

SYMPOSIUM ON ISLAM & GOOD GOVERNANCE



October 2020

Edited by Muqtedar Khan

Contributors:

Robert W. Hefner

Asma Afsaruddin

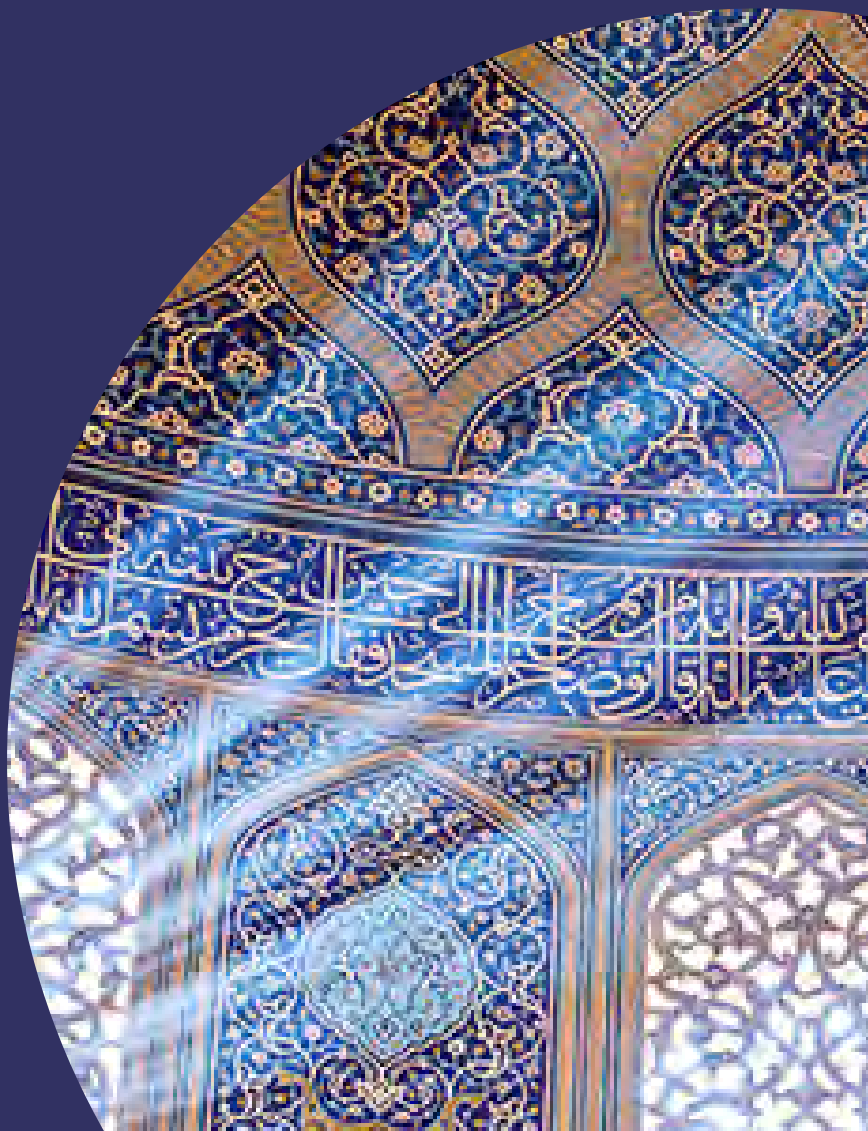
Peter Mandaville

Amir Ullah Khan

Omid Safi

Joseph Prud'homme

Mohammed Ayub Khan



Welcome

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Welcome to the first IIIT symposium on good governance. This is the genesis of the Islam and Good Governance program at the International Institute of Islamic Thought. This program inspired by Dr. Muqtedar Khan's award-winning book, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), seeks to explore the ideas, theories, practices and values that are informing contemporary discourse on public policy and good governance all over the World. This symposium is composed of six essays and an annotated bibliography. The essays by prominent scholars seek to advance a critical appreciation of the ideas advanced by Dr. Muqtedar Khan in his book and in the light of those ideas examine how universal values informed by faith can enrich the discourse on good governance. We hope that this symposium will benefit scholars as well as practitioners of good governance and will be read in classrooms and townhalls. Our next symposium will be on the impact of Authoritarianism on Governance.



Dr. Ahmed Alwani,

President, Fairfax University of America

VP international Institute of Islamic Thought

-

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

The Mission

The goal of this program is to bring values into the global discourse on good governance. Good governance, we believe, should not rely on technology and data science alone, it should also be grounded in universal values. Whether these values are articulated in Islamic ethical terminology or in secular lexicon, ultimately the mission of this initiative is to promote value-based governance in the US and abroad. We hope that good governance will reduce inequity, promote equality, eradicate social injustices, enhance inclusivity, and minimize conflict at home and abroad.

Vision

The Islam and Good Governance program is based on three normative assumptions:

1. The world needs good governance and good governance needs a normative philosophy (universal values) to define the ‘good’ in good governance.
2. Islamic values though articulated within the cultural and linguistic context of Muslim societies, are nevertheless universal such as equality, social and criminal justice, development and progress, education and enlightenment, cooperation, pluralism, mutual understanding, governance by consent, consultative governance, compassion and forgiveness, and respect for human dignity, to mention a few.
3. We believe that advocating for the good in good governance is both service to humanity and service to our values.

Goals and Objectives

1. Articulate a systematic vision of good governance and approach the development of this concept from both Islamic ethics and values and empirical research. We want to benchmark the point of convergence of our normative vision and empirical reality. We will pursue a research and policy program that will develop knowledge and policies for governing ethically in contemporary times.
2. To develop an epistemic community that has expertise in the areas of values and good governance, Islamic ethics and values, and good and smart governance understood broadly. This network of scholars, practitioners and students will eventually constitute a core of good governors expanding to include governance in corporations and nonprofit sector too. If you wish to be part of this community please contact us @ Muqtedar.khan@gmail.com

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

Table of Contents

Introduction: Symposium on Islam and Good Governance - Muqtedar Khan	7
Ihsan Ethics and Political Revitalization: <i>Appreciating Muqtedar Khan's Islam and Good Governance</i> - Robert W. Hefner	17
Negotiating Virtue and Realpolitik in Islamic Good Governance - Asma Afsaruddin	25
Worlding the Inward Dimensions of Islam: <i>Ihsan in Search of a Political Praxis</i> - Peter Mandaville	33
Islam and Good Governance: <i>A Political Economy Perspective</i> - Amir Ullah Khan	39
"God Commands You to Love and Justice": Musings Shared across Islamic Spirituality and the Black-led Freedom Movement - Omid Safi	47
A Tragic Beauty? Quakerism, Christian Tradition, and Secular Misconceptions: <i>A Christian's Thoughts on the Political Philosophy of Ihsan</i> - Joseph Prud'homme	61
Islam and Good Governance: <i>An Annotated Bibliography</i> - Mohammed Ayub Khan	81
Contributors' biographies	93

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

Introduction to Islam and Good Governance: ***An Interdisciplinary Symposium***



Muqtedar Khan

Department of Political Science and International Relations

University of Delaware

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.008.20

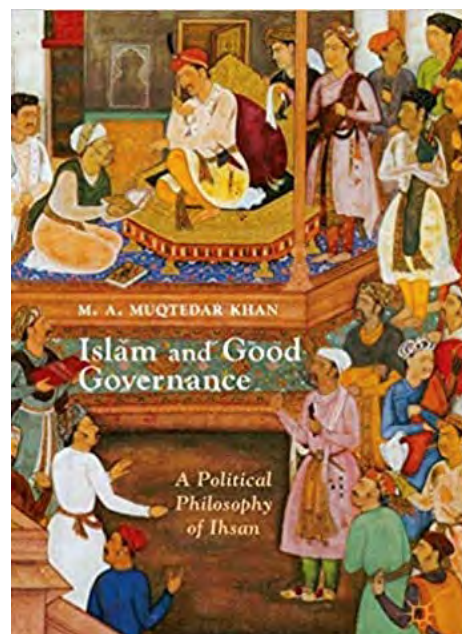
The Symposium

It is a great honor for me to present these exceptionally thoughtful and eclectic collection of essays by a highly interdisciplinary panel of distinguished scholars. We have an anthropologist, two from the field of international affairs, one political theorist, two scholars of Islamic studies, an economist, and a public policy scholar on the roster. In this peer-reviewed symposium, we are using the theoretical and philosophical provocations I have advanced in my recent book, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, to have an interdisciplinary conversation about Islamic values and governance. While some scholars have directly engaged with the book and its ideas providing critical insights as well as insightful critique, others have used it as a point of departure to explore the relationship between Islamic values and governance. The symposium also includes an annotated bibliography of key sources on Islam and good governance. This symposium is the first of hopefully a series of symposia on good governance with the goal to ensure that values are never neglected in pursuit of effective governance. Every symposium will include essays by

¹ Philpott, Daniel. *Religious Freedom in Islam: The Fate of a Universal Human*

scholars and an annotated bibliography compiled by a graduate student.

The Book: Why Can't Politics be Beautiful?



