

Religion, Governance and Sustainable Development

Contemporary Studies from the Muslim World



Editors

Homam Altabaa

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**RELIGION, GOVERNANCE AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
CONTEMPORARY STUDIES FROM
THE MUSLIM WORLD**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEMPORARY REALITY AND THE MEANING OF “RELIGION”

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The contemporary culture-based human civilization dominates most of the peoples' individual, familial, communal, social, national, economic, political, cultural, local, and international aspects of life. It is a product of a period of five to six hundred years within the premises of scientific inventions and discoveries. The Western secular-oriented mindset is an amalgamation between antiquity, i.e., Greek rationalism and Roman law, and modernity such as European humanism, which was developed within a period of five hundred years. From its early emergence, it aimed at the separation between religion and governance, which later led to the complete marginalization and silence of religion and its authority.

The Western culture-based worldview has dominated most people's understanding of the world for the last two hundred years. It is based on human free will, reason and science and not revelation. According to this worldview, individuals make assumptions not only about how the world is but also how the world should be. Additionally, individuals and societies can create the world they desire by exercising their reason and scientific methodology to understand and corporately construct how they believe the world should be (Baumann, 2011).

On one hand, the rational-based interpretation of the world as presented by the Western worldview posed intellectual, social, economic, and political challenges mainly for different religious representatives, communities, educational institutions, governments, and countries. On the other hand, it served as a

motivation especially for Muslim scholars in responding to these

challenges from the Islamic perspective through their studies presented in seminars, forums, conferences, and writings.

Therefore, the main objective of this book is to present the intellectual responses towards these challenges in the light of contemporary Muslim studies focusing on religion, civilization, governance, and sustainable development. Given this objective, the focus of discussion in the *Introductory Chapter* is on a brief historical development of contemporary reality; literal and technical meanings of religion; and a brief overview of Muslim studies that contributed to this book in the form of chapters.

A Brief Historical Development of Contemporary Reality

The contemporary reality that dominates the whole world directly or indirectly, partially or entirely, intellectually or politically, and locally or globally has its own history. Such a situation is not the product of a day or a night. Rather, it is the outcome generated from continuous experiences people went through during different periods of time to develop and sustain their intellectual and material aspects of life. The history of contemporary reality is begun with the Western Renaissance movement that paved the way to other succeeding movements, i.e., Reformation, Enlightenment, Modernism, and Postmodernism. Without these movements, such contemporary reality most likely could not exist.

The Renaissance Movement: Renaissance with its Humanism Movement introduced different ways of thinking based on pure human reasoning. It revived the Greek and Roman human-cultural-based civilizations of antiquity. Also, this marked the beginning of a new age that is often known as “The Age of

Reason”, which implies that the previous era was “The Dark Ages”. The emphasis of the Renaissance was on the ability of a man to think by using reasoning to solve his problems. This kind of thinking caused the establishment of Humanism as a school of thought that was founded by Francesco Petrarch as the father of Humanism (Sellars, 2020). Petrarch and other supporters of the renaissance movement used the notion of *Humanismus* to express the spirit of intellectual freedom by which a man asserted his independence from the authority of the Church (Bergin, 2004). The blame was put on Church authorities for not allowing people to analyse things based on their reasoning.

The Reformation Movement: It is referred to the reformation of the Catholic Church leadership, which at that time was corrupted. Therefore, they were overthrown and replaced by politicians representing the people (Bruce, 1996). A Protestant reformer, Luther’s humanism, dealt with his “attitude toward church hierarchy, church authority, and church traditions, his trust in his own reason and conscience, his individuality and his scientific method in reading scriptures” (Hertzell, 2009, p. 17). For Luther, the Scripture was the sole means to get access to the Word of God and, therefore, his *sola scripture* (the Scripture alone) and *sola fide* (the Faith alone), was to state that Christian truth should be on Scripture and Faith (Shehu, 2017, p. 108). Luther intended to make Christians get access to God through two important means, the Scripture and the Faith and avoid the use of mere human reasoning. In this way, reformation marked the beginning of the separation between revelation and reason.

