



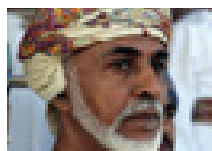
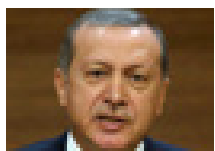
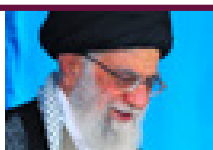
PERSONS
OF THE YEAR



The
Muslim 500

THE WORLD'S 500 MOST
INFLUENTIAL MUSLIMS

2020





The Muslim 500

THE WORLD'S 500 MOST
INFLUENTIAL MUSLIMS

2020

The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, 2020

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ تُنْفِقُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْجزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ فَإِنِّي أَنْتِ وَهُوَ
مَوْهِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْجزِيَنَّ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

التَّحْلُفُ ٩٦، ٩٧ - ٩٧

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْعَظِيمِ

That which is with you will come to an end, but that which is with God remains. And He shall surely pay those who were patient, their reward according to the best of what they used to do. Whoever acts righteously, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall revive with a goodly life. And We shall surely pay them their reward according to the best of what they used to do.

The Bee, 96 - 97

Calligraphy by Jawahir Al-Qur'an © FreeIslamicCalligraphy.com

THE 450 LISTS

❧ The Lists ❧

Scholarly

page 115

These scholars, thinkers, and educators are well-respected leaders who have made significant contributions to the study and cultivation of Islamic knowledge and Muslim culture.

Political

page 127

These leaders possess high positions of power over substantial groups of people and exert influence from their status, reputation, or political clout.

Administration of Religious Affairs

page 135

These agents of change are responsible for founding and/or directing institutions that influence the religious affairs of Muslims.

Preachers & Spiritual Guides

page 143

Preachers rely on charisma to inspire millions through multimedia while spiritual guides traditionally teach through live study circles and individualized directives to their disciples.

Philanthropy, Charity & Development

page 150

These activists work in the field, affecting the world through poverty alleviation programmes, emergency aid, charitable giving, sponsorships of various initiatives for people and communities to become self-reliant.

Social Issues

page 153

These individuals address various social issues such as health, education, women's rights, the environment, human rights and conflict resolution.

Business

page 163

These entrepreneurs head and direct key organisations in the business world pushing innovation and financial development forward.

Science & Technology

page 168

These are the main figures from the world of science and technology.

Arts & Culture

page 172

These are artists and cultural ambassadors whose work has become part of people's daily lives.

Qur'an Reciters

page 179

The recitation of the Qur'an is a special art that is valued by Muslim communities across the world. The word al-Qur'an literally means 'the recitation' referring to its origins as an oral text.

Media

page 180

In an age of impulsive news and innovative media, these personalities have garnered influence from their activity in the media world.

Celebrities & Sports Stars

page 184

These instantly recognisable figures have a huge public following due to their prominence in popular culture and sport.

Top Extremists

page 186

These individuals are responsible for heinous acts and controversial statements that are rejected by Muslim orthodoxy, separating them clearly from others engaged in armed conflict.

Middle East and North Africa

IRAN

Amoli, HE Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Jawadi
Read bio on page 106 in Honourable Mentions.

ALGERIA

Cherif, HE Ambassador Prof Mustafa

Prof Mustafa Cherif is a philosopher and researcher specializing in international relations and dialogue between cultures. Cherif has written numerous works on religion, civilization and dialogue between cultures. He has held many senior positions including minister of higher education and ambassador. He was awarded the UNESCO-Sharjah prize for Arab Culture and the Ducci Foundation peace prize in 2013.

BAHRAIN

Yaquby, Nizam

Nizam Yaquby was trained in the Islamic sciences in Bahrain and Makkah before going on to study at McGill University. He sits on a plethora of Sharia advisory boards including Morgan Stanley, Arab Banking Corporation, Citigroup Inc, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Barclays, BNP Paribas, Credit Agricole CIB, Dow Jones Islamic Index, Lloyds TSB, and HSBC Amanah. A highly sought-after expert with an immense breadth of experience with the Muslim community, Yaquby has received several awards, including the Euromoney Award for Outstanding Contribution to Islamic Finance and the Zaki Badawi Award for Excellence in Shariah Advisory in 2008.

EGYPT

Emara, Dr Mohamed

Dr Emara is an intellectual and scholar who has authored over 70 books. He is currently a member of the Al-Azhar Al-Sharif Islamic Research Academy, The International Institute for Islamic Thought, and The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. He was chosen to be part of the team re-writing the Egyptian constitution before the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood. Dr Emara is outspoken in his views against Western intervention and influence over the Muslim world, calling upon all Muslims to unite and form an Islamic State under moderate Islamic rule. He resigned from his post as Chief Editor of Al-Azhar Magazine in 2015.

Dabashi, Prof Hamid

Hamid Dabashi is the Hagop Kevorkian Prof of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York. He has written extensively in major publications and peer reviewed journals on a variety of topics including religion, literature, cinema and philosophy. He founded Dreams of a Nation, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian Cinema. He is also a public speaker, a current affairs essayist (contributing opinion pieces regularly to the Al Jazeera website), and a staunch anti-war activist.

Damad, HE Ayatollah Dr Seyyed

Mostafa Mohaghegh

Damad is one of very few high-level clerics in Iran to have been educated in international law in the West. Damad is a forceful advocate for a more progressive interpretation of Sharia. He is a very well-respected scholar, Dean of the Department of Islamic Studies at The Academy of Sciences of Iran, and a Prof of Law and Islamic Philosophy at Tehran University. In October 2010, at the Pope's behest, he addressed the Synod in the Vatican, stressing the Muslim view towards Christians as one of friendship, trust, and mutual understanding. He was honoured as a prominent figure of humanities in Iran at the 8th Farabi International Award ceremony in 2017.

Shirazi, HE Grand Ayatollah Nasir Makarim

Grand Ayatollah Shirazi is a leading theologian teaching at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning for Twelver Shia. He is most influential for his Tafsir Al-Amthal, which is a very popular, simplified commentary of the Qur'an. He has also spearheaded the creation of schools and magazines devoted to young people. He has been outspoken in his support for Palestinians. His official website (www.makarem.ir) is in six languages, including English.

Sobhani, HE Ayatollah Jafar

Sobhani is a leading member of the Council of Mujtahids at the Qom Seminary, one of the two most important centres of learning in Twelver Shiism. He is the director of the Imam Sadiq Institute, Iran and was previously a member of the Society of Seminary Teachers at Qom. His work in all areas of the Islamic sciences is widely known and receives critical attention. Sobhani is a prolific writer, having published over 300 scholarly works.

IRAQ

Fayadh, HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq

Read bio on page 106 in Honourable Mentions.

Hakim, HE Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Said

Grand Ayatollah Hakim is one of the four maraji' of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and, accordingly, is one of Iraq's most important Shia clerics. His family is very prominent in Iraq, holding key positions in Shia social and religious organizations and also in government. Hakim leads around five percent of the Iraqi Shia population. His influence stems partly from his relationship to Grand Ayatollah Mohsen Al-Hakim, a former religious leader of the Twelver Shia in Iraq.