In *Islam and Good Governance*, I present an approach to governance that departs radically from the dominant Islamist imagination of an Islamic state that seeks to impose *Shariah* (Islamic laws) using the coercive tools of the state on its citizens. Additionally, this model of imposing or “implementing” the *Shariah* as a litmus test of Islamicness of states has raised questions about Islam’s compatibility with democracy, pluralism, and religious freedom.¹ I

Right in the Muslim World Today. Oxford University Press, 2019.

advocate an alternate vision of an Islamic polity – a state of *Ihsan* – an approach to governance based on *Ihsan* (to do beautiful things) that privileges love over law along with freedom of religion and thought over enforced adherence to religious mores. Most importantly I favor process (good governance) over government structure (Islamic state) and ethics over realpolitik.²

Another important goal of my book is to demonstrate that over time Muslim political thinkers have imagined politics and polities from very diverse perspectives.³ Relying on the archetypes of foundational Islamic thinkers like Al-Farabi, Al-Mawardi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Saadi of Shiraz, I show that Muslims have theorized politics from perspectives that include philosophy, theology, sociological realism, jurisprudence, and mysticism. The point is that the *Shariah*-based Islamic polity that contemporary Islamists advocate is just one way of imagining Islamic politics. There are other ways of realizing Islam in the public sphere, which are also more compatible with democracy, pluralism, and inclusion,

such as the Medinan model (pp. 215-217). It is crucial for Muslims who desire a public role for Islam to be aware of this rich diversity in their heritage.

The final and most important reason for writing this book was to explore more deeply the concept of *Ihsan*, unanimously considered the highest virtue in Islam, and envision how *Ihsan* can be realized in the political sphere. *Ihsan* means to do beautiful things, to serve God as if you see him, or at least be cognizant of the fact that he sees you all the time.⁴ In a way, both God and his servant are witnessing and witnessed by the other. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said that God has commanded *Ihsan* in all things, so why not in politics? *Islam and Good Governance* endeavors to show how *Ihsan* can make politics beautiful. Regardless of its limitations, I believe it is a unique contribution to Islamic political thought and I hope it inspires many Muslims and non-Muslims to engage in virtuous politics.

In chapters four and five, I elucidate how the Islamic intellectual heritage

² Khan, M A Muqtedar. *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*. Springer, 2019.

³ Boroujerdi, Mehrzad (Ed.), *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*. Syracuse University Press, 2013.

⁴ Khan, M. A. Muqtedar, “Live Life as if you have made and Eye-Contact with God,” [*Islamic Horizons*, March-April issue, 2020., pp. 61-62.](#)

explored the meaning of *Ihsan* and, based on that reading, I advance a public philosophy of *Ihsan*. Even if the readers have profound disagreements with my political vision, I hope they at least find these two chapters beneficial. We have relegated *Ihsan* to spiritual practices; it is time to unleash its potential in the political sphere. I recognize that the highly ethical and compassionate vision of the state – the State of *Ihsan* – that I have presented may be too idealistic for Muslim nations mired in realpolitik internationally and identity politics domestically. Yet, I am hopeful that it will start a conversation about imagining Islamic politics based on love, compassion, inclusion, and forgiveness in academia, on social media, in policy circles, and at kitchen tables.

The Essays

I am both humbled and delighted by the essays in this symposium. They not only place my contribution in perspective but also raise several interesting issues that need further exploration and point to new

5

<https://hadithcommentary.com/nawawi/hadith7/>

⁶ Auda, Jasser. *Maqasid al-Shariah as philosophy of Islamic law: a systems approach*. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2008.

ways of thinking about Islam and politics. I see the discussion here exemplary of the Islamic spirit of *Ihsan* captured so beautifully in the well-known tradition ‘*Al-Deen Al-Naseehah*,’ that religion in essence is sincere counsel.⁵ Robert Hefner is especially generous in his praise and, coming from such a distinguished and renowned scholar, it does mean a lot to me. He does, however, ask a very pertinent question – is it not possible to achieve most of what I advocate through an application of the *maqasid al-shariah* approach (higher purposes of *Shariah*) as advocated by Jasser Auda and others?⁶ Hefner is right, that the already established idea and approach of *maqasid* could be a vehicle to implement many of the virtues I advocate.⁷

However, I have two reservations with regards to this idea. One of my goals is to reduce the domination of legalism in Islamic thought as I see it as the main cause for the loss of *Ihsan* in the *fiqhi* discourse (pp. 9-42). The *maqasid* approach is another form of legalism and it will, in my view, perpetuate the loss of *Ihsan*. Secondly, as I discuss in *Islam and Good*

⁷ Hefner, Robert, “Ihsan Ethics and Political Revitalization: *Appreciating Muqtedar Khan’s Islam and Good*,” in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance*, [International Institute of Islamic Thought](https://www.iiit.org/), October, 2020.

Governance (p. 223), I find it troubling that Islamic jurists find defense of lineage as an important goal of Islamic *Shariah* and not justice or freedom. The five higher purposes of divine law according to the *maqasid* approach are protection of life, property, religion, lineage, and reason. I consider this list without justice (*adl*) and *Ihsan* as a not very beautiful way of divining the divine purpose. Hefner is correct though – I am trying to chart a new pathway to good governance.

I consider Asma Afsaruddin as my teacher (she is not to blame for my many flaws and limitations). When it comes to classical scholarship on the Qur'an, early Muslims, and on the theory as well as practice of *Jihad*, she is second to none. Her participation in this symposium is an honor for me. Afsaruddin pushes back, albeit gently, against my argument critical of the canonization of the *Khulafa-e-Rashidun* as the orthodox model of Islamic governance. I instead advocate the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his governance – the Medinan model – as the standard of good governance to emulate (pp. 203-205 and 215-217).

⁸ Afsaruddin, Asma, "Negotiating Virtue and Realpolitik in Islamic Good Governance," in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance*, [International Institute of Islamic Thought](#), October, 2020.

Afsaruddin reminds us that the first four caliphs were selected primarily for their virtue and moral excellence (*fadila*).⁸ She, however, makes my case for me when she also points out that later scholars like Al-Mawardi and Ibn Taymiyyah muddy the idea of moral excellence by infusing and moderating it with realpolitik. I am with Afsaruddin all the way. My criticism of the *Khulafa-e-Rashidun* model is based on how it is presented in Islamic thought, while Afsaruddin's appreciation for it is based on what it really was.

Of all the contributors, Peter Mandaville is the closest to me in training and research focus. We are both scholars of international affairs focusing on Islam and politics. He is of course a much more accomplished scholar than I. It is no surprise that he has written a much better summation of my main arguments than I have in any of the essays I have published so far trying to explain my objectives in *Islam and Good Governance*. He even picked on subtle elements such as the observation that I am advocating *Ihsan* and not Sufism as practiced today.⁹ Yet, his main question, which is also the sticking point for Robert

⁹ Mandaville, Peter, "Worlding the Inward Dimensions of Islam: Ihsan in Search of a Political Praxis in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance*, [International Institute of Islamic Thought](#), October, 2020.

Hefner and Amir Ullah Khan, regarding how do I get from philosophy of *Ihsan* to praxis of *Ihsan* is very important. My answer is: in baby steps. I have moved from cosmology to philosophy, and the next stage to praxis will be, including TEDx talks, lectures and sermons, symposia like this one, perhaps even a global conference on *Ihsan* (in the future). The key here is the journey towards the destination, not just reaching the end. Fortuitously, two days before the publication of this symposium on October 29, 2020, in a widely listened to TEDx talk, I made the case for how principles of *Ihsan* can combat America's two biggest challenges, structural racism and income inequality. I believe the journey towards *Ihsan* has begun already.

Amir Ullah Khan's response is what I imagine Ibn Khaldun would have said after reading my book – all this is fine, but what about the empirical realities of the existing world? Khan is a renowned economist, who brings *Ihsan* into his political activism on behalf of oppressed minorities in India. Khan's major point is how can we advance

an ethical political reform agenda without taking into account the economic impediments to reform and causes for current miseries? He also suggests that the absence of *Ihsan* may be because of economic injustices, suffering, and huge inequities that persist in Muslim nations.¹⁰ I accept Khan's criticism that my analysis as well as my solution is grounded in ideational terms. I did chart a way forward in chapter seven of the book (pp. 209-246), but that too is ethico-political in nature. I hope my book inspires scholars like Khan to revisit the loss of *Ihsan*, which he does not contest, and advance solutions from a political economy perspective.

Omid Safi is a prominent Muslim public intellectual, besides being a serious scholar of Sufism. He emphasizes the importance of *Ihsan* understood as love in his scholarship and his activism for social justice in America. In *Islam and Good Governance*, I speak of love (*Muhabba*) as one of the seven elements of *Ihsan* (pp. 136-145). Safi takes *Ihsan* as love.¹¹ In his response, he strongly advocates that one

¹⁰ Khan, Amir Ullah. "Islam and Good Governance: A Political Economy Perspective," in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance, International Institute of Islamic Thought, October, 2020*.