The Enlightenment Movement: Enlightenment became very decisive for the existence of religious voice, authority as well as religion itself. It was an “intellectual movement toward secularization as people began looking to human reason, science, and nature for the solutions to problems rather than depending on

piety, religious texts, and prayer” (Andrea, 2011, p. 315). Thus, a man in his quest for knowledge “must not let his thought be influenced by any authority or any prejudice; he must let the content of his judgements be determined only by his own critical reason” (Goldmann, 1973, p. 2.). During this time, Christianity was viewed “as dark power which is ever clogging and dragging back the human spirit on its path towards progress and happiness” (Dawson, n.d., p. 12). Christian theologians responded to this claim by asserting that:

Any religion that depends on revelation must insist that perception and reason cannot suffice to give man the knowledge he needs in all the important questions of life; such knowledge requires correction, or at any rate needs to be supplemented by knowledge resting on the authority of revelation (Goldmann, 1973, p. 3.).

In this sense, revelation from God is necessary for human reasoning through which accurate knowledge is obtained and errors in thinking and acting are avoided.

The Modernist Movement: Modernism, which was mainly influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution, turned its back on old traditions, customs, and cultures including religions. This time marked the maturity of human reasoning in which science claimed its superiority over religion, profane replaced sacred and holy, and man substituted God. According to the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary, modernism is “a self-conscious break with the past and a search for new forms of expression” as well as “a tendency in theology to accommodate traditional religious teaching to contemporary thought and especially to devalue supernatural elements” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2021). In this sense, Modernism with both of its philosophical and art movements caused a separation between the old, outdated traditions and the new, modern way of life.

The Post-Modernist Movement: Post-Modernism marked a tremendous shift in the Western worldview with regards to the

existing values of modernity. A new way of understanding reality and truth was promoted under the platform of religious pluralism, which called for equality of truth claims from various religious

communities. This movement views that there is no absolute truth as truth is relative and contingency is everything. Therefore, the only absolute truth is that there are no absolute truths. Post-Modernism's characteristics of "meaningless and valueless emphasised the revival of outdated cultural-traditional values in order to replace religious values and humanize religious educational institution" (Golz et. al., 2019, pp. 30-42). The question is no longer whether the truth is real or not, but whether the truth works or not. This raises the question of

whether the truth produces new moves in the language game, new ideas, new processes, and new products (Patterson, 1990). In postmodernism, "Consensus [about what is real] has become an outmoded and suspect value," is replaced by "a plurality of formal and axiomatic systems capable of arguing the truth of denotative statements," a Truth, which is determined not by correspondence to Reality, but by "performativity," that is by its usefulness (Lyotard, 1984, pp. 66 & 43). Indeed, such ideas are dominating the contemporary world.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that all these movements have contributed significantly towards the historical development of contemporary reality, which represents the scientific notion of reality as interpreted by human reasoning. Besides, the secular-oriented humanist's argument can be summarized as *if a man is a rational being then he does not need any other rational being higher than him like God or any other spiritual being to tell him what to do*. In this sense, to allow a man to achieve material progress and happiness in this world, something that religion did not offer to him, Divine interference should not be accepted as Truth based on Revelation. Rather, it is something claimed by man and science, which supports the idea that man becomes the mystery behind everything and not God.

Conclusively, the Western theoretical ideology (liberal, social, communist, or capitalist) with its philosophical implications defines religion as a human projection instead of a Divine one through which it controls people's definition of religion and its practices. As a result, the focus of human knowledge and scientific inquiry has changed from Revelational-oriented to rational-oriented and religious-centred to secular-centred, which is "the liberation of Man from religious and metaphysical tutelage, the turning of his attention away from other worlds and towards this one" (Cox, 1965, p. 15), the worldly one.

Literal and Technical Meanings of Religion

It was the lack of intellectual and material development in the West that made Western people reject Christianity and then other religions including Islam. Religion was viewed by Western philosophy and evolution-based disciplines as a product of *people's reasoning about supernatural beings or spirits*. This indirectly and directly rejected the Revelation-based notion of *al-Dīn* (a comprehensive way of life) as explained by *al-Islām* (total submission to Allah SWT's Will and obedience to His Commandments willingly) and its primary sources, *al-Qur'ān* and *as-Sunnah*. As a result, it is replaced by the rational-based notion of "Religion." Thus, religion was made partial and was viewed as an entity that covers one aspect of people's life pertaining to divinity through rituals only. The divine nature of religion as a comprehensive way of life was distorted and replaced with the human nature of religion as a partial way of life resulting from his relationships with supernatural beings. Thus, religion became a human product.