Al-Najafi, HE Grand Ayatollah Bashir

Grand Ayatollah Bashir Al-Najafi is one of the four maraji' of the Hawza Seminary in Najaf, Iraq, and one of Iraq's most powerful Shia clerics. As a marja' of the Hawza in Najaf, Iraq's premier Shia institution, Najafi holds a position of immense authority. Najafi, originally from Pakistan, holds less sway amongst Iraq's population than the other maraji' but has significant clout in South Asia. His website (www.alnajafi.com) is available in five languages.

Al-Qaradaghi, Prof Ali Mohyi Ali

Prof Ali is the Vice-President of the European Council for Fatwa and Research and the Chairman of the Supreme Consultative Council for Bringing Islamic Madhahib Closer Together of ISESCO, in addition to many other professional positions. He has written more than 30 works.

Al-Sadr, HE Ayatollah Al-Faqih

Seyyed Hussein Ismail

HE Ayatollah Al-Faqih Seyyed Hussein Ismail Al-Sadr is the most senior Shia cleric in Baghdad, Iraq. He heads the Ayatollah Seyyed Hussain Ismail Al-Sadr

Foundation Trust, which runs humanitarian, development, and peace and reconciliation projects in Iraq. His role as a social leader and humanitarian has increased significantly during the recent hostilities in Iraq. The issue of reconciliation and dialogue between Iraq's different religious and ethnic communities has featured heavily in the Ayatollah's recent efforts.

JORDAN

Khasawneh, HE Sheikh Abdul Karim

Sheikh Khasawneh has served Jordan in his capacity as a religious scholar and mufti in various roles. He is a former mufti of the Jordanian Armed Forces, served as the Grand Mufti of Jordan between 2010-2017, and is currently Jordan's Chief Islamic Justice. Khasawneh is also a member of the Jordanian Ifta Council and member of the board of the World Islamic Sciences and Education University.

LEBANON

Qabbani, HE Dr Mohammad Rashid

Mohammad Rashid Qabbani is the former Grand Mufti of Lebanon and the country's leading Sunni scholar. Qabbani speaks out regularly against sectarianism and violence. His is an important voice in a region where tensions can easily escalate.

MOROCCO

Abdurrahman, Prof Taha

Taha Abdurrahman is a Moroccan philosopher famous for his work on the creation of an ethical humanistic modernism on the basis of the ethics and values of Islam. Abdurrahman has won the Moroccan Book Prize twice, and was awarded the ISESCO Prize for Islamic Philosophy in 2006. He is the president of the Wisdom Circle of Thinkers, Morocco, and a member of the International Union of Muslim Scholars.

OMAN

Al-Khalili, HE Sheikh Ahmad

Sheikh Al-Khalili is the Grand Mufti of Oman. He is a strong advocate for religious tolerance and works hard to ensure harmony between the different religious schools of thought in Oman.

PALESTINE

Abu Sway, Prof Mustafa

Prof Abu Sway was appointed as the first holder of the Integral Chair for the Study of Imam Ghazali's Work at Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa and at Al-Quds University in 2012. He has been Prof of Philosophy and Islamic Studies at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, Palestine, since 1996. He taught at the International Islamic University in Malaysia (1993-96) and was a visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University, as well as a Visiting Prof of Islamic Studies at Bard College, NY.

Nusseibeh, Prof Sari

Sari Nusseibeh, who comes from one of Jerusalem's oldest and most prominent families, is a Prof of philosophy and a leading intellectual. He served as president of the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem for more than twenty years. In 2008, Nusseibeh was voted 24th in a list of Top 100 Public Intellectuals by Prospect Magazine (UK) and Foreign Policy (US).

Al-Tamimi, HE Justice Sheikh Dr Tayseer Rajab

Al-Tamimi is a leading scholar and Chief Islamic Justice of Palestine. Popular as an outspoken thinker and leader on Palestinian-Israeli relations, Al-Tamimi is the head of the Palestinian Centre for Religion and Civilization Dialogue.

SAUDI ARABIA

Al-Fawzan, Sheikh Salih Bin Fawzan

Sheikh Al-Fawzan is considered to be the most senior scholar of the Salafi movement in Saudi Arabia. He is a member of the council of senior scholars and committee for *fatwa* and research. He has authored over 35 books and is one of the major Muftis on the program "Noor 'Ala Al Darb", one of the oldest and most famous programs broadcast on the Quran radio channel, where a number of major scholars answer questions and give *fatwas*.

Al-Madkhali, Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr

Sheikh Rabee Ibn Haadi 'Umayr Al-Madkhali is one of the most radical thinkers in the Salafi movement. He is an influential writer and speaker whose influence has led to an independent faction within Salafism. Al-Madkhali's adherents are known as Madkhali Salafis and make up one of the most significant

and influential branches inside the Salafi movement. A former head of the Sunnah Studies Department at the Islamic University of Madinah, Al-Madkhali is a scholar who has authored over 30 works in the fields of Hadith and Islamic disciplines.

Al-Saffar, Hasan Musa

Hasan Musa Al-Saffar is a Saudi Shia reformist leader who has made significant progress in communicating with Salafi leaders and other senior officials in Saudi Arabia. This is important as sectarian tensions throughout the Muslim world have risen with increased Sunni-Shia hostilities in Iraq.

Al-Awni, Dr Hatim

Dr Hatim Al-Awni is the General Supervisor of International Committee for the Support of the Final Prophet (ICSFP). He has also served in a number of academic and political capacities, including the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia for two separate terms. While his academic research includes dozens of publications, perhaps his greatest contribution is the awakening of Salafi introspection in Saudi Arabia. His widely-read articles have pointed out clear connections between militant extremism and core Salafi texts. He also writes extensively on rapprochement between Islamic schools of thought, particularly between Salafi and Traditionalist (Ash'ari and Maturidi) approaches.

SYRIA

Al-Nabulsi, Dr Mohammed Ratib

The son of a well-known Syrian religious scholar, Dr Al-Nabulsi has represented Syria all over the world in many Islamic conferences. Muslims know him through the lessons, orations, symposiums, and interviews broadcast on radio and television. He has written a number of Islamic books, many of which have been translated into English. In addition to studying in his native Syria, he also has studied in Ireland and France.

Al-Sabouni, Sheikh Mohammed Ali

Read bio on page 106 in Honourable Mentions.

TUNISIA

Djait, Hisham

Prof Hisham Djait is a well-known pan-Arab intellectual from Tunisia. A Prof of history at the University of Tunis, he has written important works such

as Al-Fitna and L'Europe et l'Islam, and was chosen by the Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing in Beirut as the Cultural Personality of the Year for 2016.

Sub-Saharan Africa

ERITREA

Said, Sheikh Faïd Mohammed

Sheikh Faïd Mohammed Said was raised in Eritrea, where he was educated by Sheikh Hamid (rehmatullah alaih), the Senior Judge of the Shari'ah Court in Asmara. While he remained in Eritrea, he studied under some of the greatest scholars in the country. He later moved to Madinah al Munawarah, where he continued his studies under Sheikh Atiyyah Mohammed Salim (rehmatullah alaih), the Resident Scholar of Masjid ul Nabawwi and Senior Judge of Madinah. Since that time, Sheikh Faïd has been invited to lecture all over the world, particularly in Canada, Germany, the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UK. He has also headed Almadina College, a centre of learning in London.