¹¹ Safi, Omid. "God commands you to Justice and Love: Islamic Spirituality and the Black-led Freedom Movement, in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance, International Institute of Islamic Thought, October, 2020*.

way through which American Muslims can bring *Ihsan* into their lives along with face the challenges of social injustices is by drinking from the well of love in the African American struggle for freedom (The Civil Rights Movement) and centering the role of African American Muslims. It was fascinating to me to see how Safi understands the verse on justice and *Ihsan* (Quran 16:90) by reading it as love and justice. I too contemplate this important verse, but to argue that God is telling us that justice is not enough, it also needs *Ihsan* – compassion, vigilance, love, mercy, forgiveness, and self-effacement (pp. 222-229, and 248-249). Broadly speaking, I agree with Safi’s general argument that *Ihsan* is an antidote to racism. In a public lecture given at University of Alberta on October 7, 2020, I discussed how *Ihsan* can serve as a remedy to racism in North America.¹² I also make the same argument in a Friday sermon given to the community of Cordoba House, New York, that two dimensions of *Ihsan*, *Muraqaba* (vigilance) and *Fanaa* (self-annihilation), can combat

racism and inequity in America while developing a community of Muhsins (those who realize *Ihsan*).¹³

Joseph Prud’homme is an eminent scholar of Christian thought. He and I have not only engaged in dialogue and debate over the political role of Evangelical Christians in the U.S.,¹⁴ but also have worked together on several projects stateside as well as in Europe, East Asia, and in the Middle East. He constructs a fascinating account of how, in his view, the Quakers in pursuit of a virtue much like *Ihsan* – to be guided by an inner light both in private and public spheres rather than authoritative Christian dogma – essentially became apostates from Christianity.¹⁵ My familiarity with Quaker thought is limited to occasional lectures at Friends’ High School in Delaware. So, I cannot comment much on Prud’homme’s *takfir* of Quakers.¹⁶ Yet, I understand his point. He is afraid that, in pursuit of *Ihsan*, Muslims too might move away from the doctrinal and core teachings

¹²

<http://meis.ualberta.ca/?event=Public%20Talk%20by%20Prof.%20Khan>

¹³ <https://youtu.be/OPRLmgtuRsQ>

¹⁴ <https://youtu.be/pYYaC7xixVI>

¹⁵ Prud’homme, Joseph. “A Tragic Beauty? Quakerism, Christian Tradition, and Secular

Misconceptions: *A Christian’s Thoughts on the Political Philosophy of Ihsan*” in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance, International Institute of Islamic Thought, October, 2020.*

¹⁶ *Takfir* is an Islamic doctrine by which one declares another as outside their doctrinal fold.

of Islam and, God forbid, leave the fold of Islam.

I appreciate the warning and I suspect some scholars from the school of thought broadly defined as *Salafi* Islam may confuse my advocacy for *Ihsan* as support for contemporary Sufism and actually agree with him.¹⁷ However, I disagree completely. The idea of *Ihsan* derives both from the Quran and from the Hadith of Jibril, according to which angel Gabriel himself came to teach Muslims their religion. From the fringes of Islamic heterodoxy to the core of Islamic orthodoxy, there is consensus that *Ihsan* is the highest moral excellence one can aspire to in Islam. Even the most prominent of Salafi scholars have written about *Ihsan*. Ibn Taymiyyah, the stalwart of Salafis, also anchors his book, *Kitab al-Iman* (Book of Belief) on the Hadith of Jibril (pp. 80-82).¹⁸ The hadith defines Islam, *Iman*, and *Ihsan*. Ibn Taymiyyah in his book focused on *Iman*, I chose to focus on *Ihsan*. I also review two major contemporary Arabic books on *Ihsan*, one

by the late Sufi scholar Sheikh Yassine of Morocco and another by a renowned Salafi scholar, Sheikh Hassan of Egypt.¹⁹ The treatment of *Ihsan* is diametrically opposite but the sources are the same – Quran and Sunnah. In *Islam and Good Governance*, I made sure that none of my assertions strayed from the orthodox-sanctioned, authentic, sacred sources. My worry is that my vision is too idealistic to realize, not that its realization will lead to deviation.

Mohammed Ayub Khan's bibliographical essay is thoughtful and well put together.²⁰ In annotated bibliographies, what is not seen – the articles and books examined but not included – often far exceeds what is visible. Khan's selection of sources is well balanced; they include recent and prominent sources as well as contemporary and classical texts on Islam and Good Governance.

Acknowledgements

Besides the seven scholars who contributed to this peer-reviewed

¹⁷ Haykal, Bernard. "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst, 2009).

¹⁸

<https://40hadithnawawi.com/hadith/2-islam-iman-ihsan/>

¹⁹ Yassine, Abdessalam. "Al-Ihsan." *Casablanca, Morocco: al Ufuq Edition* (1990). Shaykh

Muhammad Bin Hassan, *Al-Ihsan* (Mansoura, Egypt: Maktabah Fayad, 2010).

²⁰ Khan, Mohammed Ayub. "Islam and Good Governance: An Annotated Bibliography," in *Muqtedar Khan (Ed.), Symposium on Islam and Good Governance, International Institute of Islamic Thought, October, 2020*.

symposium, I have benefitted from the support of many others. I am grateful to Dr. Ahmed Alwani, the Vice President of IIIT, for supporting the Islam and Good Governance initiative and helping to develop the vision that informs it. I also want to thank Salwa Medani who worked hard to build the entire web presentation of these essays, Saulat Pervez who meticulously proof read the essays, Lina Bhatti who coordinated and made sure we got the DOI numbers for the essays, and Amina Derbi for her input on promotion of the symposium. Thanks also to Mariam Khaziuri and Kristina Klimova for handling the financial side of the project.



Dr.

Muqtadar Khan is a Professor in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the University of

Delaware. He is a non-resident scholar with IIIT, coordinating the Islam and Good Governance initiative. He was the academic director of the US State Departments' National Security Institute, 2016-2019 and is the academic director of the American Foreign Policy Institute, 2019-2021, at the Institute for Global Studies, UD. He was a Senior Nonresident Fellow of the Brookings Institution (2003-2008) and a Senior Fellow with the Center for Global Policy (2017-2020). He is the author of the award-winning book *Islam and Good Governance: Political Philosophy of Ihsan* published in April 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan. He is also the author of several other books: *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom* (2002), *Jihad for Jerusalem: Identity and Strategy in International Relations* (2004), *Islamic Democratic Discourse* (2006), *Debating Moderate Islam* (University of Utah Press, 2007). His articles and commentaries can be found at www.ijtihad.org. His academic publications can be found at <https://udel.academia.edu/MuqtadarKhan>. He hosts a Youtube show called [Khanversations](https://www.youtube.com/c/ProfMuqtadarKhan) at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/ProfMuqtadarKhan>. Click here to read reviews, articles and view videos about [*Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*](#).

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

***IHSAN* ETHICS AND POLITICAL REVITALIZATION:**

Appreciating Muqtedar Khan's *Islam and Good Governance*



Robert W. Hefner

Pardee School of Global Affairs
Boston University

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.001.20

Ours is an age of pervasive political turbulence, and the scale of the challenge requires new thinking on politics as well as public ethics for our world. In Western countries, the specter of Islamophobia, alt-right populism, along with racialized violence has shaken public confidence in long-secure assumptions rooted in democracy, diversity, and citizenship. The tragic denouement of so many of the Arab uprisings together with the ascendance of apocalyptic extremists like Daesh and Boko Haram have caused an even greater sense of alarm in large parts of the Muslim-majority world.

It is against this backdrop that M.A. Muqtedar Khan has written a book of breathtaking range and ethical beauty. The author explores the history and sociology of the Muslim world, both classic and contemporary. He does so, however, not merely to chronicle the phases of its development, but to explore just why the message of compassion, mercy, and ethical beauty so prominent in the Quran and Sunna of the Prophet came over time to be displaced by a narrow legalism that emphasized jurisprudence, punishment, and social control. In the modern era, Western Orientalists and Islamists alike have pushed the juridification and interpretive reification of Islamic ethical traditions even further. Each group has asserted that the essence of Islam lies in

jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and both have tended to imagine this legal heritage on the model of Western positive law, according to which law is authorized, codified, and enforced by a leviathan state. “Reification of *Shariah* and equating of Islam and *Shariah* has a rather emaciating effect on Islam,” Khan rightly argues. It leads its proponents to overlook “the depth and heights of Islamic faith, mysticism, philosophy or even emotions such as divine love (*Muhabba*)” (13). As the sociologist of Islamic law, Sami Zubaida, has similarly observed, in all these developments one sees evidence, not of a traditionalist reassertion of Muslim values, but a “triumph of Western models” of religion and state (Zubaida 2003:135).

To counteract these impoverishing trends, Khan presents a far-reaching analysis that “seeks to move away from the now failed vision of Islamic states without demanding radical secularization” (2). He does so by positioning himself squarely within the ethical and mystical legacy of the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet. As the book’s title makes clear, the key to this effort of religious recovery is “the cosmology of *Ihsan* and the worldview of *Al-Tasawwuf*, the science of Islamic mysticism” (1-2).

