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Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come:
 There can be no doubt
 About it, or about (the fact)
 That Allah will raise up
 All who are in the graves.
 Yet there is among men
 Such a one as disputes
 About Allah, without knowledge,
 Without guidance, and without
 A Book of Enlightenment—
 (Disdainfully) bending his side,
 In order to lead (men) astray
 From the Path of Allah:
 For him there is disgrace
 In this life, and on the Day
 Of Judgment We shall
 Make him taste the chastisement
 Of burning (Fire)

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

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FOCUS

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was particularly conscious of the importance of literacy. His first act immediately after arrival in Madinah was to construct a mosque. When he reached Quba in the territory of the tribe of Aws, he built a mosque. When he left Quba and entered the territory of Najjar – a branch of Khazraj, the old mosque was expanded. It had residential quarters for the Prophet (peace be upon him). A part of the mosque was reserved for educational purposes. The place was called *al-suffah*, which means dais or platform. It functioned as a school by day and a hostel by night for students who had no other place to go.

This, then, was the first residential university of Islam. Residential facilities were subsidized by the state as well as private individuals. Everyone of the *Ansar*, for example, contributed a bunch of dates when the crop was ready. It was hung in *al-suffah*, in a high place. When a date ripened and fell down, the poor students living in *al-suffah* used to eat it. A person was appointed to keep guard on the bunches. Mu'adh ibn Jabal, an eminent Companion, for example, was assigned this duty when he came to live in *al-suffah*. He had gone bankrupt on account of his extreme generosity and had to sell even his house to pay off his debts.

There were two kinds of students in *al-suffah*. There were those who were day scholars, and there were those who were obliged to stay there because they had no other shelter. Their number fluctuated. Among such students we come across 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, the son of the famous Caliph 'Umar. They depended for their living partly on public gifts which came from the Prophet's household and the families of the Companions. We learn that eighty resident scholars of *al-suffah* were invited to dinner by Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah. This gives us some idea of the number of resident scholars and the nature of their board and lodging. Aid was also provided by the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the state treasury. But students were no parasites. They worked besides studying. The idea was to earn and learn rather than to collect money. Once a student of *al-suffah* died. On being given the ritual bath it was discovered that he had two sovereigns on him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was angry for he thought that a person with such a substantial saving had no right to subsist on charity.

The education imparted in *al-suffah* was of an elementary nature. It dealt with the primary aspects of Islam. Different branches were entrusted to different teachers. Some were responsible for teaching students to read and write. Those who had learnt to read and write were asked to teach others the verses of the Qur'an which had been revealed until then. Some were possibly asked to elaborate on problems of jurisprudence, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him), prayers and other acts of worship, etc. Special arrangements were made to teach non-resident converts to Islam, who came from time to time to Madinah, about their new faith. A tradition is related about the people of 'Abd Qays who visited Madinah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) entrusted them to the care of the *Ansar* and asked them to extend their hospitality.

From *The Emergence of Islam* by Muhammad Hamidullah, pp. 247-249

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

India to have varsity with Quranic Approach

India is set to have its first international university to teach social studies and humanities with a focus on “conceptual and investigative research on the Quranic approach” to address human problems and problems of Muslims, said a New Delhi-based prominent social scientist and the chairman of Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), a leading think- tank, here yesterday.

The institute, which organised 14 international conferences across the country in 2011 marking the silver jubilee, has taken the initiative to establish an international university in New Delhi as part of efforts to address socio-economic and political challenges faced by the people, especially the minorities in the world’s largest democracy.

“The world today is going through a critical phase, and facing many big challenges. It has become nearly infertile or sterile in terms of producing big revolutionary concepts or ideas akin to ‘democracy’, ‘capitalism’ and ‘socialism’ for the last several decades. The need for establishing institutes promoting modern education with Quranic approach to restore moral and human values was long due, said Dr Manzoor Alam.

The university on an area of over 30 acres will be located in the outskirts of New Delhi at Palwal, the 21st district of neighbouring Haryana state in the north.

The non-profit International Objective University is expected to start its first academic session in 2014. It will put emphasis on disciplines such as economics, Islamic finance,

law, comparative religion and studies, moral science and others.

So far IOS, established in 1986, has made significant contributions by conducting and promoting empirical and conceptual research related to ideologies and problems relevant to Indian polity, society, economy, religion and culture.