ETHIOPIA

Idris, HE Hajji Omar

Hajji Omar Idris is a mufti and leader of Ethiopian Muslims, who represent 40% of Ethiopia's population. Widely respected, he is a proponent of Muslim unity and was elected as President of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council. It is hoped that the EIASC, or Majlis, will retain its independence from the government and help to build a unity amongst Muslim groups in Ethiopia as well as representing them strongly. Hajji Idris is also president of the *fatwa* and Da'wa Councils.

GAMBIA, THE

Jah, HE Ambassador Prof Omar

Jah is an important figure in the Muslim community of Gambia and in Gambian scholarship on Islam. Jah was the former Gambian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Secretary of the Muslim Scholars Council of Gambia, and Acting Vice-Chancellor at the University of Gambia. After more than a decade at the University of Gambia, he is now the Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he was appointed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

NIGERIA

Ahmed, Dr Ibrahim Datti

Dr Ibrahim Datti Ahmed is the President-General of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN). The SCSN is the focal Islamic religious institution that deals with Sharia in Nigeria and is also a representative body of Nigeria's Muslim scholars. Recently, the SCSN has petitioned for fair treatment of Muslim military officers and has spoken out against prejudice and violence against Muslims. He has been touted as a mediator between Boko Haram and the government.

Salih, HE Sheikh Ibrahim

Read bio on page 106 in Honourable Mentions.

Zakzaky, Sheikh Ibraheem

Sheikh Ibraheem is the leading force behind the most influential Shia movement in Nigeria and heads its Islamic Movement. The movement has witnessed rapid growth and is based on the model of Hezbollah, focusing on social services, education, charity, etc, but also including military training. In December 2015, the Nigerian Army raided his residence in Zaria, massacred hundreds of his followers, killed three of his sons and held him under state detention before being released. He was arrested again earlier this year but the court hearing has been repeatedly delayed.

SOUTH AFRICA

Desai, Mufti Ebrahim

A prominent and world renowned scholar; Mufti Ebrahim Desai runs the askimam.org, issuing numerous fatwas online through his institution—Darul Iftaa Mahmudiyyah in Sherwood, Durban—South Africa where he trains students to become Muftis. Mufti Desai has been issuing Fatwās in various fields for more than 25 years. Currently, Mufti Saheb runs The Darul Iftaa Mahmudiyyah where he teaches students to become Muftis. The Darul Iftaa caters for many facilities under the supervision of Mufti Saheb.

Esack, Farid

Farid Esack is a scholar of the Qur'an and Contemporary Islam who has authored many famous written works on Islam and is arguably the world's leading

A Common Word

www.acommonword.com

The 'A Common Word Between Us and You' initiative (ACW) was launched on October 13th, 2007 initially as an Open Letter signed by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals (including such figures as the Grand Muftis of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Oman, Bosnia, Russia, and Istanbul) to the leaders of the Christian churches and denominations of the entire world, including His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. In essence it proposed, based on verses from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible, that Islam and Christianity share, at their cores, the twin 'golden' commandments of the paramount importance of loving God and loving one's neighbour. Based on this joint common ground, it called for peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims worldwide, who together comprise over 55% of the world's population. ACW was and is an extended global handshake of interreligious goodwill, friendship and fellowship and consequently of world peace.

ACW is a document which uses religion as the solution to the problems of interreligious tensions. By basing itself on solid theological grounds in both religions—the twin Commandments to love God and love the neighbour—ACW has demonstrated to Christians and Muslims that they have a certain common ground (despite irreducible theological differences) and that both religions require them to have relations based on love not on hatred.

During the ten years since its launch ACW has become arguably the most influential interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians in history. It has provided a common ground on which thousands of Muslim and Christian religious leaders have been brought together through:

- Initiating a multitude of conferences, seminars, workshops, training programs, and university courses in Jordan, the Vatican, the USA (Yale University, Georgetown University and the College of William and Mary, Fuller Theological Seminary, ISNA, Oregon, Virginia, South Carolina, New Orleans), the UK (Cambridge University, Oxford University, Heythrop College and Lambeth Palace), Oman, Malaysia, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, the UAE, the Brookings Institute in Qatar, the Mediterranean Dialogue of Cultures, Germany (the Munich School of Philosophy), the World Council of Churches in Switzerland, the Philippines, and Australia.
- Being the subject of books, articles, PhDs and over 74 dissertations and reports.
- Founding the regular [every 3 years] Catholic-Muslim

Forum, which was first held at the Vatican in 2008, at the Baptism Site, Jordan, in 2011, and at the Vatican in November, 2014.

- Giving rise to a variety of other events, activities, initiatives and even legislative bills.

Thus HH Pope Benedict XVI, said of it (during the First Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum held at the Vatican, November 4–6, 2008):

"The Open Letter 'A Common Word between Us and you' has received numerous responses and has given rise to dialogue, specific initiatives and meetings, aimed at helping us to know one another more deeply and to grow in esteem for our shared values."

Equally, HG Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said of it (in 2010):

"The appearance of the A Common Word [Open Letter] of 2007 was a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations and it has a unique role in stimulating a discussion at the deepest level across the world."

Insofar as Muslim-Christian relations are concerned, Professor Miroslav Volf of Yale University said of it (in 2011):

"The A Common Word Initiative is the most significant initiative in Muslim-Christian relations since *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council."

And in so far as Muslim initiatives towards Christians are concerned, Professor David F. Ford (Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Cambridge, U.K. and Director of the Cambridge Interfaith Program) said of it (in 2011):

"The Open Letter A Common Word Between Us and You (2007) was probably the single most important initiative ever taken by Muslim scholars and authorities towards Christians."

The A Common Word initiative was awarded the UK's Association of Muslim Social Scientists Building Bridges Award of 2008; Prince Ghazi, Habib Ali Al-Jifri and Grand Mufti Mustafa Ceric were awarded Germany's Eugen Biser Award for it in 2008, and Prince Ghazi was awarded the St Augustine Award for Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean (Milan, Italy, 2012) and the Interfaith Harmony and Tolerance Prize by the International Islamic University of Malaysia, Jamia Ma'din and the National Unity and Integration Department, Malaysia.

Islamic Liberation Theologian. He was appointed as gender equality commissioner by Nelson Mandela. Through the organization, The Call of Islam, Esack played a leading role in the struggle against apartheid. He is an advocate of interreligious solidarity against all forms of injustice and has worked extensively to support Muslims infected with HIV. He is currently a Professor of the Study of Islam at the University of Johannesburg. In 2018, he was awarded the Order of Luthuli (Silver), South Africa's highest civilian order for his contribution to scholarship and work for justice.

Hendricks, Sheikh Seraj

Hendricks is the Mufti of Cape Town, the Resident Sheikh at the Azzawia Institute, and Dean of the Student Body at the Madina Institute. He is a leading scholar on Sufism in South Africa and a patron of Dome Publications. Hendricks is seen as one of the highest authorities on Islamic scholarship for South Africa's large and affluent Muslim population.

Moosa, Ebrahim

Ebrahim Moosa is the Prof of Islamic Studies in the Keough School of Global Affairs, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame. His interpretive and historical research on questions of tradition, ethics, and law includes two monographs as well as several edited and co-edited books. His prize-winning book *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination*, was awarded the Best First Book prize in the History of Religions by the American Academy of Religion. He is the author of *What is a Madrasa?* (2015). Moosa is also regarded as a prominent public intellectual. In 2007, he was invited to deliver the King Hasan Lecture (Durus Hasaniyyah) to HM King Mohammed VI of Morocco in Arabic. He currently directs the Madrasa Discourses project, advancing scientific and theological literacy amongst young theologians (madrasa graduates) in South Asia.