For Islamist activists whose models of Islam have more to do with contemporary identity politics than a deep reading of Islamic traditions, Khan’s foregrounding of *Ihsan* may seem unfamiliar or baffling. But

one of the many achievements of this book is the skill with which it plumbs the depth of scripture, classical commentaries, and *tasawwuf* practices to recover and confirm the ethic that lies at their heart. “The Quran promises that God is with those who do beautiful things,” the author reminds us (Khan 2019:1). The concept of *Ihsan* appears 191 times in 175 verses in the Quran (110). The concept is given its richest elaboration, Khan explains, in the famous hadith of the Angel Gabriel. This tradition recounts that when Gabriel appeared before the Prophet he asked, “What is *Ihsan*?” Both Gabriel’s question and the Prophet’s response make clear that *Ihsan* is an ideal at the center of the Qur’an and Sunna of the Prophet, and that it enjoins “perfection, goodness, to better, to do beautiful things and to do righteous deeds” (3). It is this cosmological ethic that Khan argues must be restored and implemented “to develop a political philosophy ... that emphasizes love over law” (2).

In its expansive exploration of Islamic ethics and civilization, Khan’s *Islam and Good Governance* will remind some readers of the late Shahab Ahmed’s remarkable book, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Ahmed 2016). Both are works of impressive range and spiritual depth. But whereas Ahmed stood in the humanities wing of Islamic studies, Khan is an intellectual polymath who moves

easily across the Islamic sciences, social theory, and comparative politics. He brings the full weight of his effort to conclusion with policy recommendations for how “to combine Sufism with political theory” (6), and to do so in a way that recommends specific “Islamic principles that encourage good governance, and *politics in pursuit of goodness*” (8).

These latter recommendations are decisive, but inevitably they will elicit varied responses. In Chapter 4, Khan provides a vivid account of his travels to five Muslim-majority countries in the early stages of writing his book, not long after he realized “that the idea of *Ihsan* was the key to the enlightened understanding of Islam that I sought” (98). He reports that, in the course of his travels, Muslim scholars in the academy “were fascinated by the idea of developing a political philosophy based on *Ihsan*” (ibid.). Yet the response in other circles was often skeptical. Muslims of Salafi and Islamist persuasion were hostile toward any ethical proposal seen as grounded in Sufi traditions. Surprisingly, even “Sufi-leaning scholars” were unenthusiastic about his proposal, because for these believers “the purpose of *Ihsan* in life is to detach oneself from the seductions of this world, power and wealth, and not to find fulfillment in them” (99).

To his credit, Khan brings these skeptical responses into his narrative and

recognizes the challenge they represent. Having done research for more than three decades in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, I am confident that in some Muslim-majority lands, especially those with still vibrant traditions of *tasawwuf*, the *Ihsan* alternative may yet receive an enthusiastic hearing. Over the past five years, the sixty-million member Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Muslim social welfare association, has launched a series of national and international initiatives on "humanitarian Islam," all designed to counter the narrow-minded and reifying legalism of the country's small but assertive network of transnational Islamists. Although not explicitly referencing *Ihsan*, NU has not been the least bit shy about announcing its conviction that democracy and inclusive citizenship are deeply compatible with Islamic values in general as well as the Muslim world's traditions of divine love and mysticism in particular.²¹

In broad swaths of the Muslim-majority world, and even in modernist Muslim circles in Indonesia, however, the response to proposals that suggest *Ihsan* should be the basis of a more compassionate Muslim governance may well resemble what

Khan encountered in his travels. In one passage in his book, as he assesses what is required to elevate governance around the Muslim world, Khan observes, "It will take a global movement to transform the idea of religiosity as service to humanity. Nothing less than a revival and reform of Sufism can accomplish this challenging task" (144). Although, again, in many Muslim lands Sufism and neo-Sufism are flourishing, my sense is that the "agonistic pluralism" (to use Chantal Mouffe's phrase, referring to the inevitable and vitally necessary clash of public ethical principles that takes place in all modern societies) so characteristic of Western politics and modernity has also become a key feature of politics and ethics in Muslim countries. On this feature of global modernity, I suspect there is no going back. So, however beautiful the vision (and I agree it is), to pin one's hopes for good governance on a global Sufi revival may mean the chances of success are slim indeed.

My reading of Khan's proposal, however, leads me to conclude that there may yet be a more immediate and accessible pathway toward the realization of his proposal, one that preserves most of the substance of the *Ihsan* ethic while utilizing

²¹ See <https://baytarrahmah.org/humanitarian-islam/>).

different social processes already underway in Muslim societies. What I am referring to here are an array of educational, economic, and political changes already sweeping large sections of the Muslim world, and creating great social pressures for a rethinking of Islamic public ethics on terms not dissimilar to those Khan has in mind, but understood as a reconstitution of shariah ethics rather than a Sufi revival as such. My sense is that building on this already-existing aspiration for shariah reform can achieve many of the same goals of Khan's *Ihsan* proposal, but with a greater degree of sociological feasibility by harnessing existing social and ethical trends.

As Khan himself shows so well, the crises of authority and religious ethics shaping much of the world have led conservative Islamists to imagine that God's law is unitary and unchanging, so much so that a true Islamic ethics can do no more than implement that law in a fixed, inflexible, and thus highly ineffectual way. Where such an unreformed and (ironically) Western positivist understanding of shariah commands public support, there may well be few grounds for ethical reform on the scale intended by Khan and others calling for Islamic renewal (*tajdid*) for the purposes

of enhanced equity, compassion, and justice. Recent years have seen a growing array of efforts to break out of this ethical and epistemological impasse, however, as seen in proposals made by Muslim intellectuals of varied pedigree, including Ebrahim Moosa, Muhammad Hashim Kamali, Tariq Ramadan, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, and Jasser Auda, among many others. In his *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (2009), Tariq Ramadan, for instance, provides one of the most concise syntheses of this reformed-shariah-ethics approach, and I cite it here because, in my view, he clearly articulates the epistemological obstacles involved in any such effort.²²

Ramadan observes that an Islamic ethics capable of meeting the challenges of the modern age will be impossible without the cooperation as equals of *ulama an-nusus* ("text scholars") with *ulama al-waqi'* ("context scholars"). In Ramadan's model, the *ulama al-waqi'* are primarily scholars working in the natural and social sciences. They are as important as scholars of the Islamic sciences, he explains, because "the world, its laws, and areas of specialized knowledge not only shed light on scriptural sources but also constitute a source of law

²² Ramadan is currently under indictment in France on charges of sexual assault. Although he has publicly

acknowledged marital infidelities, the court case against him has yet to be resolved.

on their own” (Ramadan 2009: 83). In Ramadan’s view, then, an ethical life consistent with shariah is not merely a matter of conformity to a fixed and finished body of legal rules (*ahkam*). The struggle for the good also requires that believers grasp the higher aims of the law (*maqasid al-shari`a*) and then go one step further: develop the empirical knowledge of society and nature required to solve ethical problems in an empirically effective manner consistent with the full truth of revelation.

What is so timely and important about these *maqasid*-based proposals for ethical reorientation is that they link aspirations for Islamic ethical reform to far-reaching sociological and epistemological changes already underway in Muslim societies. I find this suggestion quite persuasive, but I do think that we also need to talk about the move from Sufism to *Maqasid* (or *Maqasid* to Sufism). One way would be to highlight the *Maqasid* as protecting life, honor, family, and property, linking together the sanctity of life and honor as goals of the Sufi approach to humanity as well.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of new institutions of health care, education, science, and social welfare provision across the entire Muslim world. The knowledge required to progress in such fields represented an effective refutation of the claim that proper Islamic ethics involves

no more than conformity to fixed and finished rules, without any of the epistemological expansion both Ramadan and Khan propose. Advances in education, science, and health care also offered a real-world counter-point to the unempirical claims that an essentialized version of Islamic law is a panacea for all social ills which does not require a sustained engagement with the sciences of the world or with the higher aims of God’s law. Of course, some people may insist that the new forms of knowledge required for such an ethical reformulation are “secular,” not Islamic. But others with a deeper religious understanding will recognize that this “knowledge of the world” is an additional means of moving closer to God.

There is another sociological reality contributing to these new Islamic understandings of the true, the good, and the beautiful. The creation of modern Islamic hospitals, banks, laboratories, and universities – which is to say, sites where Muslim actors are obliged to put new forms of knowledge and ethical action into daily practice – allows believers with new and important life-world skills to acquire a social standing and influence in Muslim communities that exceeds that of activists committed to a reified and positivist understanding of Islamic law. These and other “mundane” activities have served to convince a growing number of Muslims that

the moral and spiritual challenges of the age require more complex ethical engagements than conformity to unchanging rules, or to the religious authorities who claim an exclusive right to voice their truth. Momentum for this global process of Muslim ethical and epistemological reform is already strong. For those with an understanding of the beauty of *Ihsan*, the same process of *maqasid*-based ethical reformulation can provide a vehicle for promoting an even deeper realization, “that God loves those who do beautiful things” (Quran 2:195). Indeed, with growing public awareness, this simple truth will provide powerful support for good governance and a truly Islamic way of life.