The meaning of 'Religion' from the Western Perspective:

The notion of religion is explained in the light of its literal and technical meanings as follows:

Literal Meaning: The English term "religion" is derived *firstly* from the old French term *relegion*, which denotes "piety,

devotion, religious community”; *secondly* from the Latin term *religionem* - (nominative *religio*) that means “supernatural constraint, sanction, religious practise”; and, *thirdly* from the Latin term *religare*, which denotes “to restrain, tie back” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2021). In addition, the Latin term *religio* is connected with another two terms: *firstly* the Latin term *legere* that means “to gather together”, “to arrange”, which is a proposed derivation associated with Cicero; and, *secondly* the Latin term *ligare*, which signifies “to tie together”, “to bind”, which is a proposed derivation associated with Lucretius and it is a favoured term by the Christian writers, Lactantius and Tertullian (Saler, 1987, pp. 395-396).

Technical Meaning: In this scientific movement, Western scholars studied religion from a humanistic point of view assisted by human sciences, especially philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and phenomenology. Excluding Philosophy, all the other disciplines used Darwin’s theory of evolution in the study of religion as an alternative to revelation and other religious scriptures or sources or traditions. Therefore, the term “religion” is technically defined according to the methods used in the study of religion from the lens of human reasoning and experience.

Religion as a private experience: William James (1842-1910), in his classic work in Philosophy of Religion “The Varieties of Religious Experience”, states that:

Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand to whatever they may consider the divine (James, 2002, pp. 29-30).

Religion as the belief in spiritual beings: Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), a pioneer in the field of anthropology and the anthropological study of religion, asserts in his “Primitive Culture” that “It seems best to fall back at once on this essential source, and

simply to claim, as a minimum definition of religion, the belief in spiritual beings” (Tylor, 2016, pp. 340-341).

Religion as a socio-culture practice – a group experience: Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), a founding father of the discipline of sociology, in his masterpiece “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life” has mentioned two definitions about religion. *Firstly*, he claims that:

Religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them (Durkheim, 1995, p. 44).

Secondly, he revises and secularizes this definition by saying that “religion is first and foremost, a system of ideas by which men imagine the society of which they are members and the obscure yet intimate relations they have with it” (Durkheim, 1995, p. 227). So, religion is a societal expression of people’s views on religious representations and realities collectively.

Religion as a manifestation of the sacred: Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), a French phenomenologist of the 20th century, in his book, “The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion”, views religion as a phenomenon, in which its essential features:

‘The Sacred’ and ‘its likeness’ distinguish it from the natural world of the profane. For him, religion is “the act of *manifestatum* [manifestation] of *hierophany* [sacred], i.e., that something sacred shows itself to us.... by the same mysterious act—the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our *Datural* “profane” world” (Eliade, 1987, p. 11).

In this sense, religion is understood as people’s apprehension about the physical manifestation of the sacred in the form of symbols, myths, and rituals.

Religion as a cultural system: Clifford James Geertz (1926-2006), American cultural anthropologist, a leading rhetorician and proponent of symbolic anthropology and interpretive anthropology, in his work “The Interpretations of Cultures”, defines religion as:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz, 1973, p. 90).

Religion as an illusion: Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the founding father of Psychoanalysis, in his work, “The Future of an Illusion”, views religion as:

The universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose...out of the relation to the father...” and “a system of wishful illusions together with a disavowal of reality, such as we find in an isolated from nowhere else but in amentia [insanity – lack of intellectual development], in a state of blissful hallucinatory confusion (Freud, 1975, p. 49).

Hence, Freud sees religion as a system dealing with neurotic rituals and wishful illusions.

The meaning of “Religion” from the Muslim Perspective:

The notion of “Religion” is explained by the Muslim scholars in the light of the Qur’ānic term *al-Dīn* which is different compared to the Western perspective. *Al-Dīn*’s literal and technical meanings are discussed as follow:

Literal Meaning: The term “الدين - *al-Dīn*” is derived from the root verb “كَانَ - *Dāna*,” which indicates the state of submissiveness, obedience, and humiliation. According to Arabic language dictionaries, the literal meaning of *al-Dīn* is described as follow:

(1) التَّوْحِيدُ وَالطَّاعَةُ وَالْعِبَادَةُ لِلَّهِ – *at-Tawhīd wa at-Tā'ah wa al-Ibādah li-Allah* (the Oneness, the Obedience and the Worship of Allah SWT); (2) الْجَزَاءُ وَالْحِسَابُ – *al-Jazā' wa al-Hisāb* (the Retribution and the Reckoning); (3) الشَّرِيعَةُ وَالطَّرِيقَةُ – *al-Sharī'ah wa at-Ṭarīqah* (the Law and the Way); (4) الْمَنْهَجُ وَالطَّرِيقَةُ – *al-Manhaj wa at-Ṭarīqah* (the Course and the Way); (5) الْحُكْمُ وَالنِّزَامُ – *al-Ḥukm wa an-Nizām* (the Judgment and the Order); (6) الْعَادَةُ وَالشَّانُ – *al-Ādah wa al-Sha'n* (the Custom and the Way); and (7) الْمِلَّةُ وَالْإِسْلَامُ – *al-Millah wa al-Islām* (the Religion and Islam) (Ibn Manzūr, 1993, vol. 13, pp. 169-170; Mustafa et al., n.d., vol. 1, p. 307; and Az-Zabīdī, 1984, vol. 35, pp. 53-56).

From all the above-mentioned terms, *al-Millah* and *al-Islām* indicate the true meaning of the term *al-Dīn* from the Qur'ānic perspective as “a comprehensive way of life” assigned by Allah SWT to humanity through all His Messengers and Prophets: ﴿قُلْ﴾ (95: حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ) (آل عمران صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ Say: “Allah speaketh the Truth: follow *the religion* of Abraham, the sane in faith;

he was not of the Pagans”¹ (Āl-E-'Imrān: 95); ﴿عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنْ الدِّينَ﴾ (19: آل عمران) (The Religion before Allah is *Islam* (submission to His Will):...” (Āl-E-'Imrān: 19); and ﴿وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا﴾ (125: حَنِيفًا وَاتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا) (النساء مِمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ 125) - “Who can be better in *religion* than one who submits his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows *the way of Abraham* the true in Faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend.” (an-Nisā': 125).

Based on the above literal meaning, the term “*al-Dīn*” could be generally understood by the word ‘religion’. However, the word ‘religion’ is too narrow to explain the meaning of *al-Islām* as a comprehensive way of life. Thus, the use of the term *al-Dīn* is more

¹ For the translated text of the *Qur'ānic* verses, the researcher referred to A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989).

accurate to be combined with the term *al-Islām* instead of “religion” (al-Attas, 1978, p. 51) as it contains its comprehensive meaning with all its tenets.

Technical Meaning: The Islamic sources – *al-Qur’ān* and *as-Sunnah*, have inspired both the classical and contemporary Muslim scholars to provide the appropriate technical meaning of *al-Dīn* as follow:

First, “الشرع الإلهي المتلقى عن طريق الوحي – the Divine Law received through the way of Revelation” (al-Khalaf, 2004, p. 9).

Second, “هو ما شرعه الله تعالى على لسان نبيه من الأحكام – It is what Allah Almighty has decreed through the tongue of His Prophet of the judgements” (al-Bājūrī, 2002, vol. 1, p. 41).

Third, “وَضَعُ إِلَهِي سَانِقٌ لِدَوِي الْعُقُولِ السَّلِيمَةِ بِاخْتِيَارِهِمْ إِلَى مَا فِيهِ نَجَاتُهُمْ أَوْ إِلَى سَعَادَةِ الدَّارَيْنِ فِي الْحَالِ، وَقَفْلَاخُهُمْ فِي الْمَالِ. أَوْ إِلَى سَعَادَةِ الدَّارَيْنِ – it is the state of Divine Origin leading sound-minded people, by their own choice, to their success in this world and their salvation in the Hereafter (Riḍā, 1990, vol. 8, p. 350) or the happiness of both worlds” (al-Bājūrī, 2002, vol. 1, p. 41).

The above definitions have been supported by most contemporary Muslim scholars. For instance, Sayyid Abū al-A’lā Mawdūdī (1903-1979) argues that the notion of *al-Dīn* is “a *Qur’ānic* technical term, signifying the way of life, the system of conduct, and the code on which man bases his entire mode of thought and action” (Mawdūdī, 1988, p. 114.). In addition, he claims that *al-Qur’ān* gave *al-Dīn* a very clear-cut definition and made it a central *Qur’ānic* terminology that stands for the entire way of life. According to him, *al-Dīn* is a unique composition of (1) Sovereignty and Supreme authority; (2) Obedience and submission to such authority; (3) The system of thought and action established through the exercise of that authority; and (4) Retribution meted out by the authority, in consideration of loyalty and obedience to it, or rebellion and transgression against it (Mawdūdī, pp. 93-103).