The Sachar Committee Report, published in November 2006 by the Indian government, finds its roots with the IOS.

The landmark piece of work, which testifies the pathetic conditions of Indian Muslims, with empirical data and statistical reports, sourced about 30 percent of information collected by the IOS.

The report, prepared under the chairmanship of Justice Rajender



Dr. M. Manzoor Alam delivering his speech

Sachar, has made recommendations to improve the socio-economic condition of Muslims.

For its achievements over the past 27 years, the IOS has received recognition from national and international organisations, including the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

“With the emergence of the so-called global village, the world has been witnessing thousands of new issues and challenges related to various fields such as cyber laws, space laws, moral crimes and bankruptcy of human values, etc.

“And I firmly believe that the convergence of modern education with

Quranic teachings and true Islamic values can provide a sustainable solution with humane face,” added Dr Alam.

Leading a delegation, Dr Alam is in Qatar on the last leg of their tour to Gulf states to create awareness and mobilise resources for the university. He addressed members of the Indian community at the Ibn Hajr Library in Bin Omran.

Dr Alam highlighted key issues faced by Indians in general and Muslims in particular. He also invited the audience with Quranic references to participate in community building initiative, which will not only benefit the Muslim Ummah but also the whole humanity.

He advocated studying challenging subjects instead of opting only for engineering and medicine.

“Throughout history, in every era there have been some significant areas of studies. For instance, today, law is the rising subject in the US and Europe as a result of the ‘New World Order’,” he said.

Dr Alam, also President of Indo-Arab Economic Cooperation Forum and

General Secretary of All India Milli Council — a pressure group protecting minorities’ rights — said that in democracy ‘adult franchise’ is a great power for people, especially the minorities, which should be exercised strategically.

However, describing lacunas of democracy, he said theoretically democracy is against the ‘rule of elite’ where leaders are not able to ignore the interests of people for a long time, whereas in practice the distinction has been blurred.

“There is a need for serious intellectual endeavour for conceptual and investigative research on the Quranic approach to address human problems and problems of Muslims.”
The Peninsula

Announcements

AFRO-MIDDLE EAST CENTRE

Call for Papers: In whose interests? Exploring Middle East involvement in Africa

The Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC) will convene an international conference from 5 to 6 November 2013 in Pretoria, South Africa, to examine the nature and extent of the penetration of Middle Eastern states into Africa. Potential presenters are invited to submit abstracts for consideration.

Decision date: 22 September 2013

Full paper Submission Date: 31 October 2013

About the conference

The conference is framed within Africa's history of colonialism and of African states and non-state actors being used as proxies on an African battlefield during the Cold War. It will explore the nature of the relationship that exists between both that of state and non-state actors on the continent and the Middle East. Aside from responding to the paucity in research around the penetration of the Middle East into Africa, and what this means for the continent, the conference further looks to explore ways of enhancing balanced and mutually beneficial relations between Africa and the Middle East region.

Africa's colonial past and the implications of a postcolonial world defined by neoimperialism and neoliberalism continue to manifest in the socioeconomic reality of the majority of Africans. The recent assertiveness of Africa on the global stage, growing markets, diverse geography, geostrategic importance, and vast natural resources continue to attract the attention of global powers. China, for example, in its unquenchable quest for resources and global partners, turned its focus on Africa, and has succeeded in becoming the continent's largest trading partner.

The past three decades have, however, also seen the entry of new players into Africa, such as India and Brazil. Some of these states share experiential colonial histories as well as similar development experiences and challenges with countries on the continent. This interaction has facilitated the emergence of South coalition blocs such as the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, to promote cooperation amongst these states.

In a postcolonial era, however, the attention that Africa attracts is uneven, sometimes paternalistic, and often under the guise of development, aid and humanitarian assistance. This has often seen the evolution of asymmetrical political and economic relations between African states and these external powers.

Of course, Africa is not a singular monolithic and homogeneous entity. On the whole, however, it has often been the disadvantaged partner in exploitative relationships.