UGANDA

Mamdani, Mahmood

Mamdani is the Herbert Lehman Prof of Government in the Departments of Anthropology and Political Science at Columbia University in the United States, and Director of Makerere Institute of Social Research in Kampala, Uganda. In 2008, Mamdani was named one of the world's top 20 intellectuals by

Foreign Policy (New York) and Prospect (London) magazines. He is the former president of the Council for Development of Social Research in Africa in Dakar, Senegal. Mamdani is well-known for his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War and The Roots of Terror*, which became significant in liberal policy circles in the US.

Asia

AZERBAIJAN

Pashazade, Sheikh ul-Islam Haji Allahshukur Hummat

Pashazade is the Grand Mufti of Azerbaijan, the elected mufti of the Caucasus region, and the chairman of the Religious Council of the Caucasus. Pashazade is also the world's only Sunni-Shia Grand Mufti, giving each group fatwas according to their relevant madhab, reflecting Azerbaijan's Sunni-Shia mix. He co-chaired the World Summit of Religious Leaders, held in Azerbaijan in April 2010. He has been spear-heading Azerbaijan's initiatives of promoting dialogue between faiths within the region and internationally.

INDIA

Khan, Wahiduddin

Wahiduddin Khan, founder of Centre for Peace and Spirituality, is an Islamic scholar who advocates peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue, and social harmony. He has authored over 200 books on Islam, prophetic wisdom, spirituality and coexistence in a multi-ethnic society. Many of his works expound on the Islamic position on modernity, secularism, democracy and freedom of speech. Khan's English translation of the Quran is widely acknowledged as simple, clear and easy-to-read. Internationally recognized for his contributions to world peace, he has received, among others, the Demiurgus Peace International Award, Padma Bhushan and Sayyidina Imam Al-Hassan Ibn Ali Peace Award by the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. Khan has launched Maulana Wahiduddin Khan Peace Foundation and Quran Foundation to make people aware of the true message of the Quran. He is also the co-founder of Goodword books, a popular publisher of books on Islam.

Nadvi, Rabey Hasani

Nadvi is an Islamic scholar and a bilingual author of around 30 books in both Arabic and Urdu. His influence emanates from being the fourth president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Rector of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, and a founding member of Rabita Aalam-e-Islami, Makkah Mukar-ramah. He is also the president of multiple Islamic centres and academics.

Nadwi, Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen

Dr Bahauddeen Muhammed Jamaluddeen Nadwi is the founding vice chancellor of Darul Huda Islamic University, Kerala, India. He has authored a number of books, treatises, edited volumes, and translations in Arabic, English and Malayalam. His recent work is the translation of Holy Quran into Malayalam. His works span Qur'anic sciences, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, education, Sufism, Comparative Religion, Arabic Language and Literature, and Islamic History. He is the Editor in Chief of an international Journal of Islamic studies, and a member of regional (Kerala), national, and international organizations. He has visited more than 40 countries and delivered a number of religious, academic and cultural lectures.

INDONESIA

Bisri, Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa

Kyai Haji Achmad Mustofa Bisri is widely revered as a religious scholar, poet, novelist, painter, and Muslim intellectual. He has strongly influenced the NU's (Nahdlatul Ulama) social and political development over the past thirty years. He heads the prestigious Raudlatuth Tholibin Islamic Boarding School in Rembang, Central Java. Mustofa Bisri's role in combining spirituality with artistic expression is widely admired in Indonesia, where he is regarded as a cultural icon. Often called the 'President of Poets' he is celebrated for his courage in defending artistic and religious freedom in the face of radical onslaughts.

Maarif, Syafii

Maarif is one of Indonesia's most famous scholars whose political comments regularly attract significant attention. In 2008 he won the prestigious Magsaysay Award for guiding Muslims to embrace tolerance and pluralism. This former president of the influential Muhammadiyah organization is actively involved in interfaith and peace movements both domestically and internationally, largely through his Maarif Institute for Culture and Humanity. He was

recognized for his role in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious harmony at the Habibie Awards. Maarif is also a Prof of history at the National University of Yogyakarta and a productive author and columnist, currently writing two regular columns in 'Republika' newspaper and also in Gatra Magazine.

Syamsuddin, Prof M Din

Read bio on page 106 in Honourable Mentions.

MALAYSIA

Al-Akiti, Dato Dr Muhammad Afifi

Al-Akiti is a scholar, trained theologian, and philologist. He is a lecturer of Islamic studies with the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University, a KFAS Fellow in Islamic Studies, and a fellow at Worcester College. He is internationally acclaimed for his 2005 fatwa "defending the transgressed by censuring the reckless against the killing of civilians", written in response to the 7 July London bombings, which was praised by scholars of Islam and gained a massive readership on the Internet. Al-Akiti was appointed Privy Councillor to the State of Perak, Malaysia by the Crown Prince of Perak. In 2012, he was the sole recipient of the Darjah Dato's Paduka Cura Si-Manja Kini (DPCM) which carries the Malaysian title of "Dato" in the Sultan of Perak Birthday Honours List.

Al-Attas, Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib

Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is considered by many to be a giant of scholarship in the Muslim world. An influential philosopher and thinker, he has written on the traditional Islamic sciences as well as Sufism, metaphysics, and philosophy, authoring more than two dozen books. He has also served at various global academic institutions as an educator and lead administrator and is also a noted calligrapher. He has been widely recognised for his scholarly thought and has had Chairs established bearing his name.

Bakar, Dr Osman

Dr Osman Bakar is Distinguished Prof and Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilizational Studies and Renewal at ISTAC, International Islamic University, Malaysia. He was formerly Director of the Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies (SOASCIS), Univeristi Brunei Darussalam. He is concurrently Emeritus Prof of Philosophy of Science, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. He has published 22 books and over 300 articles on Islamic thought and civilization, particularly on Islamic phi-

losophy and science. He also writes on contemporary Islam and inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue. His writings have been translated into many languages. He has served as advisor and consultant to a variety of international academic and professional organizations and institutions, including UNESCO and The Qatar Foundation. He served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Malaya (1995-2000) and was awarded a Datukship by the Malaysian King in 2000.

Kamali, Prof Mohammad Hashim

Originally from Afghanistan, Kamali was dean and Prof at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) and the International Islamic University in Malaysia. Kamali is currently Founding CEO of the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies in Malaysia. He is the world's leading expert on comparative studies between Islamic and modern law, and one of the most prolific producers of quality scholarship on Islam in the world today. Kamali received the King Abdullah II bin Hussein International Award for the year 2010 in recognition of his intellectual and academic contributions towards serving Islam and Muslims. In February 2010, he worked on the new constitution of Somalia.

PAKISTAN

Ahmed, Prof Akbar

Read bio on page 107 in Honourable Mentions.

Hashmi, Dr Farhat

Dr Farhat Hashmi is an influential Islamic teacher, public speaker, and scholar. She is a prominent name in the burgeoning field of the role of women in Islam. In addition to the academic aspects of Islamic teachings, Hashmi also focuses on its relatable and practical aspects, thereby ensuring that her message resonates with a multitude of women across the globe. She holds a PhD in Hadith Sciences from the University of Glasgow, Scotland. She is the Founder of Al-Huda International, a non-profit institute founded in 1994. Al-Huda promotes Islamic learning and serves in the field of social welfare, and has branches across Pakistan as well as internationally.