Robert W. Hefner is a professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Pardee School of Global Affairs at Boston University. From 1986-2017, he worked with the sociologist Peter L. Berger and served as director and/or associate director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and

World Affairs (CURA) at Boston University. Hefner is a social theorist who specializes in the anthropology of religion, ethics and law (including shariah law), education and youth development, as well as the comparative study of gender, citizenship, globalization, and modernity. He has directed some 24 major research projects and organized 19 international conferences, on issues ranging from Muslim politics and shariah law to citizenship and civic education in Western democratic societies. His research in recent years has had two thematic and areal foci: the politics and ethics of pluralist co-existence in the Muslim-majority world, including especially Indonesia and Malaysia; and, second, social recognition and citizenship among Catholics, Muslims, and secular-liberals in France and the United States. Hefner has published 21 edited or single-authored books, as well as seven major policy reports for the U.S. government and private foundations. Seven of his books have been translated into Indonesian and Malay; one has been published in Chinese. With the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, Hefner is currently (2019-2021) co-producing (with Zainal Abidin Bagir of Gadjah Mada University) six films on plurality, gender, and citizenship in Indonesia. He is also completing a book on Muslims, shariah law, and the quest for a modern Muslim ethics.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Shahab. 2016. *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Khan, M.A. Muqtedar. 2019. *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*. New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ramadan, Tariq. 2009. *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zubaida, Sami. 2003. *Law and Power in the Islamic World*. London: Tauris.

Negotiating Virtue and Realpolitik in Islamic Good Governance



Asma Afsaruddin

**Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies
Indiana University, Bloomington**

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.002.20

“The scars and stains of racism are still deeply embedded in American society... Not one of us can rest, be happy, be at home, be at peace with ourselves, until we end hatred and division.” --John Lewis

These words of John Lewis represent a scathing criticism of the contemporary failures of the United States, the oldest and possibly most vibrant democratic nation-state in the world. The words also express a deep disappointment that the principles of equality and justice enshrined in the US constitution have been honored more in the breach when they pertain to African-Americans, many of whose ancestors arrived on these shores long before those of their Euro-American compatriots.

Lewis’s sense of betrayal is a potent reminder that words and resolutions in themselves – however lofty and high-minded they may sound – do not in themselves create a just and inclusive society. Since the adoption of the US constitution, minority groups – African-Americans and Native Americans in particular – have been unable to fully benefit from the rule of law in this country, as both groups have

been subjected to systemic discrimination and social denigration as long as the United States has been in existence. Recent occurrences of election gerrymandering and police brutality dramatically confirm that there is indeed a dual system of justice in this country that disproportionately advances the white majority and consistently disenfranchises black Americans in particular.

Muqtadar Khan’s thought-provoking and remarkable book, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, expresses a not dissimilar disenchantment with the course of Islamic political history that he understands to have largely turned its back on the high ideals expressed in the Qur’an and hadith literature about how Muslims should govern their affairs in this world²³. He focuses on the concept of *Ihsan*, which in the Qur’an is specifically coupled with justice (16:90).

²³ M. A. Muqtadar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political*

Philosophy of Ihsan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Justice in turn is described as an important correlate of *taqwa* (Qur'an 5:8), a fundamental attribute of the believer that the well-known scholar of Islam, Fazlur Rahman, famously rendered as "God-consciousness." This God-consciousness permeates the notion of *Ihsan*, as described in the much-cited hadith: "When the angel Gabriel asked the Prophet Muhammad about *Ihsan*, he replied that it means to worship God as if you see him; if you cannot see him, then surely he sees you." The Qur'an (29:69) promises that God is with those who practice *Ihsan*, that is to say, with those who carry out beautiful deeds.

Ihsan is a much-invoked and powerful concept particularly within Islamic moral theology and the mystical strain of Islam known as Sufism. Khan provides a useful odyssey through the trajectory of spiritual and mystical Islam in which *Ihsan* enjoys a particularly high valence, often in self-conscious contrast to the hard-nosed realm of politics, which was guided more by *realpolitik* and what today we term as "identity politics." It is this development that the author rues, leading him to lament how the adoption of realist precepts by ruling elites have been determined by

considerations of political power and practical efficacy rather than the cultivation of moral excellence and virtue. This has led to Muslim political theorists being concerned more with the *structure* of political administration rather than with the *process* of political governance.

A more appropriate concern for the latter would lead to the establishment of what Khan calls "the State of *Ihsan*" that would strive to realize a system of virtuous and benevolent governance in which justice and participatory politics would predominate. In contrast to the state as it evolved in Islamic history, "the State of *Ihsan* will be concerned with national virtue rather than national identity." More provocatively, Khan states that this State of *Ihsan* is a secular state. Such a secular state, in our author's conception, is not devoid of religion and religious principles. It is rather a state that "creates an intimidation-free environment that allows various ethical and virtuous communities and even movements to advocate the pursuit of individual and societal perfection."

In the State of *Ihsan*, the government no longer exercises its authority in a top-down coercive

manner but rather interacts and collaborates synergistically with the citizenry to construct a virtuous, egalitarian polity. Muslims should be more concerned with Islamic principles of governance rather than with an assumed blueprint for an “Islamic government,” which is non-existent in any case, Khan remarks. It is the implementation of these principles that guarantee moral and righteous polities. The hunt for the elusive “Islamic state” of modern-day Islamists is futile and must be abandoned. The conclusion is inescapable: in the absence of adherence to Qur’anic principles, no amount of sloganeering turns a state “Islamic.” Islam, after all, is not an empty shibboleth merely to be invoked and publicly professed.

Khan appeals to the example set by the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century that, he says, must be emulated by contemporary Muslims in establishing their State of *Ihsan*. The Qur’an (33:21) describes the Prophet as “a beautiful example,” signaling the importance of beauty (*husn*),

etymologically related to the term *Ihsan*, as an attribute that must undergird everything that a Muslim does in emulation of the Prophet. The community and city-state that he established in Medina is a shining beacon for modern Muslims and invites them to similarly uphold the virtues of justice, equality, beauty, mercy, and compassion in the administration of their daily lives and public affairs. Above all, ethics must govern politics in the State of *Ihsan*.

Khan, however, is not as enamored of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs who came after the Prophet and says that Muslims must not be so concerned with their legacy as they currently tend to be. He recognizes some of their positive accomplishments but suggests that Muslims go overboard in lionizing them. And here I must express mild dissent with the author. In my own studies of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs,²⁴ I find that the way they are said to have comprehended proper and righteous governance continues to impart important lessons to modern

²⁴ Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); idem, *The First Muslims:*

History and Memory (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

Muslims. One of the fundamental traits associated with the legitimate caliph by seventh-century Muslims is that of *fadila* or moral excellence. The importance of this concept is enshrined in the general political adage that the most virtuous (*afdal*) individual should govern the Muslim community. A quick survey of early Islamic literature reveals that influential Muslim authorities in the formative period remembered the early debates about legitimate leadership as having crystallized around the two key concepts of moral excellence and precedence (*sabiqa*). The best candidates for the office of the caliph drawn from the first generation of Muslims were deemed to have possessed certain virtues, such as charitableness, truthfulness, magnanimity, and courage, while precedence was predicated on early conversion to Islam.

As Sunni sources affirm, Abu Bakr was understood by the majority of Muslims to have met these criteria after the death of the Prophet and, therefore, was considered to be the most qualified to become the caliph. Using very similar arguments, early Shi'i sources assert that Ali, rather than Abu Bakr, was the most virtuous Companion and, therefore, was the best suited to assume

the office. Using Khan's terminology, we can say that according to early conceptions of legitimate and righteous governance, Muslim rulers were expected to display and practice *Ihsan* – which, in its capacious sense, includes traits like charitableness and magnanimity considered indispensable in the legitimate caliph. However imperfectly realized in reality, these were ideals drawn from the Qur'an and the sunnah that informed the political consciousness of early Muslims in significant ways. The Rightly-Guided Caliphs also famously practiced *shura* or consultative governance and considered themselves to be first among equals, eschewing, as our sources inform us, absolutism and tyranny (*istibdad*). This idealized conception of virtuous, moral leadership is the enduring legacy of the first four caliphs. The principles that informed their administrative decisions are fully replicable today but not the actual mode of government (the historical caliphate) that was a contingent institution applicable for that time and circumstance.

The concepts of precedence and moral excellence, however, progressively receded in socio-political importance with distance from the first and second

generations of Muslims. Although moral excellence as a central trait of the most qualified leader continued to be endorsed and upheld as a requirement that must ideally be fulfilled, more pragmatic considerations of effective leadership began to gain ground by the ‘Abbasid period. This becomes quite evident in al-Mawardi’s writings in the eleventh century and receives greater emphasis in Ibn Taymiyya’s works in the late thirteenth century during the Mamluk period. Al-Mawardi (d. 1058) maintained that it was no longer necessary that the most virtuous individual assume the caliphate; it was adequate if the candidate possessed the minimum qualifications understood to be necessary for governing the Muslim polity.²⁵ Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) similarly declared that on the issue of good governance, pragmatic and mundane considerations of public benefit and communal welfare should take priority over idealized notions of moral-political leadership. Thus, he stated, one should appoint the individual who is most suitable (*al-*

aslah) for a particular position and that their qualifications have to be assessed in view of who would best serve the public interest. Out of consideration for the greater public good (*li-maslaha rajiha*), Ibn Taymiyya affirms, one may appoint less virtuous but more competent individuals to positions of public prominence, despite the existence of others who are more knowledgeable in religious matters and more pious than them. Thus, for the position of a military commander, the strongest and the most courageous man should be picked, even though “he may have moral failings” (*wa-in kana fihi fujur*), over the weaker and less capable individual, even though he may be more trustworthy.²⁶ Given the crisis-ridden world that he inhabited – with the memory of the Crusades still very strong and the Mongol invasion underway – it is perfectly understandable why Ibn Taymiyya would emphasize practical, worldly skills over moral probity as the required desiderata in the most qualified leader(s) of his time.

