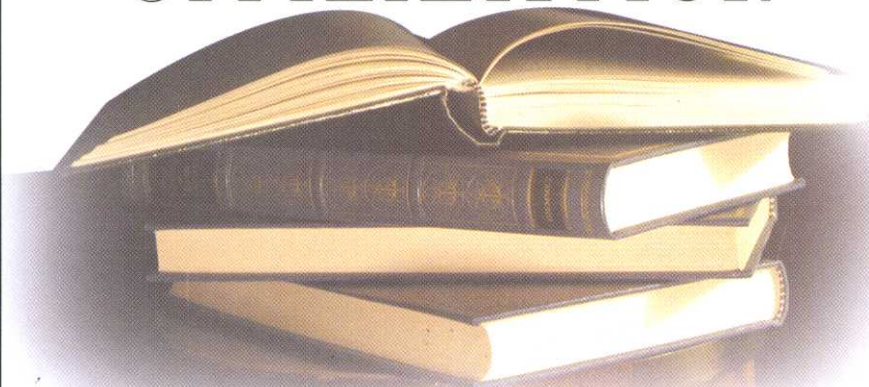




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MUNAWAR HAQUE
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CHAPTER FOUR

CONTRIBUTION OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS TO THE SCIENCES

Munawar Haque

Introduction

Islam is a complete and comprehensive system of life, and not merely a religion describing the relations between man and his Creator. Therefore, far from discouraging a life of well-being in this world, the Qur'ān praises those "who say: Our Lord! Give unto us in this world that which is best and in the Hereafter that which is best, and guard us from the torment of fire" (2:201). It is this quest for the well-being which urges man to study and learn, in as perfect a manner as possible, of all that exists in the universe, in order to profit by it, and to be grateful to God. As to the method of increasing knowledge, it is inspiring to note that the very first revelation that came to the Prophet, who was born among illiterate people, was a command to read— "Read with name of thy Lord..." (96:1). The Qur'ān has repeatedly urged the Muslims to mediate over the creation of the universe, and to study how the heavens and earth have been made subservient to man. Therefore, there has never been a conflict between faith and reason in Islam.¹

Thus it is that the Muslims began very early an ever-progressive and serious study of the sciences. They did not merely attain political and intellectual supremacy and found extensive empires, but also surpassed all other nations in the field of knowledge and intellectual endeavours. Muslims scholars did not limit their studies

¹ Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muslim Contribution to the Science and Arts* (Islamabad: Da'wah Academy, IIU, 1989), pp. 5-6 and p. 15.