Scope:

Middle East in Africa

Apart from states that are well-known for their involvement in Africa, such as the USA, China, Brazil and India, the continent has also been targeted by a number of states whose role has garnered relatively little attention. These include states from the Middle East whose strategic involvement in, and outreach to, Africa range from extending their sphere of influence to pursuing ideological interests, and includes economic, business, political, military and religious relations. In particular, Israel, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other Gulf states have set their sights on Africa. Certain non-state actors from the Middle East have also looked to Africa to export their ideologies. This manifests in diverse forms: from religious and ideological education projects to involvement in civil or interstate conflict, such as in the Sahel region and Somalia.

Relations between the Middle East and Africa have a long history going back centuries. This has seen

beneficial as well as exploitative exchanges for Africa. Due to their geographical, cultural and religious proximity to Africa, there is a centuries-old flow of people, ideologies, and sociopolitical undercurrents from countries in the Middle East into Africa, particularly North Africa, East Africa and the Sahel region.

The objectives of the various Middle Eastern countries involved in Africa are numerous, diverse, yet also converge as they jostle to increase their dominance over each other. Due to Iran's global isolation, Iran sees resonance in Africa, with the continent's own experience of marginalisation. Africa thus holds the potential to reduce the isolation forced on Iran by western sanctions. Turkey's revitalised foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has seen it extending its global influence. Since 2002, Africa has become part of its revamped foreign policy that looks to see Ankara develop and strengthen ties with countries which Turkey previously had neglected. Today, Turkey has the largest foreign diplomatic and business components in Somalia compared to any other state. With the world's attention drawn to Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian lands, Israel has attempted to win favour from African countries through its use of soft power under the guise of development, and the sharing of agricultural and technological expertise. Israel has also recently agreed to provide certain African states with assistance in exchange for the transfer of African refugees from Israel. Tiny Qatar, aside from seeing the opportunities that the continent's physical expansiveness offers, hopes to extend its global clout and sphere of influence through Africa. This has seen it involved in mediation in African conflicts, for example between Sudan and Darfur rebels. It has also attempted to insert its influence through involvement in the NATO-led overthrow of Libya's Muammar Gaddafi.

Paper and Abstracts

AMEC invites submissions of abstracts from people that might be interested in presenting a paper at this conference on the issues discussed here.

Prospective paper titles and abstracts must be in English, and may be emailed to Nazlie Jada at nazlie@amec.org.za by no later than 15 September 2013. Abstracts should not be more than 200 words in length, attached to the email, and in '.odt', '.doc', or '.docx' formats.

If your abstract is accepted, AMEC will expect an original paper submitted prior to the conference. Papers should be between 4 000 and 6 000 words in length, and conform to AMEC's style guide, which will be provided to authors on the acceptance of an abstract. It is hoped that papers will be published in an edited volume after the conference.

The cost of flights to Johannesburg and accommodation during the conference for speakers will be covered by AMEC.

About the Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC)

AMEC is a Johannesburg based think tank that looks to understand and enhance relations between Africa, particularly South Africa, and the Middle East and North Africa region. AMEC seeks to shape public discourse and engage decision makers on issues affecting the region. It further looks to produce and disseminate the highest quality of research on the Middle East, and on issues related to the Middle East and North Africa.

For more information visit

<http://www.amec.org.za> or email

info@amec.org.za

Afro-Middle East Centre

info@amec.org.za +27 11 880-0525

<http://www.amec.org.za>

CALL FOR PAPERS

The International Conference on Philanthropy and Peacebuilding Classical Approaches and Emerging Trends

10-12 April 2014

Istanbul

(Indialogue Foundation is an official representative of this conference in India)

Dating back to early 20th century, philanthropic organizations and volunteering initiatives, acting as the "third sector," have played an active role in the resolution of a variety of societal problems ranging from meeting basic human needs to reducing social and economic inequalities at the local as well as global level.

The International Conference on Philanthropy and Peacebuilding, organized by the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) and Kimse Yok Mu (KYM), particularly aims to analyze the actual and potential role of philanthropy as an agent in conflict resolution processes, building interpersonal and inter-communal trust. Alongside its aim to address critical assessments, the conference will particularly focus on the multi-dimensional characteristics of philanthropy to foster its effectiveness in terms of comprehensiveness and consistency by questioning *who* "gives," as well as *what, how, when,* and *where* this civic engagement is realized.