²⁵ Al-Mawardi, *The Ordinances of Government*, tr. Wafaa H. Wahba (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1999)

²⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Siyasa al-shar‘iyya fi islah al-ra‘i wa ‘l-ra‘iya* (Beirut, n.d.), 23-26.

Ibn Taymiyya's influential conception of leadership represents a clear concession to hard-headed realism and a significant modification of the caliphal paradigm of precedence and moral excellence. *Aslah* ("the most suitable") replaces *afdal* ("the most excellent") in Ibn Taymiyya's thought. According to him, an individual's greater precedence in some activity is established not on account of any *a priori* generalized standard of moral excellence but through his "fit" for that particular activity on the basis of pragmatic criteria which maximizes the public benefit to be derived from his appointment. In Ibn Taymiyya's conceptualization, the State of *Ihsan* was effectively aborted by this transmutation and realpolitik was assumed to determine the contours of good governance.

To some readers, the State of *Ihsan* replacing the modern amoral nation-state may sound preposterously far-fetched and impossibly pie-in-the-sky. Can any form of government, after all, remain unsullied by the ambient world in which it functions and refuse to capitulate to realpolitik? As John Lewis's words above remind us, we have, nonetheless, a moral and ethical obligation to try. Otherwise, in the American context, we may never be able to achieve that more perfect union

envisioned by the country's forefathers and heal the horrendous racial and ideological divides plaguing contemporary American society. The injustices engendered by the sin of racism can only be transcended by the adoption of values that were meant to animate the American psyche and state formation: equality and justice for all.

Similarly, Khan's extended and eloquent *cri de coeur* reminds us that Muslims in their own societies must endeavor to aspire towards the Qur'anic ideals of beauty and justice encapsulated by the term *Ihsan* or surrender to the socio-political cleavages created by the divisive religio-political rhetoric emanating from certain extremist groups today. Though the ideals of beauty and justice embedded in foundational Islamic texts and retrievable from early Islamic society may never be fully or perfectly realized in this world, the very attempt to realize them provides a way out of the spiritual and intellectual morass that afflicts many Muslim-majority societies today. The State of *Ihsan* will always be a work in progress, ensuring its adaptability and relevance through time. *Ihsan's* embeddedness in classical Islamic texts and enshrinement in Muslim practices

and norms over the centuries are irrefutable, creating a normativity that cannot be disavowed, except through ignorance and rhetorical legerdemain. Khan's invocation of this hallowed tradition specifically in the political sphere is not only timely and necessary but irresistible.



Dr. Asma Afsaruddin is Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures in the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. She is the author and editor of seven books and has written over seventy journal articles and book chapters on topics as diverse as Islamic political thought, Qur'anic hermeneutics, Islamic approaches to war and peace, and gender. In 2015, her book *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad*

and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought (Oxford University Press, 2013) won the World Book Prize from the Iranian Government and was a runner-up for the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book prize in 2014. She has received research grants from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, the American Research Institute of Turkey, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, among others.

Professor Afsaruddin was the Kraemer Middle East Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the College of William and Mary in 2012. She is a past member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion and a current member of the Academic Council of the Prince al-Waleed Center for Muslim-Christian Relations at Georgetown University. She lectures widely in the US, Europe, and the Middle East and has served as an advisor to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the US State Department, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Woolf Institute at the University of Cambridge. In 2019, Afsaruddin was inducted into the Society of Scholars at Johns Hopkins University in recognition of her academic and professional achievements since receiving her PhD there in 1993.

Worlding the Inward Dimensions of Islam: *Ihsan in Search of a Political Praxis*



Peter Mandaville

Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance
Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.003.20

Muqtedar Khan's *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan* is, above all, an expression of faith.²⁷ This does not mean that we should engage it as a confessional text — although it certainly is one at some level — or that it necessitates or assumes a particular faith positionality on the part of its reader. Rather, Khan seeks here to build a vision and conception of Islamic governance that does not depend on compliance with or fidelity to some outward standard — whether that be European political liberalism or *madhhabi* requirements. Instead, he draws on concepts, values, and virtues commonly associated with Islam's more inward dimensions to propose a strikingly original political philosophy: one that makes worldly that which has traditionally been kept apart from the world. More specifically, Khan locates the basis of a new kind of Islamic politics within the Qur'anic and Prophetic injunction of *ihsan*, which implies beautification, excellence, or perfection — conventionally understood as primarily spiritual in nature. However, this is not a politics that concerns itself with domination (the pursuit, retention, and maximization of power); it is neither narrowly focused on building governmental structures that

supposedly correspond with divine diktat nor understood as contestation or competition. This is, as the book's subtitle suggests, a pathway to a philosophy of the political which defines the latter in terms of searching for the Good.

As with all new and radical ideas, there is much here that is appealing precisely because it is fresh and different, offering a welcome departure from tired as well as increasingly banal debates about, for example, the compatibility of Islam with democracy or the correct institutional form of an authentically Islamic polity. Khan is inviting us to think about the relationship between Islam and the political in completely new ways. By the same token, the sheer innovation of *Islam and Good Governance* leaves many questions unanswered and aspects of the argument under-theorized. In this essay, I want to both explain what is new here and how Khan's book provides a timely new corrective to the trajectory of contemporary Islamic political thought, while also pointing out where the argument remains underdeveloped. I trust it will be understood that I approach the latter task in the full spirit of *ihsan*.

²⁷ M. A. Muqtedar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, New York:

Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

My own work of late has turned to the question of how we might connect contemporary Islamic thought and activism to the *decoloniality* paradigm associated with the work of Walter Mignolo, Catherine Walsh, and the late Aníbal Quijano.²⁸ As I understand it, what such a reading enables is the dismantlement of a common exceptionalism which tends to confine modern Islamic political thought within an insular impulse that has little to do with the world but everything to do with a myopic obsession with replicating Medinan normativity. This is conventionally represented as a genealogy that flows back through Rashid Rida to Muhammad Abduh to the 18th century revivalists (Shah Waliullah, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab) and straight on back to Ibn Taymiyya in 14th century Damascus. Instead, the paradigm I wish to pursue would treat modern Islamic activism and its intellectual proponents as interventions in the global, transhistorical problematic of coloniality/decoloniality.²⁹ This approach proceeds from the assumption that even in this period of postcolonialism (in the sense of being chronologically posterior to the

historical event of colonialism), modes of life, thought, and the political imagination all continue to be defined by colonial categories. In light of my aspiration to explore the idea of decolonial approaches to Islam, I was immediately drawn to the analysis Khan offers on pp. 193-203 in *Islam and Good Governance* under the heading “Four Responses to Postcolonial Reality.”

In this section, Khan offers a typology of “four distinct theoretical directions that Muslim thinkers have sought to shape the Muslim world’s postcolonial political reality.” I found his schema here to be a valuable summary of the major trends in modern Islamic political thought, and a useful reference point for specifying what is new and different about his *ihsan*-oriented approach. The four directions in Muslim thought that Khan identifies are the Westernizing secularism of Mustapha Kemal in Turkey and various 20th century Arab republican regimes (Tunisia, Egypt, etc.); the effort to build a specifically Islamic political order within the parameters of the modern nation-state (Rashid Rida, Abu-l

²⁸ Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2018; Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from South*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2000, pp. 533-580.

²⁹ For an initial statement of these ideas, see Peter Mandaville, “Global Jihadism, Subalternity and Urban Islam in the West” in Jeevan Deol and Zaheer Kazmi (eds.), *Contextualizing Jihadi Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Ala Maududi, Ikhwanism); the aspiration to (re)establish a centralized, transnational Islamic polity in the form of a Caliphate (Hizb ut-Tahrir, Al-Qaeda, ISIS), and the project to establish the Islamic basis of democracy (Khaled Abou El-Fadl; Abdolkarim Soroush; Abdullahi An-Naim; early Muqtedar Khan). While each of these approaches is clearly distinct, they all share something in common insofar as they aspire to either replicate or justify themselves in terms of an external standard (modernization; Shari'ah; democracy) inevitably produced by human endeavor (*ijtihad*, Enlightenment philosophy) but *subsequently* constructed as divinely normative, culturally authoritative, or some combination of the two. From Khan's perspective, each of these can be understood in much the same way as the work of the late Fatima Mernissi — an inspiration for Khan — who revealed the historical processes through which patriarchal hegemony was retroactively encoded within Islamic sources.

