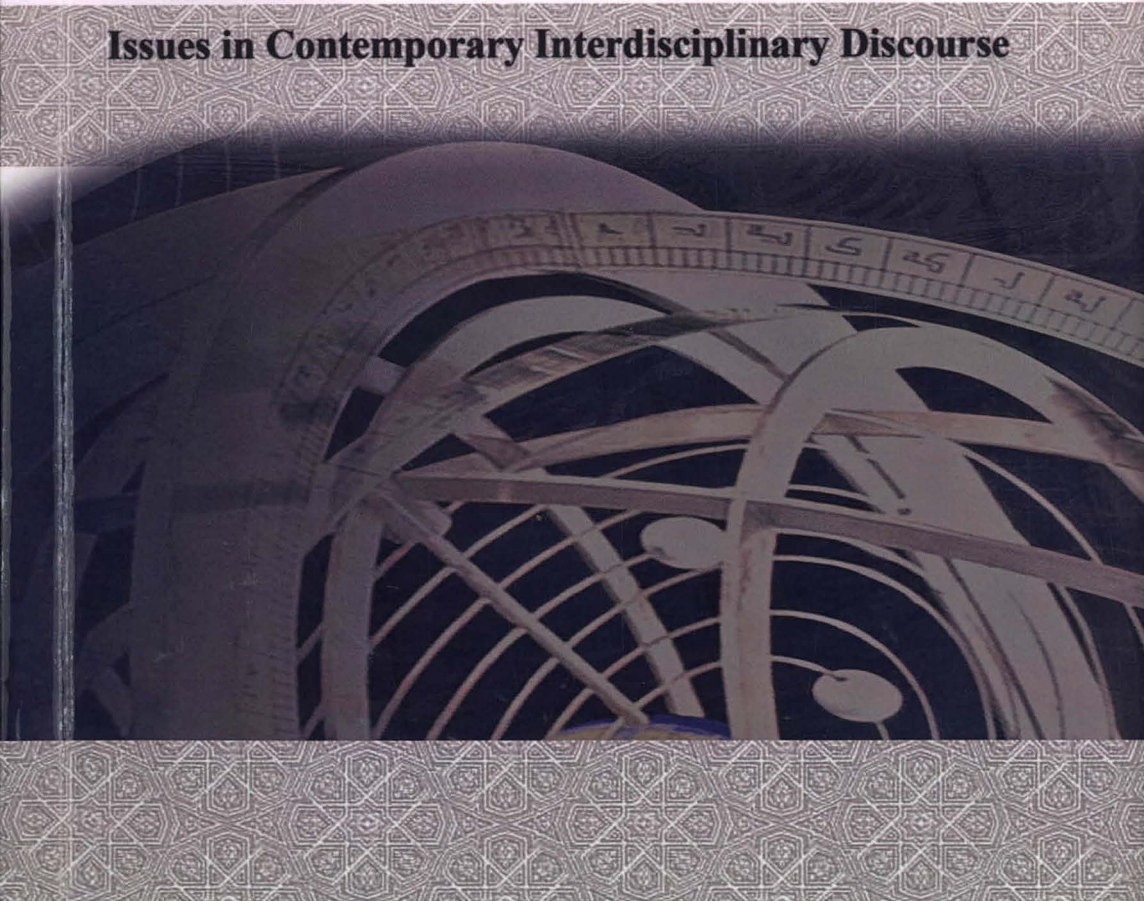


THE ISLAMIC WORLDVIEW, ETHICS AND CIVILIZATION

Issues in Contemporary Interdisciplinary Discourse



ABDUL KABIR HUSSAIN SOLIHU

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Contents

Preface	vii
Table of Transliteration	viii
Introduction: Islamic Values and Civilizational Worldview <i>Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu</i>	1
Part I: Worldview & Civilization	
1. Culture and Civilization: A Review of Concepts <i>Suleiman M. H. Boayo</i>	15
2. The Question of Development in Islam: Revitalising the Role of Worldview & Civilizational Vision <i>Abdelaziz Berghout</i>	27
3. Urbanization and Resources Sustainability: Lessons from <i>Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah</i> <i>Abubakr Imam Ali-Agan and Muhammad Bello Ibrahim</i>	47
4. Defining Moderation and Extremism in the Light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah <i>Jamal Ahmed Badi</i>	61
5. The Islamic Worldview on the Preservation and Restoration of Mental Health <i>Abdul Latif Abdul Razak</i>	77

Part II: Ethics & Religion

6. The Role of Religion in Shaping Moral Character: Islamic and Catholic Perspectives <i>Fatmir Shehu</i>	99
7. Media Audience Ethics in Islam and Christianity <i>Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu</i>	123
8. Voluntarism: An Islamic Perspective <i>Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman</i>	141
9. Servant Leadership in Islam <i>Abdul Raufu Ambali, Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar, Jasmine Ahmad and Zahra Tariq</i>	169
10. Islamic Perspective of Suicide Attack: Concepts, Causes and Effects <i>Md. Yousuf Ali</i>	205
11. Euthanasia: An Islamic Perspective <i>Mohammad Manzoor Malik</i>	229
Bibliography	251
List of Contributors	271
Index	275

Chapter 7

Media Audience Ethics in Islam and Christianity

Abdul Kabir Hussain Solihu

Introduction

We live in a world of communication. At home, in school, in business and industry and in world affairs at large we always have to face the demands of a fast running world revolving around the magical and revolutionary web of communication technology. With the rapid advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), however, comes a variety of moral challenges. The mass media celebrate values or broadcast programmes that some audiences sometimes find repugnant to their values.

To safeguard the cultural values of the media audience, there have been several attempts to formulate codes of ethics pertaining to the freedom, responsibilities, rights and duties of the media. Most studies on media ethics focus on the message sender, the message reporter and the quality of the message itself. Even most of the studies purportedly dealing with audience ethics stem from the standpoint of the message sender or message reporter.¹ Little effort has been invested in critically studying and outlining the audience responsibilities towards message reception and consumption, irrespective of the quality of the media content. Against this backdrop, some media theorists have underscored the concept of a mass media audience with some level of active role in relation to media messages.² From the concept of an active media audience, there emerged the concept of media audience ethics.³ Drawing on the responsibilities of audience members as they are exposed to experiences, ideas, and facts generated by the mass media, audience ethics refers to a code of ethics a media user, consumer, audience or recipient possesses when engaging with media content.⁴ It has now been established that “audience members have the ability to interact