Furthermore, al-Qaradawi (b. 1926) asserts that *al-Dīn* is inborn or natural (*Fitrah*) in every human and, therefore, people's need for religion is a matter that cannot be denied by the human mind as both the man and the religion are closely related. In addition, within oneself lies a feeling or conscience. It is the combination of mind, emotions and soul that make up an individual (Qaradawi, 2005, pp. 9-11).

Moreover, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (b. 1931), a contemporary Muslim scholar of Islamic philosophy, theology and metaphysics, offers a unique technical meaning about the notion of *al-Dīn* based on the combination of four comprehensive terms: (1) *Indebtedness*, which means that man is indebted to Allah SWT for bringing him into existence and maintaining him in his existence; (2) *Submissiveness*, which indicates that man must submit himself with his full consciousness to Allah SWT. So, his sincere submissiveness makes him understand that he must return the debt to Allah SWT through sincere *Khidmah* (service) for His sake based on His commandments; (3) *Judicious Power*, which signifies that man must acknowledge Allah SWT as his *Rabb* (Lord), and therefore, he must do justice by giving himself up in performing all *'ibādah* (act of worship) only to Him and not to creates; and (4) *Natural Inclination*, which means that *Fiṭratul-Insān* (the nature of man) based on his creation is to obey Allah SWT and worship Him alone (al-Attas, 1978, p. 52-68).

The above technical definitions reveal the true meaning of *al-Dīn*, which denotes *a comprehensive way of life where a person's sincere Īmān* (conviction) in Allah SWT as the Only Supreme Authority. Furthermore, his total submission and obedience to Him and His Message revealed to His Prophet SAW are testified and implemented in his entire individual and communal oriented activities. In addition, the presentation of *al-Dīn* as a Divine, innate, and sublime way of life applies to *al-Islām*, which is: (1) Allah SWT's comprehensive way of life that encompasses all aspects of people's life; (2) total submission to Allah SWT's Will and obedience to all His prescribed Divine

Commandments in *al-Qur'ān* and applied by His Prophet SAW in the state of sincerity and willingness.

Overview of Muslim Studies that Contributed to this Book

The fall of Andalusia indicated the beginning of direct exploitation and colonization of the most important parts of the Muslim world by the Western supremacy of science. The humanization and Christianization of Muslims in Spain were done to uproot completely the Islamic identity from Andalusia. The eight hundred years old Muslim heritage in Spain was completely ruined and replaced by the blended Western-Hellenic-Roman-Christian-Secular civilization. Particularly, great libraries with vast literature in different sciences and branches of knowledge were destroyed and almost all their books were burned. Besides, a lot of beneficial literature written by great Muslim minds was taken away by the Westerns, who used them as primary references for many centuries in their universities. However, the loss of Andalusia was not the end of the Muslim world; rather, it marked the rise of a great Muslim Caliphate that ruled most parts of the world for another six hundred years.

The emergence of the Ottoman Caliphate was timely crucial for the very existence of the Muslim world during this time as it significantly contributed to the body of knowledge in different dimensions. The Islamization project, which was introduced by the Prophet SAW and carried out by the four Righteous Caliphs and other Muslim leaders, was continued further by the New Caliphate. The new territories came under Muslim leadership and governance. *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law) with its *Maqāṣid* (Objectives) was applied to govern all aspects of Muslims' and non-Muslims' lives, residing in Muslim lands and sustaining their material well-being. Islamization and the Relevantization process was applied to the revival of Islamic heritage from the beginning of the Ottoman Caliphate until its end. The Caliphate created a unique system of governance to treat both Muslims (being different in their

languages, traditions, cultures, ethnicities, religions, colours and races) and non-Muslims (being different in many aspects and especially in matters of religion) with Allah SWT's Divine Justice.