It is in contrast to such trends that Khan develops his politics of *ihsan*. At its core is the pursuit of beautiful deeds, a concept generally understood to operate in a spiritual register or within the domain of interpersonal ethics, but which Khan seeks here to articulate in political terms. Khan's political theorization of *ihsan* is informed by a thorough exploration of the classical

sources and, fully understanding that *ihsan* represents an ethos rather than a political method, he proceeds to explicate principles of politics that, for instance, prioritize governance over government; define the *muhsin* (one who brings about *ihsan*) in light of citizenship, and propose a multifaceted conception of progressive liberation understood as *istihsan* (the process of bringing about *ihsan*). Rather than "the Islamic State," Khan advances the State of *Ihsan* as the embodiment of Islamic good governance.

What is most compelling to me about this approach is its insistence on rejecting didactic hegemonies both internal and external to Islam. It is not seeking to justify Islam in terms of political liberalism or, as with some of the more facile efforts, to confirm Islam's compatibility with democracy, pointing to a few Islamic terms (*shura*, *ijma'*) and declaring mission accomplished. At the same time, it strongly resists the idea that classical jurisprudence mandates a specific model of Islamic government whose contours are prescribed by Shari'ah. Rather, it is striving to lead Muslims away from dead ends within and outside their tradition, while offering a new political ethos that associates *ihsan* with the pursuit of ethical governance. Some may sense in his approach shades of an updated Islamization of Knowledge paradigm (à la Ismail Al-Faruqi) that posits a conventional

liberal policy discourse on good governance (transparency, accountability, equity) and “Islamizes” it by throwing in some religiously-inflected terminology. Such a reading would be unfair, however, as Khan clearly has broader normative horizons in mind. He is not looking to superficially “convert” existing domains of knowledge to Islam but rather inviting Muslims to consider fundamentally different sources of political ethics within their tradition.

Nonetheless, my questions and concerns about Khan’s *ihsan* paradigm arise from the fact that I am primarily a scholar of Islamic social and political movements and, more specifically, someone interested in how Islamic political thought gets translated into political action and activism. I am, therefore, naturally led to ask how we get from a political philosophy of *ihsan* to the political praxis of *ihsan*. To be fair, Khan is not entirely silent on this issue. *Islam and Good Governance*, particularly in its closing sections, does indeed describe aspects and qualities of practice for the *muhsin*: citizenship, legislation, and policymaking. Yet it is not entirely clear to me how one would transform *ihsan* the ethos into *ihsan* the political project. Conscious of the concept’s strong associations with Sufism, Khan is very clear that he is not suggesting all Muslims become Sufis in order to enable *ihsan*. He is clearly aware — and wary — of the sharply hierarchical and sometimes

authoritarian practices present within organized (rigidly *tariqat*) Sufism. So, then, what are the mechanisms through which *ihsan* politics become enacted or enter the world? Is this a story of how reflection and re-orientation at the individual level eventually scale to aggregate effect? Are there societal or political conditions that Khan sees as conducive to encouraging Muslims to recognize the possibilities inherent in *ihsan*? Are there concrete and specific examples that might illustrate to a broad constituency how embracing *ihsan* as the north star of Islamic politics can deliver tangible public good? *Islam and Good Governance* has a fascinating — but, I feel, ultimately underdeveloped — section on justice (pp. 222-226) in which Khan bemoans the gradual disappearance of an emphasis on justice (*‘adl*) as Sunni jurisprudence evolves through the medieval period. Given the centrality of socioeconomic and other forms of structural inequality in shaping domestic and global politics, I want to know more about how Khan’s paradigm would reconceptualize *‘adl* in our time. For instance, what does *ihsan* as praxis mean for Black American Muslims?

My hope is that *Islam and Good Governance* will generate many difficult but ultimately transformative discussions. This is a book that doesn’t just rock the boat but rather sends the ship back to dry-dock for a

fundamental overhaul. The challenge will lie in helping its would-be passengers to see a craft that is not only seaworthy but also capable of navigating the increasingly turbulent waters of humanity's near future.



Dr. Peter Mandaville is Professor of International Affairs in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. From 2015-2016 he served as Senior Adviser in the Secretary of State's Office of Religion & Global Affairs at the U.S. Department of State where he led that office's work on ISIS and sectarian conflict in the Middle East. He has also been a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and a Visiting Senior Fellow at the Pew Research Center. From 2011-12 he served as a member of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Policy Planning Staff where he helped to shape the U.S. response to the Arab Uprisings. He is the author of the books *Islam & Politics* (Third Edition, 2020) and *Transnational Muslim Politics:*

Reimagining the Umma (2001) as well as many journal articles, book chapters, and op-ed/commentary pieces in outlets such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic* and *Foreign Policy*. He has testified multiple times before the U.S. Congress on topics including political Islam and human rights in the Middle East. His research has been supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Henry Luce Foundation.

Islam and Good Governance:

A Political Economy Perspective



Amir Ullah Khan

Centre for Development Policy and Practice

Hyderabad, India

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.004.20

It is readily apparent to everyone that there are multiple and serious concerns that face Muslim societies today. Terrorism, civil strife, poverty, illiteracy, factionalism, gender injustices and poor healthcare are just a few of the challenges to governance across the Muslim world. These are core issues for governance and public administration in any form of government. However, before we can engage with good governance within the context of Islam, we need to be clear what mean by good governance itself. A simple definition of good governance is that of an institutionalised competency of administration and institution leading to efficient resource allocation and management³⁰. Another way of looking at it is as a system which is defined by the existence of efficient and accountable institutions³¹. Civil society now tends to look at good governance by

³⁰ Kraipornsak, P. (2018). Good governance and economic growth: An investigation of Thailand and selected Asian countries. *Eurasian Journal of Economics and Finance*, 6(1), 93-106.

³¹ Davis, T. J. (2017). Good governance as a foundation for sustainable human

way of impact measurement and how a certain set of processes result in a set of measurable and desirable outcomes.

Given these various contours of what is seen as good governance, there is a need to look for the Islamic definition of the same. How does Islam view the issue of governance and administration? It is in defining good governance from an Islamic perspective that the book *Islam and Good Governance* excels³². Khan, in the very beginning underlines his objective in writing this text. The purpose is to reinforce the foundations of love, compassion and mercy and to discourage the notions of divine justice that then descend into harsh, intolerant and distasteful institutions that almost always tend to negate the very purpose of a system based on the Quran and the Sunnah. The book is clear in its purpose,

development in sub-Saharan Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(3), 636-654.

³² Khan, M. a> Muqtedar (2019). *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*. Palgrave-Macmillan.

that of advancing a form of governance where love prevails over law, process over structure and where virtue rules over identity and ethics over politics.

But when we approach the matter from a political economy perspective, we are confronted with a very different set of challenges – cross border issues, trade wars, falling interest rates, an inexplicable rise in stock values, galloping inequalities and a stagnation in GDP growth that is fuelling unemployment and therefore a resentment among social groups. The twenty first century began with the internet bust, the euro crisis, the steep fall in oil prices and now the COVID 19 pandemic. Given these tumultuous development and their occurrence, at a frenetic pace. The Islamic world unfortunately has been caught in the vortex and is unfairly seen by many as the eye of the storm for many of the tragedies the world faces. In Muslim countries, already helpless populations face these staggering crises rather breathlessly. The political

administrations are repeatedly caught napping and are grossly unprepared, to put it mildly. Therefore a fresh look at what governance means and how it needs to be improved within the Islamic framework is essential, and Khan's *Islam and Good Governance*, is a worthy contribution to this cause.

An issue that is now challenging world peace and cooperation is the growing income inequality, in every country. While global inequality has historically been a product of differences between Europe and Asian income levels, it is the spectacular increase in intra-Asian inequality that has grown since the 1950s³³. This impacts the Muslim world both from the outside and the inside. While inequality within the Islamic world creates pressures on the economy, it also drives large scale migration from East and South Asia to West Asia and from the Middle East to the Western world. An political economic analysis of the violence and strife in the Middle East is missing. There is a need to explore how stark

³³ Modalsli, J. (2017). Decomposing global inequality. *Review of Income and Wealth*, 63(3), 445-463.

economic inequality between very rich countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia sharing borders with relatively poor nations could be triggering or at least impacting the conflicts in the region.

Europe blames its own civil strife on Muslim migrants while Muslim societies in various countries find the rich getting richer by the day. Khan goes beyond the mechanism of Zakat to addresses this issue.³⁴ It is Khan's vision that *Ihsan* as the defining feature of Islamic society, that emphasises love and self-effacement (*Fanaa*), cannot tolerate such huge differences in wealth, leading to acute deprivation on one hand and colossal incomes on the other. Khan underlines the importance of the *Muhsin* in the development of any society. *Muhsins* build a society's character and use that to develop fair and equitable policy. It is this character and its absence that could explain much of the economic woes seen across the West Asian and North African regions

The modern world is facing challenges from a new set of perplexing

and paradoxical views that emerge from the confluence of globalisation and nationalism across the entire planet. The heydays of globalisation that we saw in the twentieth century was built on the colonial structure of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Islamic world faced these international challenges rather helplessly over the last three hundred years and remained for the most part, a passive bystander. National boundaries were redrawn and international treaties and multilateral institutions came up almost always without any significant input from the Muslim world. In the era that began after the cold war, in the age of neoliberalism of market economies and global trade, Muslim nations watched from the galleries as governance systems changed and transformed themselves everywhere. Today as the world turns anti-global, once again the institutions that govern Muslim nations look on with no local or global contribution.