Najafi, HE Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussain

Grand Ayatollah Hussain Najafi is the only marja' in South Asia. Based in the Sargodha district of the Punjab province in Pakistan, he was the first scholar

from that country to be given the status of marji'yya and is one of only two ayatollahs from Pakistan.

Al-Qadri, Sheikh Dr Tahir

Sheikh Tahir al-Qadri is a Prof of law and the founder of Minhaj ul Qur'an International Worldwide and the Minhaj Welfare Foundation. Al-Qadri has authored some 450 published works and given more than 6,000 lectures on various subjects which are aired on international satellite channels. In March 2010, Qadri issued a 600-page fatwa declaring that terrorists and suicide bombers are unbelievers. He has continued to be outspoken against terrorists. His attempts to lead popular revolts against the Pakistani government has led to a fall in his standing. He is based in Canada.

Europe

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ceric, Sheikh Dr Mustafa

Mustafa Ceric served as the Grand Mufti of Bosnia from 1993 until 2012, when he retired. Ceric is outspoken on interfaith initiatives in the Muslim world. In 2006, Ceric issued the Declaration of European Muslims to the European Union stating that European Muslims are dedicated to the common values of law, tolerance, democracy and human rights, the value of life, faith freedom, property, and dignity. In 2008, Ceric led the Muslim delegation of the A Common Word initiative to the Vatican. In 2015 Ceric wrote A Friendly Letter to the European Bishops, declaring, "We accept you and ask that you accept us." He is President of the World Bosnian Congress.

Karic, Dr Enes

Dr Enes Karic is a Prof of Qur'anic studies and history of the interpretation of the Qur'an at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo. He previously served as the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1994-1996. Dr Karic has written extensively on the Qur'an and Islamic studies in English and Bosnian, and has delivered lectures worldwide. He recently completed his book Traditional Bosnia: Islamic Theological, Philosophical, and Logical Studies from the 15th Century Onward, which was commissioned by Kalam Research Media's analytic theology initiative.

FRANCE

Bencheikh, Sheikh Sohaib

Bencheikh is a theologian, a modernist former Grand Mufti of Marseilles, and one of the most influential social leaders and scholars of Islam in France. Bencheikh is also head of the Higher Institute for Islamic Studies. Marseilles is a cosmopolitan city with a huge population of Muslims of North African ancestry. Bencheikh is a passionate advocate for integration of the Muslim population, hijab rights, and women's involvement as imams in the Muslim community.

GERMANY

Hoffman, HE Ambassador Dr Murad

Hoffman is an author and Muslim intellectual, respected by both Muslims and non-Muslims. He is a prominent former German diplomat and author of several books on Islam, including *Journey to Makkah* and *The Future of Islam in the West and the East*, published in 2008. Many of his books and essays focus on Islam's place in the West and the United States, specifically in light of the post-9/11 climate.

RUSSIA

Gaynutdin, Mufti Sheikh Ravil

Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin is a Moscow-based Muslim scholar. Among various academic roles, he is Grand Mufti of Russia and Chairman of the Union of Muftis of Russia. He is probably the single most important figure in the schema of Russian Islam. As a member of the Russian president's Council for Coordination with Religious Organizations, he is a key figure in relations between the Kremlin and Russia's Muslim population.

SWITZERLAND

Ramadan, Dr Tariq

Ramadan is a pre-eminent European Muslim intellectual and author about Islam in public life. He is a Prof of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University, as well as holding academic positions at other institutions worldwide. In February 2018, Ramadan was accused of raping two women (a third charge was dropped) and was arrested in that same month pending his trial. The French justice system has come under scrutiny for the way it has treated Ramadan since then, denying him bail and put-

ting him in solitary confinement where his physical health has deteriorated (he suffers from multiple sclerosis). The testimony of one of his accusers has been discredited. Prominent activists (e.g. Noam Chomsky) have signed petitions calling for Ramadan to be treated fairly.

TURKEY

Kalin, Dr Ibrahim

Ibrahim Kalin, PhD, is a senior advisor to the President and Presidential Spokesperson. Dr Kalin is the founding director of the SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research based in Ankara, Turkey and served as its director from 2005 to 2009. He is a fellow at the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Dr Kalin has published widely on Islamic philosophy, relations between Islam and the West, and Turkish foreign policy.

Karaman, Prof Hayrettin

Karaman is one of the most prominent scholars of Islam in Turkey, and the pre-eminent scholar of Islamic law (Sharia) there. He publishes popular academic texts extensively and writes a weekly column in the newspaper *Yeni Safak* (New Dawn). His long career in academia has garnered him much respect. At the pinnacle of his career, Karaman was a dean at Turkey's premier university, Marmara University. He left this position at the height of the headscarf controversy in 2001.

UNITED KINGDOM

Abdel Haleem, Prof Muhammad

Prof Muhammad Abdel Haleem is a much loved Prof of Islamic Studies at SOAS, University of London, and editor of the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*. He was appointed an OBE in 2008 in recognition of his services to Arabic and inter-faith understanding. Born in Egypt, Abdel Haleem memorised the Qur'an (this was a prerequisite for entry to Al-Azhar university) before starting his further education. He has many publications including a widely acclaimed translation of the Qur'an.

Hellyer, Dr Hisham

A noted scholar of Politics, International Studies & Islamic Studies in the West and Muslim communities worldwide, Dr Hellyer's professional career includes senior positions with the Carnegie Endow-

ment, Brookings, and the Royal United Services Institute. Appointed to the rank of professor at the Raja Zarith Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (CASIS) at the University of Technology, Dr Hellyer has held academic affiliations with Harvard, Warwick, the American University (Egypt), and Cambridge Muslim College. A prominent nonpartisan public intellectual in the West and the Muslim world, he regularly writes in the international press. Dr Hellyer's books include "Muslims of Europe: the 'Other' Europeans", "A Revolution Undone: Egypt's Road Beyond Revolt", "A Sublime Path: the Sufi Way of the Makkan Sages" (co-author), and "The Islamic Tradition and the Human Rights Discourse" (editor).

Mangera, Dr Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf

Dr Mufti Abdur-Rahman ibn Yusuf Mangera is a British Muslim scholar educated in both the Islamic and Western traditions. He memorised the Qur'an by heart and studied with accomplished scholars in the UK, South Africa, India, and Syria. He holds a PhD from SOAS and has served as an imam in the UK and USA. He is the founder of Whitethread Institute, a post-graduate institute for Islamic scholars, and he works on scholarly publications through White Thread Press (www.whitethreadpress.com) with many of his lectures being available on www.zamzamacademy.com.

Nadwi, Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram

Sheikh Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi is one of the most important Islamic scholars in the Western world today. He has a doctorate in Arabic Language and has authored and translated over 30 titles on Arabic, jurisprudence, Qur'an, and Hadith. He travels extensively, and his courses and lectures have a worldwide following. His biographical dictionary of women scholars in Islamic history (over 40 volumes) is now being published by al-Rabitah al-Muhammadiyah li al-ulama in Rabat. A revised edition of the English translation of the introductory volume al-Muhaddithat was published in 2013. He is the subject of the best-selling book *If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran* (2015).