The fall of the Ottoman Caliphate changed the fate of the Muslim world. Most of the Muslim countries that were colonised even during the existence of the Caliphate, like India, Indonesia, and other parts of the Muslim world, were misled by the colonizers. The whole Muslim world witnessed changes in all aspects of life where secular law and governance were prioritised over *al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmiyyah* (the Islamic Law) and all the Islamic tenets. The system of education was secularized or blended between the Islamic and secular. For almost 150 years, the Muslim world continues to be governed by Western supremacy under the premises of a science-cultured-based approach. This approach influenced the whole Muslim world by replacing their 13th centuries of excellent intellectualism, leadership, development and sustainability, justice and tolerance, and friendliness and peaceful coexistence with the nationalistic-humanistic-centred system of leadership leading to the division of Muslim Ummah into fifty-seven small nations. However, many Muslim scholars used various ways such as writings, forums, seminars, conferences, researches, publications, intellectual movements and organizations, etc. to respond to the Western human-based scholarship and provide solutions from the Islamic Revelational-Based Scholarship.

In *Chapter One*, which is an introduction to this *Edited Book*, the author introduces the reader to a brief historical development of contemporary reality. Its development started with the Western Renaissance movement, which caused the happening of other succeeding movements, i.e., Reformation, Enlightenment, Modernism, and Postmodernism. Then, he discusses the literal and technical meanings of religion from the Western and Muslim perspectives. The author has referred to primary sources to provide a genuine literal and technical definition of the notion of religion.

Finally, an overview of Muslim studies that contributed to this book in the form of chapters is given.

In *Chapter Two*, the focus of the discussion is on the concept of civilization in the light of the following questions: What is civilization and what are its core characteristics? What is the relationship between culture and civilization? What are the aims of civilization? How did civilization emerge? What lessons can we deduce from the study of civilization? The author aims to describe the answers offered to these questions and provide insights into why and how the world has become the way it is. It is hoped that this description will enable the readers to have a glimpse into the past nations and their achievements, have a better understanding of the present world and determine which accomplishments of the people are the most notable.

In *Chapter Three*, the subject of motivating creativity is explained in the light of its implementation in different fields of interest. The researchers argue that creativity is acknowledged as a scientific subject dealing with engineering, architecture, and human sciences. Creativity is defined as a novel, original, and unique product, which have existed for decades. For some, creativity is believed to be an innate and divine ability and for some others, it is understood as a learnable trait. Yet, not everyone is motivated to be creative. To understand creativity as a motivating process, this chapter briefly discusses the history and definition of creativity by reviewing past literature on motivation in creativity hoping that it may help enhance creativity among children, students, employees, etc.

In *Chapter Four*, the situation in Sabah when it was known as Protectorate and Crown Colony by giving special attention to the local people and the British rulers is explored. Sabah consists of multi-racial-religious-lingual people who have lived side by side ever since before the British colonization. The researchers attempted to examine how toleration was managed and promoted among the locals themselves and between the locals and the British. The positive role played by the British people to develop tolerance

in this land cannot be denied. Therefore, the locals put high respect towards them, even nowadays. The Protectorate: Hatred and Misunderstanding; Protectorate to Crown Colony: A Transition to Toleration; and Crown Colony: Toleration among all People have been the focus of discussion in this chapter.

In *Chapter Five*, a qualitative study was conducted to explore a *Tawhidic Paradigm* (TP) as an alternative for servant leaders. It was built upon Greenleaf's servant leadership (SL) theory to propose Islamic Servant Leadership (ISL). The coding process produced IPI-5es principles (expertise, ethereal, emotional, ethical, and empowering) essentially required by servant leaders to transform SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) around the globe. The Islamic constructs of *'Aqidah* (Creed), *Khalifa* (Vicegerent) and *'Adl* (Justice) were critical in grounding these principles. This research project aims to see leaders forming policies that synchronize the meeting of SDGs with spiritual responsibilities, where *Tawhidic Paradigm* projects service to humanity (SDGs) as an act of worship (*'Ibādah*).

In *Chapter Six*, the role of palliative care in managing and facing medical futility using qualitative and interpretive approaches is explored. The researchers elaborate on the significance of palliative care as the best way to approach futile treatment in the light of *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* (The Objectives of Islamic Law). The findings show that the general approaches in palliative care are fairly in harmony with the necessities in *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah*. The relevance of palliative care when treatment becomes futile has been demonstrated as a balanced approach, which is crucial in preserving the religion, self, and wealth based on the Islamic Tenets.

In *Chapter Seven*, the focus of the discussion is on how to alleviate poverty, which is one of the sustainable development goals, from an Islamic perspective. Islam architects the lawful needs of people through its very concept of *al-Maṣlahah* (the Interest). One of the pivotal objectives of Islam is to protect wealth which authenticates economic growth and uproots poverty. Islam, thus,

advocates multi-dimensional tools to eradicate poverty as a means of sustainable development. The Islamic approaches that are significant to eradicate poverty in line with the United Nations' SDGs are highlighted in this study. The findings from the research would be the value-oriented Islamic means of poverty alleviation that are poised to achieve SDGs.

