Islamic Ethics
and Character Building

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Contents

Introduction ix

Chapter One: General Overview on the Study of Islamic Ethics – Adubah Abdul Rahim 1
1. Definitions of Islamic Ethics and Its Scope
2. Sources of Islamic Ethics
3. Ethics and Other Disciplines
4. The Importance of Islamic Ethics
5. Characteristics of Islamic Ethics
6. Islamic Ethics in Relation to the Concept of īmān, īslām and iḥsān
7. The Relationship Between Islamic Ethics and Sharī’ah

Chapter Two: Ethics in the Qur’an and the Ḥadīth – Che Amnah Bahari 42
1. Amānah (trustworthiness)
2. Ḥudā (Guidance) and Rahmah (Mercy)
3. Ikhlāṣ (sincerity)
4. Ṣabr (patience)
5. Taqwā (consciousness of Allah)

Chapter Three: Moral and Ethical Concepts – Amilah Awang 68
1. The Triad Concept Governing Ethical Rule in Īslām
   a. Obligation
   b. Responsibilities and Duties
   c. Duty versus Right
   d. Sanction
2. Will in Ethics
   a. Intention, Motive and Will in action
   b. Intentions as the Value Judgements
   c. Intention as Source of Motivation


1. Influence of Environment
2. Influence of Heredity
3. Interaction between Heredity and Environment
4. Influence of Spiritual Dimension – fitrah

Chapter Five: Spiritual Pathology and Management of Emotions – Fatimah Abdullah

1. Body-soul Relationship
2. Negative Thought
3. Negative Thought and Low self-esteem
4. Narcissism
5. Arrogance (kībr)
6. Ostentation (riyā’)
7. Hypocrisy (nifāq)
8. Envy or Jealousy
9. Anger
10. Love of Dunyā

Chapter Six: Psycho-spiritual Well-being – Fatimah Abdullah

1. Self-purification and Refinement of Character
2. Self-Purification and Prosperity
3. Submission (islām) as a Means of Freeing the Self
4. Happiness
Chapter Seven: Mercy as Benchmark of Social Relation – Fatimah Abdullah 168
1. The Islamic Social virtues
2. Mercy and Compassion
3. Love and Mercy
4. Mercy and Empathy
5. Empathy, Expressiveness and Emotional Contagion
6. Mercy, Forbearance and Forgiveness
7. Justice and Forgiveness

Chapter Eight: Critical Analysis of Western Ethical Theories Concerning Human Nature: Secular Humanism – Megawati Moris 187
1. Background
2. Definitions
3. Characteristics
4. Religion
   a. Evolution
   b. Morality / Ethics
5. Islamic Perspective
   a. Islamic Conception of Man (İnsân)
   b. Human Responsibilities and Rights
   c. Human Community and Society in İslâm

Index 203
Chapter 8

Secular Humanism and The Islamic Conception of Human Being (*Insān*)

Megawati Moris

Introduction and Background

The term Secular Humanism is alternatively known as Humanism and it is often spelled with a capital ‘H’ to distinguish it from other forms of humanism. There is no universal doctrine or tenet for all Humanists to adhere to but various declarations and statements have been issued in an attempt to unify the Humanist identity. Nonetheless, member organizations of its umbrella organization the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU)\(^1\) are required by law to accept the *Minimum Statement on Humanism* which is stated below.\(^2\)

Studies have shown that over one billion people in the world today define themselves as atheist, agnostic or nonreligious. In the United States of America, considered as the most religious of the world’s

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\(^1\) International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) is the sole world umbrella organization embracing Humanist, atheist, rationalist, secular, skeptic, Ethical Culture, free thought and similar organizations worldwide. It is founded in Amsterdam in 1952 and is a democratic union of more than one hundred member organizations in forty countries. See International Humanist and Ethical Union, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Humanist_and_Ethical_Union (accessed 30 May, 2011).