In line with the aforementioned aims, we invite theoretical contributions as well as empirical studies from diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. The conference organizers welcome contributions on a variety of topics including, but not limited to:

- Conflict resolution and philanthropy
- Philanthropy in interpersonal and intercommunal trust building
- Cultural values and philanthropic practices
- Emerging trends in philanthropy (digital, celebrity, royal etc.)
- Corporate social responsibility in philanthropy and peacebuilding
- Gender and philanthropy
- Philanthropy ethics
- Challenges and critical approaches to philanthropy
- International cooperation and humanitarianism

- Altruism vs. bystander effect in philanthropy and peacebuilding
- Transnational civil society in peacebuilding

Papers are accepted from researchers from different disciplines, as well as practitioners, to foster cooperation and exchange of ideas and experiences. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length, with an additional 10 minutes allocated for questions and discussion. Selected papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Proposals should include the title of the paper, full contact information of the author(s), including name, address, e-mail and institutional affiliation and an abstract not to exceed 300 words. All proposals should be sent to the president@indialogue.in by November 15, 2013.

Expenses for travel (economy class round-trip) and accommodation will be covered for speakers. In addition, selected papers for publication will be awarded an honorarium of \$500.

Keynote Speakers,

Luc Reyckler, KU Leuven Institute for International and European Policy
Paul G. Schervish, Boston College Center on Wealth and Philanthropy
John Paul Lederach, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (tbc)

Conference Dates

Abstracts for Paper Due: November 15, 2013

Confirmation for Accepted Papers: December 15, 2013

Submission of Full Papers: February 15, 2014

Registration Due: March 15, 2013

Conference: April 10-12, 2014

About JWF

The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) was established in 1994 by a group of journalists, writers and intellectuals who believe humanity's ultimate problem lies in poverty, ignorance and conflict. It seeks to promote social responsibility, education and dialogue respectively as remedy to these key challenges. Committed to universal democratic

principles, the Foundation aims to foster peace and understanding among all peoples by promoting these core values by means of intellectual platforms, research and publications.

The JWF is the first and the only Turkish NGO with a General Consultative Status in ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council). With its four platforms and a research center, each contributing to the overall mission of candid, peaceful and inclusive intra- and inter-communal dialogue in its particular track, JWF addresses a variety of platforms, ranging from intellectuals, faith leaders, media professionals and women, at the local and regional levels, to eliminate cultural prejudices and historical misinterpretations and generate shared solutions.

ABOUT KİMSE YOK MU

Kimse Yok Mu (KYM) is a humanitarian aid organization based in Turkey with 41 branches throughout the country which also provides humanitarian relief in over 97 countries, as well as having tens of thousands of volunteers assisting its operations around the globe. Our organization focuses upon providing aid to those who are most in need at their most dire moments and we maintain a commitment to leaving a lasting impact upon those we assist.

KYM were established in 2002 as a Turkish humanitarian aid organization and were granted Public Interest Association status in 2006. The NGO were awarded the Turkish Grand National Assembly Outstanding Service Award in 2008 and gained yet more international recognition when we were granted United Nations ECOSOC Special Consultancy Status in 2010.

KYM provides aid in a broad spectrum of areas through a multitude of programs and projects providing both immediate short term assistance as well as long term solutions. Some of the fields KYM is involved in are education, social services, medical services, housing, disaster relief, emergency response, sustainable development as well as providing

food aid, basic necessities, and household goods.

Indialogue Foundation is an action-oriented international organization for education, peace and development. It was founded in 2005 in New Delhi, by the imagination and fortune of a group of Turkish and Indian people inspired by sensible and spiritual thoughts of the eminent scholars and spiritual leaders of the world, to promote and to encourage international, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Through its initiatives Indialogue envisions to eliminate illiteracy, poverty and polarization which are prime causes of all social problems.

Foundation contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues and peace building initiatives through its programs, projects and proactive studies, as well as meetings and conferences. Indialogue Foundation with its four offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata has organized several notable activities.

Thousands of Scholarships for Muslim Students

- **Pre-Matric Scholarships (Classes 1 to 10) – No on-line application (only paper application)**
Information and Paper Application: <http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/prematric>.
- **Post-Matric Scholarships (Classes 11 & higher):** Information & paper Application <http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/Postmatric> On-Line Application: <http://164.100.167.13/postmatric/>
- **Merit-Cum Means Scholarships (for Professional & Technical Courses):** Information & Paper Application: <http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/scholarship> On-Line Application: <http://momascholarship.gov.in>.
- **Free Coaching:** Information and Paper Application: <http://minorityaffairs.gov.in/freecoachin>.
- **Maulana Azad National Scholarships (For Girls, Classes 12 & 12):** Information & Application: <http://maef.nic.in>.