Pirzada, Sheikh Muhammad Imdad Hussain

Sheikh Muhammad Imdad Hussain Pirzada is a scholar who has actively promoted knowledge, education, and charity work. He has written dozens of

books on educational, religious, and contemporary issues in Arabic, Urdu, and English, particularly the first detailed Qur'an commentary written in the UK in five volumes, *Qur'an: The Sublime Word*, available in Arabic, Urdu and English in numerous countries around the world. Currently he is working on completing a 10-volume commentary 'Bukhari: The Sublime Tradition', the first in English for the modern world. He is founder of Jamia Al-Karam, an institution that has produced hundreds of young male and female British Muslim scholars, as well as Imams in many mosques across the UK. He is founder of Muslim Charity, an organization that operates in over 17 countries. He is president of the World Organisation for Al-Azhar Graduates (UK) and also chairman of the British Muslim Forum.

North America

CANADA

Mattson, Dr Ingrid

Read bio on page 107 in Honourable Mentions.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Abd-Allah, Dr Umar Faruq

Dr Umar Faruq Abd-Allah (Wymann-Landgraf) studied Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Chicago. In 1984, he was appointed to the Department of Islamic Studies at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, where he taught Islamic studies and comparative religion for several years. During the time he spent in Jeddah, Dr Abd-Allah was able to study with a number of traditional scholars. He returned to the United States in 2000 to work with the Nawawi Foundation (Chicago), where he remained for more than a decade. He then taught Islamic Studies at Darul Qasim Institute (Chicago) from 2012 to 2013. He currently works under the auspices of The Oasis Initiative (Chicago). He is engaged in independent research, writing, lecturing, and teaching across the United States, Canada, Europe, West Africa, and elsewhere with a focus on Islamic theology, spirituality, law and legal theory, and history.

Huda, Qamar-ul

Qamar-ul Huda is the Founding Director of the Conflict, Stabilization, and Development program at the Center for Global Policy, a think-tank in Wash-

ington, DC. He served as a senior policy advisor to former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's Office of Religion and Global Affairs. Dr Huda is the editor of *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* and the author of *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual Exercises for Suhrawardi Sufis*. His studies and writings--which have been published in international journals and newspapers--are geared toward examining religious identities, comparative ethics, the language of violence, conflict resolution, non-violence in religion and religious education. He is an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University, an expert for the UN Alliance for Civilizations, worked at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and contributed to seeding the field of conflict resolution and peace studies in South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Jackson, Sherman

Jackson is the King Faisal Chair in Islamic Thought and Culture and Prof of Religion and American Studies and Ethnicity, and the Director of the Center for Islamic Thought, Culture and Practice (CITCAP) at the University of Southern California. He is a well-respected scholar and author of works dealing with Islam, Sharia, and the African-American Muslim community. Jackson is the co-founder of the American Learning Institute for Muslims (ALIM) and is featured on the Washington Post-Newsweek blog *On Faith* and the Huffington Post. He is a former member of the Fiqh Council of North America and a former Prof of Law, Near Eastern Studies, and Afro-American Studies at the University of Michigan.

Al-Ninowy, Sheikh Dr Muhammad bin Yahya al
 Sheikh Dr Muhammad al-Ninowy is a Syrian-American scholar and author based in Atlanta, Georgia, whose lineage is traced back to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Al-Ninowy is considered a muhaddith. In addition to a PhD in Islamic studies, he also holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Illinois, and a Doctor of Medicine degree. He is the founding director of Madina Institute and Seminaries, the Center for Non-Violence and Peace Studies, and the charitable organization Planet Mercy, globally. Madina Institute is a fully accredited higher learning institution offering degree programs in Islamic studies, and is geared toward producing community leaders, thinkers, and scholars. Al-Ninowy is also the spiritual guide of the Alawi-Husayni-Ninowi Zawiyah; a Shadhili Rifa'i Sufi school. His latest release is: *The Book of Love*; a reflection book on Islam from the perspective of love.

Qadhi, Dr Yasir

Yasir Qadhi is one of very few professors of Islamic studies who is also a classically trained scholar. He has established a reputation as a cleric who appreciates the cultural impact that Muslims have to face in the US. He is also renowned for reaching out to media outlets and mainstream Americans of different religions to promote a better understanding of Islam, and to challenge stereotypes about Muslims in the US. His condemnations of DA'ISH and other extremists have led DA'ISH to call for his assassination.



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty."

Sahih al-Muslim

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GUEST CONTRIBUTIONS

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Towards a Postmodern Synthesis of Islamic Science and Modern Science, the Epistemological Groundwork

by Professor Osman Bakar

TERMINOLOGICAL CLARIFICATION

The main purpose of this article is to provide an introductory discussion of one of several knowledge synthesis projects with which I have been engaged in the past one decade.¹ I call this particular project “Postmodern Synthesis of Islamic Science and Modern Science.” For clarity about the whole purpose of this project, an explanation of the terms in the title seems necessary. Let me first explain the meaning of the term ‘Islamic science’ in the sense I am using it here. A clarification of the term would help us to focus on the real issues that are raised by the title of this essay, since in current usage the term is found to connote several different meanings, and hence the possibility of confusion. Some people are using the term Islamic science as an English rendering in singular of the Arabic *al-‘ulum al-Islamiyyah* that primarily refers to the so-called religious sciences, especially the sciences of the Quran and Prophetic hadiths, science of principles of religion (*‘ilm usul al-din*), and sciences of Islamic jurisprudence (*‘ilm al-fiqh*) and principles of jurisprudence (*‘ilm usul al-fiqh*). From the point of view of Islamic epistemology, the term *al-‘ulum al-Islamiyyah* as understood by a large segment of the *‘ulama’* is found to be inherently problematic.

To ascribe Islamicity to some sciences only as what this group has been doing, no matter how important these sciences may be to religion, but not to other sciences, would be contrary to the concept and philosophy of knowledge in Islam. Such a line of reasoning smacks of epistemic sectarianism that goes against the principle of unity of knowledge that is so much emphasised in Islamic epistemology. Moreover, this epistemic sectarianism is known to have the negative effect of discouraging many Muslims from studying the so-called “secular sciences” that are viewed by Muslim epistemologists as no less important to societal health than the religious sciences. In the history of Islamic civilisation the most widely accepted division of the sciences was the division into transmitted (*al-‘ulum al-naqliyyah*) and rational sciences (*al-‘ul-*

um al-‘aqliyyah), which for centuries shaped Muslim educational system until modern times. This division was conceived within the unitary epistemological perspective in which both categories of sciences were viewed as Islamic in the sense that they conformed to the most universal epistemological criteria of Islamicity. Such a division had spared mainstream classical Islamic thought of epistemic dichotomy between the humanities and the natural and the social sciences that was to characterise and indeed haunt modern Western thought.

Some others are using the term Islamic science to mean knowledge of the natural world that they claim is contained in many verses of the Quran and also in the Prophetic hadiths. They believe in modern science but with the claim that many discoveries in this science have been anticipated in the Quran. Their interpretation of those Quranic verses that they consider as laden with scientific ideas tends to be generally influenced by latest discoveries in modern science. This particular approach to a scientific interpretation of Quranic verses that relies on modern scientific discoveries has been criticised by many well-known Muslim scholars.

