard was sometimes taken too far, where at some instances, the rights of Muslims themselves were undermined and some skeptics complained about the undeserved prestigious authority of Jews and Christians above them.

Western historian Adam Mitz says in his book *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Hijri Century*, "We find it very surprising the abundance of non-Muslim laborers and senior staff within the Muslim state; where Christians governed Muslims in Muslim provinces, and complains against non-Muslims' seniority in these provinces dates far back" (part 1, p. 105).

Prophetic Recommendations Particularly for Egyptian Copts

Al-Quradawi finds that Egyptian Copts in particular have a distinguished position among other non-Muslim minorities, given

the prophetic narrations to that effects. The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) was reported to have said on his deathbed, *"By Allah, respect the Copts of Egypt, for you shall conquer them, and they shall be your supporters in the cause of Allah"* (At-Tabarani)

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) said, *"Treat them well, for they are an asset to you and a warning against your enemies by the Will of Allah."*

Reference here is made to Egyptian Copts (Ibn Hibban)

Historical reality has lived up to the Prophet's prophecies, where Egyptian Copts welcomed the Muslim conquerors, who saved them from the persecution they suffered under the Romans, who had taken up another sect of Christianity. The Copts started entering Islam in large numbers, to the extent that some rulers of the Umayyad dynasty mistakenly enforced the *jizyah* among some Copts who had already embraced Islam.

The Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) attributed certain rights to Egyptian Copts that he did not grant to other minorities, where Ka'b ibn Malik narrates from the Prophet, *"If Egypt is conquered, treat the Copts with dignity, for they have a blood relation with us."*

Connotation is made here to the mother of the Prophet Isma'il, Hajar, who was an Egyptian (Reported by At-Tabarani and Al-Hakim).

Loyalty Guarantees

Moreover, Islam adds to the rights of minorities by laying down a number of guarantees to live up to these rights. Among the most important of these is the right to believe. Such rights are clearly defined in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah, and their practice falls under the correct practice of Islam.

These rights are also protected by the Muslim society, which is founded on accurate implementation of Islamic jurisprudence, including the rights of the People of the Book according to Islamic principles. Any Dhimmi who feels that he has been treated unjustly has the right to appeal to the ruler to reverse the injustice against him, either by a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

Scholars and the “general Islamic conscience” are another defence line for non-Muslims to seek protection behind.

Islamic history is full of incidents that indicate the Muslim community's commitment to protect Dhimmis against any depreciation of their rights.

Islamic history reports the case of the priest who complained against an army leader who wrongfully took his money to Ahmad ibn Tulun, who then had it returned to the priest. There is also the case of the Copt who complained against 'Arnr ibn Al-'Aas to 'Umar, who summoned the latter into account.

The role of scholars in this regard can clearly be detected in the stance of Imam Al-Awza' i towards the Abbasid ruler during his time, when the ruler kicked out a non-Muslim tribe from Mount Lebanon after a group of them had refused to pay their yearly agricultural tax. Al-Awza'i wrote on this matter to the caliph, denouncing the act and reminding him that Dhimmis were free people and not slaves.

Furthermore, when Al-Waleed ibn 'Abdul Malik confiscated Church John from the Christians and enjoined it to a mosque, they sought Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul Aziz's assistance to revoke the wrongdoing against them, which he did.

The history of the Islamic judiciary bears witness to this, as was the case with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) and others; which evidently proves that Islam renders the People of the Book as an integral part of society, not to be discriminated against by the Muslim population in any way.

Business and Accounting Ethics in Islam

Trevor Gambling and Rifaat Ahmed Abdel Karim

The present book represents the first serious attempt to explore Islamic business and accounting ethics. After placing their subject in a broad Islamic framework, which they have documented quite ably, they then compare the distinctive features of Islamic business and accounting principles with Western theory and practice. While the book has several strong points and breaks new ground in a number of areas, it also lacks clarity and specific authority from Islamic sources on quite a few points.

To begin with, the authors argue quite convincingly that the logical corollary of prohibiting *riba* (interest) is the negation of any time value for money. Thus the theory and practice of capital budgeting, which feature in the use discounted cash flow techniques in the West, become redundant. This point, seemingly so obvious to economists, has not found favor with the economic thinking of the Islamic establishment. Rather, many Muslim economists and accountants have been busy justifying it on one pretext or another. This is the first time that somebody has come out with a compelling discussion of this question.