Items needed with application forms:

- a. Marks Sheet (last year)
- b. Fees Receipt (Recent)
- c. Bank Passbook Photocopy
- d. I.D. (like ration card, school ID, voter card, or Adhaar)
- e. Income Affidavit (on Rs. 10 stamp paper)
- f. Alpsankhyak (Minority) Affidavit (on Rs. 10 stamp paper) See sample.
- g. Residence Affidavit (on Rs. 10 stamp paper)

Items f and g may be combined into one affidavit. See sample.

Facilities for filling up the forms are available every day at the MSUS in evening (Sultanjahan Manzil, Shamshad Market)

Book Review

Islam and the Fate of Others: The Salvation Question by *Mohammad Hassan Khalil*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 272 pages.

In *Islam and the Fate of Others*, Mohammad Hassan Khalil masterfully approaches a difficult topic. What happens to non-Muslims when they die? Who is accountable for accepting Muhammad's prophethood? Could any sane person possibly reject the truth were it clearly revealed to him/her? In order to address these questions and others, Khalil probes some of the most prominent premodern and modern voices in Islamic history. A reader looking for consensus on the answers to these challenging queries, however, will be left direly wanting. Khalil unearths not a monolithic consensus but instead a cacophony of opinions concerning soteriological matters, which overwhelmingly envisions a heaven filed with Muslims and non-Muslims. As an added bonus to Khalil's robust and provocative study, his adroit prose reads smoothly, his storytelling is exquisite, and he never obfuscates his topic with obtuse language or style. That, combined with meticulous attention to transliteration and precise, fluid translations, makes Khalil's monograph an absolute

pleasure to read and should appeal to specialists and non-specialists.

In order to interrogate Islamic concepts of salvation, Khalil chooses four geographically and ideologically diverse representatives from the tradition: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi (d. 638/1240), Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), and Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935). Each section gives attention to voices beyond these four thinkers, as well, and in the final chapter Khalil offers an especially rich discussion of modern thinkers from across the globe who have written on soteriology in Islam. Khalil thus demonstrates both explicit and implicit connections between premodern and modern debates in this area. The author even manages to draw a potential connection between Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) and the Nation of Islam. Khalil perceptively notes that the field of translation can be a "theological battleground" and cites examples from English translations of the Qur'an, making sure that even readers unfamiliar with Arabic will appreciate the significance of his study.

Another related and forthcoming volume edited by Khalil, *Between Heaven and Hell: Islam, Salvation, and the Fate of Others* (Oxford University Press), promises to add to the discussion he began in his monograph. Unlike his monograph, *Between heaven and Hell* will give significant attention to this-worldly implications of the fate of non-Muslims in the afterlife. Because Khalil's objective in the monograph is to analyze the annals of Islamic tradition relating to views on the afterlife, he does not focus extensively on this-worldly consequences of those views. The still unpublished *Roads to Paradise: Concepts of Eschatology in the Hereafter in Islam* (eds. S. Guenther and T. Lawson) will also contribute to the robust topic of Islamic views on the afterlife.

The first chapter in *Islam and the Fate of Other*, "Damnation as Exception," focuses on the Khurasani metaphysician al-Ghazali but also

treats the much later Indian scholar Shah Wali Allah (d. 1176/1762). The second chapter, "All Paths Lead to God," targets the Andalusian mystic Ibn al-'Arabi while also giving attention to Shirazi philosopher Mulla Sadra (d. 1050/1640). The third chapter, "The Redemption of Humanity," devotes its study to the controversial polymath Ibn Taymiyya and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.

The fourth chapter, "The Modern Scene," simultaneously acts as a conclusion and complements Khalil's Religion Compass article on modern pluralism debates in English. This chapter treats the widest spectrum of thinkers, focusing not only on Rida but also the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), South African Farid Esack, Pakistani Fazlur Rahman, and British convert T.J. Winter.