There is yet another usage of the term Islamic science. In this third sense, Islamic science refers to the entire body of scientific knowledge that was produced and cultivated in Islamic civilization since its beginning in the seventh century CE. Notwithstanding the fact that it was partly contributed by non-Muslim scientists and scholars who lived under the civilizational umbrella of Islam and partly inspired by pre-Islamic sciences, this body of knowledge is considered by proponents of this third understanding of Islamic science to be Islamic in nature, since it conforms at the level of concepts and theories to the unitary epistemological perspective embodied in the Principle of Divine Unity (*al-tawhid*) and at the level of applications to the principles of the Sharia. This group of Islamic science proponents also believes that the principles of this science are relevant and applicable at all times by virtue of their universal

1 Knowledge synthesis projects on which I have embarked and on which I have published include a project on re-examination of the foundational assumptions of modern science with the view of providing them with more solid ones; a project on the synthesis between traditional Islamic and modern biomedicines; and a project on integral ecology aimed at providing a synthesis of biophysical, built and cultural environments.

and perennial worth. One implication of this belief is that it is possible through an intellectual renewal (*al-tajdid al-'aqli*) to resurrect the traditional spirit and philosophy of Islamic science but in new forms that meet the contemporary human needs. I am using the term Islamic science in this third sense. It is this meaning of Islamic science that makes it meaningful to speak of its synthesis with modern science.

The term modern science itself needs clarification. By modern science I mean the science that originated in the West in the early seventeenth century CE and that is based on Newtonian mechanistic philosophy of nature and epistemological principles of rationalism and empiricism. In the main it was the Newtonian universe that constituted the core dimension of the worldview of modern science. Since the mid-twentieth century many Western intellectuals and scientists have been telling the world that the age of modern science has come to an end. This view on the fate of modern science is widely accepted so much so that it became one of the significant strands of thought constituting the philosophical movement known as postmodernism. The single most important factor that ended the epistemological place and role of Newtonian physics as the main shaper of modern Western scientific worldview was quantum physics. The new physics was welcome by postmodernists, because it strengthened their philosophical position in their counter-movement against many of the tenets of modernism. The lifespan of the modern scientific worldview was thus relatively short, only about three hundred and fifty years (from early seventeenth century CE to mid-twentieth century CE) as compared, for example, to that of Islamic science that lasted nearly a millennium (eighth century CE till seventeenth century CE).

ISLAMIC SCIENCE, MODERN SCIENCE, AND POSTMODERN SCIENCE: WHY THE NEED FOR SYNTHESIS

From the perspective of Islamic epistemology there are several reasons why there is an urgent need to pursue a veritable synthesis between Islamic science, modern science, and postmodern science. The reasons are theological, philosophical, and scientific. First, the theological reason. There is a need to reaffirm the idea of knowledge synthesis as the *raison d'être* of Islam. No less than the Quran itself that advances the all-important claim that it has been revealed by God to remind humankind of its special scriptural status as the synthesis of all the previous divinely revealed scriptures, since no other revealed book would appear after it. The core theological content of the religion of Islam is the principle of divine unity (*al-tawhid*). This principle, which serves an epistemological function at various levels and within various domains of knowledge in accordance with the nature of Islam as a religion of knowledge *par excellence*, is both inclusive and synthetic in nature.

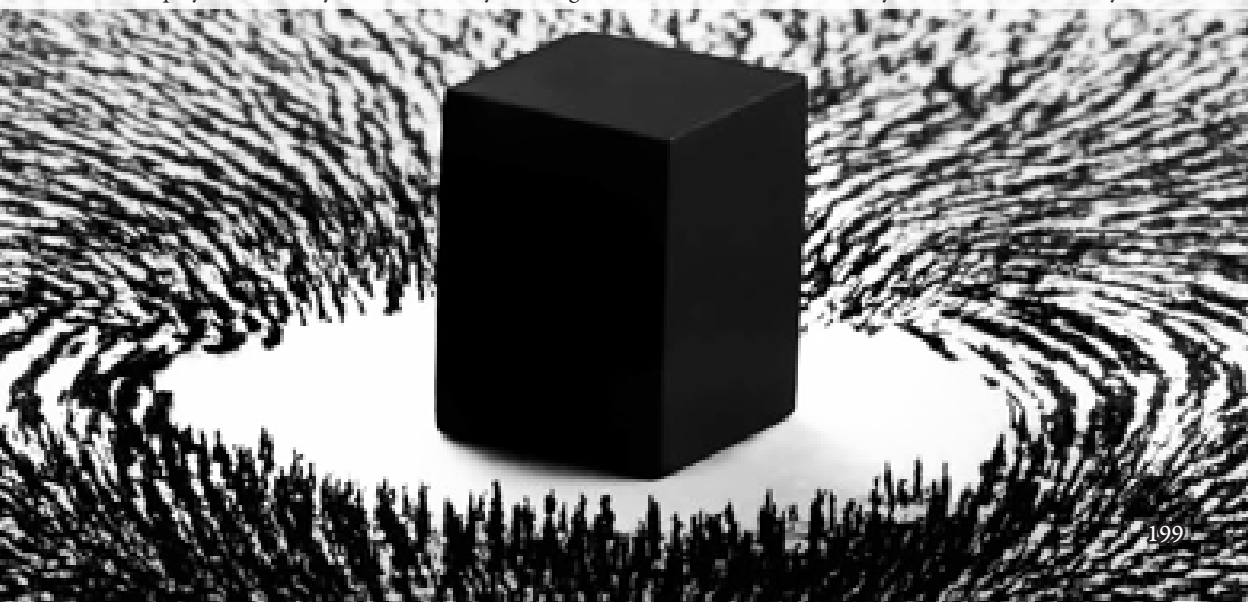
For the purposes of both general and specific knowledge syntheses, the principle of *al-tawhid* may be called upon to play its needed synthesising role once its domain of applications has been identified and clarified. Historically, in the domain of science Islamic civilisation has witnessed the synthesising role of this principle both at the level of its philosophy and theory-construction. By virtue of the synthesising spirit of Islam the religion, Islamic science that was based on its teachings too became synthetic in nature. Historically, Islamic science was created out of the scientific heritage of the world's civilisations, big and small, that came into Muslim hands.

The heritage was indeed diverse. It was the principle of *al-tawhid* that served as the epistemological thread linking these diverse elements to one another and weaving them intricately yet beautifully into a harmonious whole. The general lesson to be learnt from this historical experience is that Muslims could not remain indifferent to epistemological claims from modern and postmodern sciences, which are indeed many. In the light of the synthesising mission of Islamic civilisation and the synthetic nature of Islamic science, knowledge synthesis would be a natural Muslim epistemological response to modern science and postmodern thought. Moreover, knowledge synthesis promises to be a more effective answer to the philosophical challenges posed by modern and postmodern sciences than the decades-old Islamisation of knowledge project that has proved to be a divisive social issue, especially in pluralistic societies where Muslims have to live together and discourse with non-Muslims.