The authors have also argued that Islam absolutely forbids the nonrepayment of a debt. Thus the concept of limited liability, one of mainsprings of economic power in a capitalist society, is not recognized by Islam. However, the related theory of incorporation, the legal mechanism for justifying limited liability, is found in Islamic societies. Again, such an obvious and sensible point remains unacceptable to Muslim economists. They continue looking for excuses to accept these ideas, thereby betraying their intellectual poverty.

Although the authors do not devote a single chapter to the state's economic role in Islam, they discuss this question throughout the book. They argue for a strong regulatory and framework role for the Islamic state.

Gambling and Abdel Karim deal with several other important issues. For instance, they argue that the Islamic concept of economic development revolves around the development of human resources rather than capital formation, as is the main focus of the popular theory of development in the West. In their discussion of the Islamic concept of *Shura* (consultation) and *Khilafah* (vicegerency), they also break new ground. They opine that these concepts suggest that a business manager and a business owner: consult his/her partners, employees, customers, and creditors on a wide variety of matters. In this way, a partner will be unable to withdraw his/her investment share without first consulting the other partners. Similarly, the purchase of an existing business by an anonymous person will be made impossible. This mechanism does away with a number of modern evils: mergers, takeovers, speculation, insider trading, and playing with others' funds to reap unearned incomes, to name just a few. One unique contribution of the authors is their argument that an "absentee investor" is unacceptable to Islam as is an "absentee landlord." No one has drawn this conclusion earlier, and it contains a lot of food for thought.

Finally, Gambling and Abdel Karim state that Islam views accounting solely as a tool to determine how much of one's wealth is subject to zakah. While this idea needs some reconsideration, as there is nothing in Islam which restricts accounting to this sole function, they do draw several interesting conclusions. For example, since determining the amount of zakah has to be done on the basis of net realizable wealth, an Islamic framework cannot accept Western accounting concepts like conservatism, going concern, periodicity, and others. Similarly, the Islamic concept takes care of inflation, thereby voiding the need for a separate accounting to deal with it. These are exciting new ideas, and Muslim thinkers should pay attention to them.

However, there are certain ideas which need clarification. Among them are: the discussion of commercial leasing in Islam (p. 38); the idea that the lower marginal utility of wealth for the rich leads to

hoarding (p. 54); the Islamic position on tariffs (p. 57); government bonds (p. 59); the ummah's right to know what is going on in business (p. 60); and the concepts of just wages, just prices, and just rewards (p. 120).

There are some points on which it seems difficult to agree with the authors. For example, the support licensing by the government (p. 57), although the implications of this practice for the distribution of income have been widely discussed in the literature. Similarly, they argue that auditors in an Islamic state do not need to look for compliance with the Shari'ah. This is an unnecessary restriction. In fact, all auditors should report on this aspect if we want Islamic institutions to survive the onslaught of human machinations. Lastly, the authors have not been careful in transliterating Islamic terms. For example, the terms *qard hasan*, *rikaz*, and *'ushr* have been spelled incorrectly. It is my opinion that a glossary of terms at the end of the book would have increased its value for non-Muslim readers.

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Islam Between East and West

Alija Ali Izetbegovic

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Islam Between East and West is a remarkable work of multidisciplinary scholarship by a Bosnia Muslim lawyer who is currently serving a fourteen year term in a Yugoslavian prison for his Islamic activism and "fundamentalist digressions". Educated in Sarajevo and Paris, Alija Ali Izetbegovic has been active in Islamic work throughout his adult life. Writing, lecturing, and organizing Islamic educational and welfare activities, he has been a constant

source of intellectual and spiritual inspiration for thousands of young Yugoslavian Muslims.

Alija's main objective in this book is to examine the roots of the cultural crisis, moral anarchy and political upheavals of the modern West and to show how these are related to the influence of partial truths and reductionist ideological perspective.

The central thesis of this book is that there are three distinct views of the world that reflect three different elemental possibilities: the religious, the materialistic, and the Islamic. Islamic worldview is integral in that it combines both pure religiosity and pure materialism. While pure religion emphasizes conscience and pure materialism emphasizes nature, the focus of Islam is on man who lives in the worlds of both conscience and nature.

The author then shows how both pure religion (Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism) and materialistic philosophies (Socialism and Capitalism) have given partial answers to life's integral questions of "ideals" and "interests" and how they have been trying to compensate for their primal inadequacies and half-truths through continuous compromises in both theory and praxis. The author argues on the basis of considerable historical evidence that the actual realization of these two opposing views of the world has been quite different from what they originally aspired to achieve. A modified, post-renaissance humanist interpretation of Christianity and the religio-moral basis of socialist egalitarianism with its teleological view of history clearly demonstrates that is impossible to be consistent Christian or a consistent materialist.