In *Chapter Eight*, a systematised literature review of studies based on maintaining properties of *Waqf* in Malaysia is performed by the researchers. It is argued that the need for adequate maintenance is more important in the case of *Waqf* properties due to the uniqueness of *Waqf* properties concerning three of the core features – expected social benefits, ethical use, and perpetuity. Therefore, effective maintenance of *Waqf* properties is essential for the continued sustenance of the institution of *Waqf* and equitable distribution of income and provision of essential services to the larger society. The articles that are reviewed for this study are searched from SpringerLink, Google Scholar, Emerald, SAGE, ISRA publications, as well as other databases. The researchers carried out the searches from the database, including the title and abstract screen, full-text analysis and data extraction. The findings indicate that while many previous studies focused on the administration and management of *Waqf*, *Waqf* institution, and the development and financing of *Waqf* only, very few studies examined the maintenance of *Waqf* properties.

In *Chapter Nine*, the United Nations (UN) and ASEAN reactions toward the violence inflicted on the Rohingya as well as their roles in overcoming the ethnic conflict are examined. Besides, the reaction by Malaysia is analysed as Malaysia is one of ASEAN members that dares to criticise this issue. Myanmar's Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia are highlighted in terms of its government, social and education, and the way forward, which have assisted the researchers to evaluate and justify the situation of the refugee's daily life activities and the impact of not having clear status and citizenship. The findings indicate that the UN and ASEAN need to

cooperate and play their role more efficiently. Malaysia also needs to have the willingness to work with ASEAN members that aim to coordinate aids in Rakhine. All of them need to put pressure on and insist the Myanmar state stop all violence against the Rohingya ethnic group, whose destiny is still unidentified in the future. In reaction to these issues, the Malaysian government is supported by non-government organizations (NGOs) particularly Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Global Peace Mission (GPM), and JREC which are among the NGOs in Malaysia that inexhaustibly helping the Rohingya refugees in Myanmar and Malaysia until now.

In *Chapter Ten*, factors that are imperative in shaping one's financial literacy are evaluated. The researchers suggested a proposal on a theoretical framework to explicate financial literacy to improve people's understanding pertinent to millennials' knowledge of Islamic banking. Likewise, financial attitude, financial knowledge and financial socialisation agents are hypothesised to have impacts on financial literacy. The mediating role of financial attitude is also empirically analysed. The researchers' model was tested using 225 actual bank customers who reside in Gombak, Malaysia and their context is in Islamic banking. The findings suggest that all factors are significant drivers whilst financial attitude is proven to be a mediator. In more detail, financial attitude, financial knowledge, and financial socialisation are instrumental in determining financial literacy. Financial attitude has been a mediating variable for the relationships between financial knowledge, financial socialisation, and financial literacy. Besides, this study forefronts a financial literacy analysis at the Islamic banks' customers level in an Islamic banking context. Valuable discernments for bank managers to improve their existing and future customers for new changes in financial innovations in Malaysia are provided.

In *Chapter Eleven*, the major factors that lead to disciplinary problems in school are examined. The researchers used quantitative methodology to collect the data from three secondary schools in Klang and the data were analysed using the SPSS IBM

22. Four factors contribute to disciplinary problems among schools' students: (1) family factor, (2) peer pressure factor, (3) social media factor, and (4) teachers' role and school environment factors. The most influential is the peer pressure factor. The findings demonstrate that parents, teachers, schools, local authorities, communities, District Education Officer, State Education Officer, and MOE should play a vital role in resolving the issue of the disciplinary problem among school students.

Conclusion

This *Introductory Chapter* has concluded that the revisiting of contemporary reality's historical development is significant as it provides new insights for contemporary scholars, especially Muslim scholars to intellectually respond to its challenges from the Islamic perspective. The literal and technical meanings of the notion of religion from the Western and Muslim perspectives as discussed in this introductory chapter serve as the key indicator in distinguishing between the two approaches. It eases the way of dealing with the notion of religion appropriately within the context of its usage. Finally, this chapter presents a brief description of all the main issues discussed in this book in the form of chapters as presented by different Muslim scholars.