Detailing the arguments of each thinker Khalil examines would be impossible, given the space limitations of this review. I will therefore spend the rest of this review presenting a few critiques. Firstly, although Khalil's monograph explores the writings of dozens of diverse Muslim thinkers, the book at once palpably and disproportionately favors Sunni scholars. Some Shi'ite scholars are mentioned, mostly in the last chapter (e.g., Tabataba'i, Ayoub, and Sachedina), with the key exception of Mulla Sadra in the second chapter. But each of the four primary studies spotlights Sunni scholars. Khalil, however, notes this limitation in his introduction, explaining that his "sampling" is neither exhaustive nor representative of all schools of Islamic thought. The influence of the four figures he selects reaches far beyond their particular schools, though, and "their interpretations of Islam are, therefore, extremely useful and consequential".

Khalil's extensive citations of Qur'anic verses, both his own analyses and citations of Muslim scholars, testify to the unparalleled role of the Qur'an in Muslim discourses on soteriology and the fate of non-Muslims. These citations also

demonstrate Khalil's attention to detail and hermeneutics. He gives ample attention to how scholars have understood Qur'anic words and phrases like *ahqaban* and *khalidin fiha abadan* (for example, do these expressions mean forever or a long time?), but this reviewer would have liked to see more attention given to the exegetical methodology of the scholars whom Khalil treats. He makes no mention, for example, of Ibn Taymiyya's *Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir* or Walid Saleh's work on Ibn Taymiyya's Qur'anic hermeneutics. Similarly, Khalil remains silent about Whittingham and Abul Quasem's scholarship on al-Ghazali's approach to the Qur'an. And although when discussing Ibn al-'Arabi Khalil cites Chittick extensively, he does not mention Sands' monograph on Sufi Qur'an commentaries, which treats not only the approaches of Ibn al-'Arabi, but also of al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya.

Beyond the Qur'an, Khalil also shows great familiarity and expertise with a plethora of primary as well as secondary literature on his topic. In the first chapter, Khalil explains that he limits his investigations of primary sources to "relevant works" of a given author. At the risk of arguing from absence, one would suppose that each of the authors he treats wrote more about salvation than Khalil suggests. For example, in multi-volume works like Ibn Taymiyya's *Majmu al-Fatawa* and al-Ghazali's *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, how can the reader be sure that Khalil found the most salient sections dealing with soteriology of non-Muslims? Expecting Khalil to have thoroughly dissected Ibn Taymiyya's collection of fatwas – which is a library in its own right – defies reason, but the reader may have benefited from greater articulation of the author's method for locating sources.

Other potentially neglected areas in *Islam and the Fate of Other* include secondary literature that relates precisely to his topic. In Khalil's discussions of modern thinkers, he includes the Pakistani reformer Fazlur Rahman and cites his *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, but not his 1990 article

“The People of the Book and the Diversity of Religions.” This work deals explicitly with the soteriological fate of non-Muslims. Khalil also cites Carl-A. Keller from Waardenburg’s edited volume *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions* but makes no mention of Waardenburg’s monograph *Muslims and Others*, which would have presumably deserved mention if for no other reason than to critique; incidentally, Khalil’s citation of Keller in the bibliography is listed incorrectly in the otherwise alphabetized list.

Additionally, in the opening and closing lines of his book Khalil asks: “What does Islam say about the fate of non-Muslims?” Although he writes about what numerous Muslims have said about the fate of non-Muslims, this emphasizes that perhaps Islam says nothing about anything, ever. Rather, Muslims do. Although many individuals may very well ask what Islam says about a given topic, the language is imprecise because Islam does not speak. Given that Khalil demonstrates so forcefully that Muslims have maintained divergent and sometimes conflicting positions on soteriological matters, we should realize all the more that humans, through language, describe ontological matters. Khalil implicitly acknowledges that Islam does not talk, but directly stating that it does not would have aided his argument, given a tendency for authors to mistakenly personify religions.

Regrettably, Khalil also speaks of Islam and “other faiths” (e.g., p.6). Although “faith” as a synonym for religion is commonplace, a closer examination of the term suggests a lack of interchangeability among faith, religion, and particular religions. Like the language of “Islam says,” referring to religions as faiths subtly compromises Khalil’s goals; it positions Islam as something that is synonymous with belief and therefore not as centrally related to practice or behavior. The word choice, moreover, emphasizes the hegemony of Protestantism over the English language. A brief section on the Islamic conception of the afterlife would also have been useful (e.g.,

articulating doctrines on the punishment in the grave, *barzakh*, *al-sirat al-mustaqim*, intercession, and the concept fate itself). Much to this reviewer’s delight, he did not locate any typos in the text (except a few entries in the bibliography that were misplaced).