It is with reference to these formulations and arguments that our author builds a case for Islam as a "Third Way", the only world view which takes to account both the spiritual and material needs of man. It is because of its integral world view that Islam has always been a target of attack from the two opposite directions: from the religion which considers it as "too natural, actual, and tuned to the world"; and from science which sees in it elements religion and mysticism. Despite these apparently contradictory 'right' and 'left' wing tendencies, there is but one Islam which simultaneously reflects

spiration and experience, eternity and time, thought and practice, soul and body; in short, man's life in all its aspects.

The author shows how Islam played an important role as an intermediary between the ancient cultures and the modern West. He urges that Islam must gain today, "in a time of dramatic dilemmas and alternatives", resume its role as an intermediary ideology in a divided world.

The final chapter of the book develops another interesting and rather provocative hypothesis: that England in particular and Anglo-Saxon culture in general (as opposed to the other European societies) have found a middle road between religion and materialism and thus bear a strong resemblance to the "Third Way" of Islam. Alija argues that English society, economy, polity, art and literature, and philosophy and social thought are the closest approximation of the bipolarity of the Islamic model. The author follows the parallelism between Islamic and English minds through series of examples from Roger Bacon to George Bernard Shaw. Elaborating on the meaning of Spengler's parallel between the Prophet Mohammad and Cromwell, Alija notes that, from the viewpoint of the philosophy of history, the emergence of England and the Anglo-Saxon spirit in the West has many things in common with the emergence of Islam in the East. It is no wonder, then, that while on the continent empiricism, as a rule, will also be an atheist, in England the father of empiricism, John Locke placed the concept of God in the center of his ethical theory and upheld the hereafter's sanctions in establishing moral principles for society. Spencer's *Education*, Alija argues, might very well have been written by a Muslim intellectual. The whole thrust of the Anglo-Saxon moral philosophy, with its emphasis on the harmony between the individual and the society, egalitarianism, social responsibility, and the ethical bases of political economy, demonstrates clear correspondence between English and Islamic moral and intellectual traditions.

Not disagreeing entirely with Alija's hypothesis about the difference between Continental and Anglo-Saxon traditions of moral philosophy, the reviewer feels that the argument seems to have been stretched too

far. Although Alija seeks on focus on the most historically significant variations between Continental and English social and moral thought and praxis, he tends to overlook certain important affinities between these two traditions, affinities that are obviously derived from the religious mainstream of Western Christianity. If we are not primarily concerned so much with causal relationships as with long-term consequences of ideas, even the Left Hegelians, with their passionate desire for social harmony and intellectual crusade for universalism and political reforms, could be traced to their cousins in the British Isles.

But this is a minor point. Alija knows his subject very well. He is well versed in Western thought and is intimately familiar with relevant literature in physical, biological and social science as well as in humanities. He is particularly at his best when he discusses masterpieces of Western art and literature and offers new and often provocative interpretations of their meaning for individual and society.

Alija's critique of evolutionism and materialistic/scientific bases of human life is both comprehensive and devastating. He brings arguments in his critique from zoology, molecular biology, physics, chemistry, and cultural anthropology, and presents an alternative view of evolution of 'civilization' as against the constancy of culture. His critique of humanism is similarly brilliantly conceived. He rejects the possibility of developing a secular ethics, an ethics based on the denial of God. In line with other moral philosophers (Jacques Maritain, for example) he very clearly shows how concepts fashionable in contemporary humanistic philosophy (justice, equality, fairness, fraternity) become meaningless if they are not firmly anchored in the belief in God. Discussions on culture and civilization, mass culture, family, and community are also very forceful and illuminating.

Alija's view of Islam is closer to existentialists. To him "Islam is a method" (one is quickly reminded of Sartre's Search for Method), and not a "readymade solution". It is not something given; one has to discover it for oneself.

To me, this view seems a somewhat new interpretation of Islam, apparently contrary to the Orthodox view which regards Islam as a totally defined and once-for-all completed religion and a way of life. As far as I know, the only other Muslim thinker who comes closer to this view was Mohammad Iqbal who spoke of the continuity of the creative process in the universe and the opening up of new horizons for man on earth. But it must be noted that Iqbal's concept of the continuity of "Kun" refers to physical and intellectual spheres and not to the moral sphere which, according to him, is 'given' in the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet.