Second, the philosophical reason. Quite clearly, the philosophical outlooks of Islamic science and modern science are different. The philosophical gap between the worldviews of the two sciences is immense. The philosophical outlooks in question pertain mainly to ontological, cosmological, and epistemological views and doctrines. On a number of fundamental issues, the philosophies of the two sciences are known to diverge and even contradict each other. Ontologically, Islamic science accepts the idea of a universal hierarchy of beings (*maratib al-mawjudat*) that stretches from God at its highest to the physical things on earth at its lowest. Mainstream modern science is found to have professed changing ontological beliefs in its short history that displayed a tendency to reduce reality to a single lev-

el, namely the lowest in the traditional hierarchy of beings that was accepted in Islamic science. During the first phase of its existence, modern science maintains an ontological belief in a two-level reality comprising God and the universe. Although God continues to be involved in His creation, as in fact believed by Isaac Newton (1643 CE—1727 CE), one of its major founders, the universe of modern science has been emptied of its angelic content. Later, during the European Enlightenment period (late seventeenth century CE till early nineteenth century CE) under the influence of Deism (flourished between 1690 CE and 1740 CE), the theological belief that affirmed God's existence but negated His interactions in the universe, modern science adopted the idea of an autonomous physical world that is completely cut off from God. This belief made the idea of God redundant to science, thus paving the way for the final reduction of physical reality to what is only established through the empirical methods.

Cosmologically, Islamic science accepts the idea of a universe that is populated by spiritual, subtle, and physical creatures that are hierarchically ordered. Islamic science affirms the idea taught by the Quran that the multi-layered universe is continuously subjected to divine governance with the angels and the jinn playing their cosmic roles as His secondary agents in the running of the physical world. In contrast, the universe believed by modern science was no longer alive following the extinction of the angelic species in its new cosmic order. It became a lifeless entity. The Newtonian universe was turned into a vast machine that runs according to physical laws that can be discovered by the human mind. It was the main task of science to discover these laws, some of which had in fact been discovered by its founders. It was only to be



expected that a shrinking of objective reality in the macrocosm has to happen in parallel to a shrinking of subjective reality in the microcosm, since the one-to-one correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm, being itself a cosmic law, had to prevail. Thus, the multi-dimensional and complete man that is constituted of body, mind and spirit, as affirmed by Islamic science, has been reduced to the Cartesian body-mind entity, a major foundational pillar of modern science. The human body came to be treated as a machine, a view with numerous implications for human health and medical science and practices.

Along with the mechanisation of the human body, the Cartesian mind eventually became reduced to a cerebral intelligence rooted in the human brain that is fully explainable through an empirical neuroscience. Thus, emerged the image of modern man as the thinking machine. The cerebral intelligence thus perceived and understood has the potential to be mechanised. The artificial intelligence agenda in the postmodern era is nothing more than an attempt to bring the process of mechanisation of the human mind to its logical conclusion. In both theory and practice, the mechanisation of human intelligence that is pursued to its furthest limits poses tremendous challenges to Islam and its civilizational ideals. The progressive mechanisation of human intelligence is expected to be accompanied by a corresponding progressive dehumanisation of man, a future scenar-

io that the Quran describes as the moment when the human condition will be such that God will bring man down "to the lowest of the low."²

Given the wide gulf that separates between the philosophical perspectives of Islamic science and modern science, it is not surprising that there are people who dismiss the epistemological synthesis out of hand or simply scoff at the idea. However, intellectually a knowledge synthesis project of the kind and scope that I am proposing here is necessary not only for the sake of the Muslim ummah but rather for the whole of humanity. Hence the project needs to be pursued. May be, so as not to be too pessimistic about the feasibility of the project, an explanation is needed on what we expect to achieve in the proposed synthesis. Muslim historical experiences in knowledge synthesis enterprise could be of great help to contemporary academics and scholars who are interested in pursuing the same kind of enterprise. For example, we may refer to the classical Muslim attempt to create an Islamic philosophy and science by incorporating ancient Greek knowledge in the field into their scheme of synthesis. Muslim thinkers who initiated the synthesis enterprise made their deliberate choice. They ignored or rejected Democritus' theory of atoms, because he gave qualities such as indestructibility and eternity to these atoms that Islamic theology and metaphysics consider as unique to God. But generally speaking, they accepted for example the



2 The Quran, Surah 95, Verse 5.

ideas of Plato and Aristotle, Pythagoras, Euclid, Galen and Hippocrates. They made their choice on the basis of intellectual discernment the criteria of which are made available by the revealed teachings of Islam. Thus, they were sifting through the Greek intellectual heritage to identify ideas that were acceptable for their knowledge synthesis.

Likewise, with respect to knowledge synthesis between Islamic science and modern science it is not necessary from the perspective of the former that all elements of the latter—its foundational assumptions, concepts and theories, methodological principles and tools, schemes of data interpretation, objectives, and many others—be accepted for synthesis. What is needed to be done is to sift the unacceptable out from the acceptable or the false out from the true. A similar sifting through the Islamic science heritage needs to be done. In fact, this sifting is the first step that needs to be taken in a synthesis. This sifting, which is basically an intellectual activity, requires discernment of the data in question to enable synthesisers to determine their epistemic status. Synthesisers need to have a lot of knowledge in the area of studies in which the synthesis is to be undertaken. The task of sifting through ideas that we have in mind becomes especially tedious when the synthesis to be done involves the whole of modern science and Islamic science and not merely one or two branches of science. Necessarily the knowledge synthesis project has to be pursued as a collective enterprise.

Looking at the whole process of knowledge synthesis in question, beginning with sifting through the heritage in both sciences and going through the phase of reinterpretation of the selected ideas right to the phase of integration of these reinterpreted ideas into the *tauhidic* epistemological framework until the synthesis is completed, the phase of sifting seems to be the most taxing. Once the sifting is done, the rest of the work appears to be less time consuming. However, the phase of integration is in need of ingenuity and wisdom from the synthesisers. The point I wish to reiterate here is that a knowledge synthesis between Islamic science and modern science is possible. The successful precedents in knowledge synthesis in Islamic civilisation may serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary synthesisers.

Third, the scientific reason. Modern science has accumulated an impressive wealth of scientific data about the natural world, including human beings. Intensive specialisations in various branches of modern science have been a major contributing factor to this success. However, overspecialisation generates its own problem. Specialisation implies a greater focus and reliance on analysis. I have argued in my previous article published in *The Muslim 500*³ that whatever success specialisation has achieved in contributing to the growth of knowledge has been at the expense of synthesis. The lack of knowledge synthesis and interdisciplinary studies has meant that many academics and scholars have been largely shaped in their intellectual visions by the specialised knowledge they have accumulated in their respective disciplines. As a result, intellectual segregation has prevailed in our institutions of higher learning. I am arguing here that a knowledge synthesis between Islamic science and modern science could help address the issues arising from overspecialisation in the latter science, since the former science possesses the necessary epistemological means to achieve integration of detailed and specialised knowledge into a broader vision of knowledge.

PRIORITISING KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS PROJECTS

The theological, philosophical, and scientific justifications for the knowledge synthesis between Islamic science and modern science need to be further developed. Simultaneously, specific knowledge syntheses may be undertaken such as what we have already initiated in several areas of study. I consider as highly significant the project on the synthesis between traditional Islamic and modern biomedicine that I am pursuing as part of a collaborative project on Religion and Medicine with my colleagues at Chicago University and Oxford University. However, given the fact that the domain of knowledge synthesis that we have in mind is so broad, it is necessary that we come up with priorities in our knowledge synthesis projects. *Wa bi'Llah al-tawfik wa'l-hidayah wa bihi nasta'in.*

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3 Osman Bakar, 'The poverty of knowledge synthesis in the modern Muslim university: implications for the future Muslim mind,' *The Muslim 500* (Amman: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre), pp. 112—114.

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has become a major employer in the UK, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy.

The public sector has also become a major provider of social services, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy. The public sector has become a major provider of social services, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy.

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