Some critiques notwithstanding, Khalil’s monograph is a superb scholarly production on all levels. Given his forthcoming edited volume and already published article in *Religion Compass*, moreover, he has created an important niche for himself as a rising scholar in Islamic studies. Khalil should be congratulated for his splendid achievement that is *Islam and the Fate of Others*. The text should be of interest to scholars of theology, comparative religion, Qur’anic studies, ethics, pluralism, philosophy, Islamic history, and Sufism.

Reviewed by Elliott Bazzano

Contd. from page-8

Also many Muslims are still against educating their girls or at least they don’t allow them to pursue higher education and marry them off at an early age.

There are man-made rituals and customs which Muslims practise as religious obligations. These customs only add to our problems or multiply our miseries. As these customs are not prescribed by the Shariah, we can easily avoid or abandon them. Instead we stick to them and often perform them at high economic cost.

The Quran has urged the Muslims to purify their soul. Self-purification has been called the greatest Jihad in a Hadith. The jihad within is not just the best but also the only strategy that we may adopt to defeat the enemy within. It is logical to think that by defeating the enemy within we will succeed in weakening the enemy without. By so doing we shall, at least deprive our external enemy of potential collaborators that are active within us. Having less enemies will surely facilitate our march towards progress and prosperity.

Islam: The Jihad Within

by Ishtiyaque Danish

The views expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the Newsletter (editor)

Life is a running drama, curious, intense, full of expectations, even apprehensions and unpredictable. We can study our past and analyse our present but can't predict about our tomorrow. Indeed we do not know what may happen the next movement. Futurology is a science yet to be developed.

But generally men think about and prepare themselves for what may happen tomorrow. We may not know what tomorrow has in store for us but we are bound to welcome it. The collective human experience also persuades us to make our planning for tomorrow, so that we can face it in a better way.

Planning for future is a difficult and complex business, especially in situations that obtain in India. Normally people take into account their strength and resources while planning for future. The strategy, however, ought to take stock of our weaknesses and limitations as well.

A good self-analysis that enables us to know the weaknesses within is necessary for self-improvement. Agreed that finding one's own faults is not a child's play and it's likely we may not be just in our self analysis. It has rightly been said that the eye that sees everything cannot see itself. Should we,

then, hire the services of some experts to analyse our weaknesses as well as potentials and suggest strategies for creating a brighter future? Well, in some situations external expertise may pay but it may perhaps not work in self-analysis. It's therefore advisable to learn lessons through our own trial and error.

Self-analysis is a rule that applies to both individuals and social groups. Nations and communities, especially the ones suffering from disadvantages, can also conduct self-analysis with a view to overcoming the deficiencies which hinder their progress. There is no denying the fact that external agencies or agents may hinder our progress but in most cases they succeed only when our own weaknesses join hands with them. So, here our problem is not only the enemy without but also the enemy within. The best strategy, therefore, is to kill the enemy within in order to deprive the external enemy of a potential collaborator.

Take the example of Indian Muslims. We can easily identify the external enemies. There are enemies who openly work to harm them. There are also enemies who behave like friends but are equally responsible for the Muslim backwardness. Not just individuals and social groups, the state also

discriminates against the Muslims in many situations. Many players in the private sectors also don't like the Muslims and often deny them the opportunities they deserve.

Now let us have a look at the enemy within. I am unable to decide if poverty is an internal or external enemy? Whatever it might be, poverty is a great enemy. And the biggest enemy is the poverty of mind. Mind's poverty is an individual's discouraging thought that he is born to lead a life of miseries and tragedies. I am inclined to think that mental or intellectual poverty is an internal enemy.

Illiteracy is surely the enemy within. It is possible that the state has not created infrastructure and opened schools in areas of Muslim concentration. It's also likely that the schools in Muslim areas are not upto mark as poor quality of education is provided there. But how can we justify lack of Muslim enrolment in schools or high drop-out rate among Muslim children.

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