It is probably because of this existentialist view of Islam that the author seems to acknowledge a continued persistence of 'tension' even within the framework of Islamic bipolarity. That is, the tensions that he identifies in religion and science do not find their complete resolution even in Islam, although they do assume a new creative and sublime posture in Islamic bipolarity.

The major focus of the book is on the critique of pure religion and pure materialism. The only full treatment of Islamic alternative is in Chapter VIII, especially in its section on "Bipolarity of the Five Pillars of Islam." Thus the critique comes out as much stronger and convincing than affirmation. In terms of space and coverage, two-thirds of the book consists of criticism of religion and materialism or with the supremacy of art/religion over science. Discussion of Islam as a "Third Way" is relatively brief and sketchy.

Chapter III on "The Phenomenon of Art", though excellent in its own right, becomes larger than life in the context of the basic premises and objectives of the book. That is, it tends to present a highly exaggerated case in favour of the primacy of art and literature over science. It thus undermines the central thesis of the book, viz. that both are half-truths. Art and literature, in this particular case, become substitutes for religion and Islam. There is, however, a difference between the statement that art and literature are products of religious inspiration and the statement that they are religion as such.

Also, the author's view of religion is basically anthropological. Hence, he includes all kinds of ancient myths, superstitions, and magical rituals in his definition of religion. So far so good. But the problem arises when he equates this kind of raw and unstructured religious symbolism with the coherent and systematic theology and cosmology of revealed religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and treats them at the same level.

Like some other contemporary Muslim writer- but not at the same magnitude- our author also commits at some places the familiar intellectual sin of comparing “our best” with “their worst”. Perfected by the Christian missionaries and polemicists writing on Islam and the Muslim World, it has now been appropriated as a standard technique by some Muslims as well, especially in their da’wa-oriented writings. According to this technique, Islamic norms and ideals are compared with Western practices and behaviors, instead of comparing ideals with ideals and practices with practices.

Having expressed some, minor disagreements on certain issues, I must conclude by saying that is an excellent work of scholarship on the subject. A book of this type has to have some polemics in its style and presentation but, in the main, it is full of perceptive observations on matters of moral and social philosophy. The style is lucid and the presentation of arguments is brilliant and extraordinarily engaging. The author has a masterly grasp on his subject and knows the West from very closed quarters. Unlike many other Muslim intellectuals who have compared Islam and the West in terms of their world views and philosophical positions on individual and society, Alija does not impose a single standard of orthodoxy upon the West's entire intellectual history. He takes a more differentiating view of the intellectual history of the West and discusses important areas of divergence within both the atheistic and religious traditions. He is extremely well-versed in the intricacies of theological debates in Western Christianity as well as in the controversies associated with the secular ideas of utopian politics. He draws fruitful comparisons between these two opposing

intellectual currents and identifies certain important structural affinities between Islam on the one hand and some aspects of the Western thought and praxis, on the other.

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Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam

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How should a Muslim apply Islam- apply in One's own life in relation to others, Muslims and non-Muslims?

Moderation and Extremism in Islam attempts to answer this vital question. The subject is specially relevant in today's atmosphere of confusion and conflict.

Although the book is short, only 40 pages, it covers most of the major aspects of the question. Aisha Lemu's writing is clear coherent and orderly in presentation. She has taken great pains to support her views with carefully chosen verses from the Qur'an and the Hadith and has properly documented them.

In making her stand on the issue sister Aisha relied heavily on Yusuf al Qaradawi's *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism*. She has quoted extensively from Yusuf al Qaradawi's book and has frankly acknowledged her debt. However; it must not be thought that sister Aisha has merely summarized Yusuf al Qaradawi. She has also brought her own understanding and experience of Islam. It is clear from her writing that she has thought long and deeply herself about the best way of conducting oneself as a Muslim and making *dawah* among non-Muslim. Her own experience as a British convert and of living and working in Muslim lands have deeply contributed to the shaping of her perspective and,

the forming of her attitude. Her discussion is tinged with this very personal experience of hers.

Any reader will admit that *Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam* is a genuine and carefully thought attempt at clarifying an issue that has disturbed and divided many and has even created bitter strife.

The book is useful not only for the Muslims. It is useful for the non-Muslim also. The book will provide the non-Muslim a sober view of what a Muslim is supposed to be in his attitude to and treatment of non-Muslims.

Undoubtedly, Aisha Lemu's *Laxity, Moderation and Extremism in Islam* is a valuable and timely contribution to our understanding of the application of Islam in to-day's world

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