There has been very little scholarly work on markets and Islamic

³⁴ Bashir, A. H. M. (2018). Reducing poverty and income inequalities: Current approaches and Islamic

perspective. *Journal of King Abdulaziz University: Islamic Economics*, 31(1).

ethical governance. Choudhary and Malik have looked³⁵ at how welfare and development works in an Islamic society that is built on Quranic principles. Khan's book does not tackle economic issues directly and in its emphasis on how a society needs to be governed talks of the need for freedom and virtue to guide growth and equitable development. The book talks of how justice ought to be looked at in the framework of good governance and the importance of looking at the system of law and justice systemically. Justice, Khan argues, must be seen outside the confines of law and legal procedure. Such shackling of economic systems, under rigid and even arcane legal principles, leads to the kind of inequality we see in the world today. This is in totally opposition to the goals of an Islamic society that is based on freedom and equality.

The discussion on secularism is a major topic and Khan's book takes to sublime levels. This is the section where the book discusses what constitutes the

secular and why the Islamic world has abandoned modern secular governance. There is a tendency to see the secular as unIslamic or to see secular approaches as the reason for the appalling conditions of the poor and the marginalised. The secular model of governance, according to Khan suffered not so much because of structural and definitional issues but because of poor governance, high levels of corruption, poorly run economic institutions, large scale unemployment and an absence of freedom for the individual. These are antithetical to any economic system anywhere and Muslim countries were unable to tackle these basic issues and therefore hardened positions amongst some intellectuals against the secular idea itself.

What the book and its discussion therefore highlight is the need to look at how Islamic principles of *Ihsan* allow institutions to be developed that would pave the way for reaching the Millennium Development Goals or now the Sustainable Development Goals.

³⁵ Choudhury, M. A., & Malik, U. A. (2016). *The foundations of Islamic political economy*. Springer.

Both these frameworks have been used to measure the world's movement towards socio economic equality and justice. Muslim countries almost always are found lacking in the path towards these targets defined under the UN system. Very little work has been done on this aspect, except in Malaysia and in Indonesia.³⁶ The Islamic Development bank (IDB) also refers to these frameworks in some of its projects while helping Muslim countries reach those goals.³⁷ Khan's book will do well with a sequel that focuses on how to use the same concepts that he delineates with such lucidity in fostering justice and freedom in the Islamic world. The book is excellent in identifying "what to" but not very forthcoming on "how to". Even though Khan marshals resources from several disciplines, theology, philosophy,

³⁶ Suprayitno, E. (2019, October). Zakat and SDGs: The Impact of Zakat on Economic Growth, Consumption and Investment in Malaysia. In *2018 International Conference on Islamic Economics and Business (ICONIES 2018)*. Atlantis Press.

³⁷ Nafar, N. (2018). Affordable Housing Development and SDGs The Role of

mysticism, history, law, and jurisprudence, *Islam and Good Governance* is a project in political philosophy and not political economy.

The Islamic world's tryst with the rapidly declining standards of economic governance throughout the world will need to be re-examined through the same lens of *Ihsan* and good governance that Khan prescribes for political aspects. The rise of majoritarianism and of anti-migrant policies across the world emerge from narrow definitions of citizenship and nationalism. Islam and its mature understanding of the westernised world would enable a system to emerge that would negate much of the negativity that has emerged in a world that is now showing its dissent against globalisation. Roy³⁸, for

Islamic Finance.

³⁸ Roy, O. (2017). Globalized Islam: the search for a new Ummah. *Islamology*, 7(1), 11-40. Roy, O. (2017). Globalized Islam: the search for a new Ummah. *Islamology*, 7(1), 11-40.

example shows how the moderate and the western Muslim is reasserting Islamic principles to understand and tackle emerging conflicts in a post globalisation world. Sule et al³⁹ argue that globalisation emphasised the decline of cultural practises which Islamic nations resist and continue to fight against. In the absence of an *Ihsan* framework, this resistance could often turn violent and ungainly.

It is therefore imperative for the Muslim world to look afresh at the new realities of a world that is caught in geopolitical strife driven by harsh economic conflicts that emerge in competitive trade environments. The World Trade Organisation struggles as it tries to bring members together, who are forever looking at self-interest driven by political frameworks that have local constituencies that look suspiciously at various service sectors opening up to foreign workers. A technology driven interface brings strange parts of the world's supply chains together disrupting homegrown

and indigenous manufacturing hubs. Commodity exports that were the mainstay of most Islamic nations now are threatened by new and emerging issue of climate change, greenhouse impacts and environmental degradation. All these threats must be evaluated afresh and Khan's emphasis on *Ihsan* as the cornerstone of policy brings back the foundations that Islamic governance believed in and thrived on. The principles of *Ihsan* that Khan's book explains the need to be understood and applied to enable just and fair political outcomes that would then lead to greater economic growth that is sustainable and inclusive.

³⁹ Sule, B., Yahaya, M. A., & Ating, R. (2018). Globalisation and the Muslim Ummah: Issues, Challenges, and the

Ways Out. *IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies*, 1(1), 7-29.



Dr. Amir Ullah Khan has a PhD in Economics and Business Studies from the Jamia Millia University and is a Professor of Economic Policy at the MCRHRDI (Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute) of the Government of Telangana in Hyderabad, India. A former civil servant, Amir has worked at Project LARGE (Legal Adjustments and Reforms for Globalising the Economy)

of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India and the UNDP. He then worked with Encyclopaedia Britannica as executive director and editor after which he was Senior Fellow and Director at The India Development Foundation. He has been head of research and strategy at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Dr. Khan served as a member of the Board of Governors at the Presidency University, Bangalore. He is also a member in the Telangana Government's Commission of Inquiry on Socio-economic conditions of Muslims in the state. He has been Adjunct Professor of Business and Law at the Edith Cowan University. He teaches at the Indian School of Business and the NALSAR University of Law in Hyderabad.

**“God Commands You to Justice and Love”:
Islamic Spirituality and the Black-led Freedom Movement**



Omid Safi

Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
Duke University

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance
Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)
International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020
DOI: 10.47816/01.005.20

Cornel West, widely seen as one of the most prophetic intellectuals of our generation, has famously said:

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”

This teaching, bringing together love and justice, also serves as one that links together the highest aspirations of Islamic spirituality and governance (*Ihsan*) and justice (*‘adl*). Within the realm of Islamic thought, Muqtedar Khan has written a thoughtful volume recently on the social and political implications of the key concept in Islamic spirituality, *Ihsan*.⁴⁰ The present essay serves to bring together these two by taking a look at some of the main insights of the Black-led Freedom Movement for Islamic governance and spirituality.

Older models for the study of mysticism—and Sufism in the context of Islam—tended to relegate spirituality to the “private realm of personal experience.”⁴¹ More recent scholarship has tended to identify that characterization as a product of Protestant tradition, and instead insists that Sufism has always had a social, and even

political, dimension. This is true in the case of Naqshbandi Central Asian Sufis, South Asian Chishtis, Libyan Sanusis, Senegalese Tijanis, among others.⁴²

Many studies of the social and political dimensions of Islamic spirituality have tended to look at the “Middle” period of Islamic history, from the years 1100-1600 or so. Understandably, scholarship on modern Islamic thought has tended to prioritize studies of modernist, Salafi, as well as various reformist and puritanical schools of Islamic thought instead of the Sufi tradition. I want to push against that trend here, and examine the implications of the Black-led Freedom Movement in the 1960s in the United States for helping us imagine and re-imagine models of Islamic spirituality and governance.

⁴⁰ M.A. Muqtedar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

⁴¹ Omid Safi, “Bargaining with Baraka”, *Muslim World*.

⁴² See for example the works of Jo-Ann Gross, Bruce Lawrence, Vincent Cornell, Carl Ernst, Devin DeWeese, Rob Rozehnal, and others.

The connection between the Black-led Freedom Movement (more commonly known as the Civil Rights Movement) and Islam is not so far-fetched. Until 1970, the majority of Americans professing to be Muslim hailed from the Nation of Islam led by Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. It was only the passage of the 1965 immigration laws that made America's formal immigration law slightly less racist than the migration of Muslim doctors, engineers, and technocrats from Arab countries, South Asia, and Iran changed the demographic of the American Muslim population. Prior to this time, almost all the significant American Muslim figures such as Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and W. D. Muhammad were African-Americans who came out of the Black liberationist tradition of Nation of Islam.⁴³ Furthermore, iconic figures like Martin

⁴³ For up to date studies of Malcolm X, see Manning Marable's *Malcolm X: A life of Reinvention*; Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon*. For an overview of American Islam that centers the experience of African-American Muslims, see Julianne Hammer and Omid Safi, *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*.

⁴⁴ In his new volume, Muqtadar Khan re-centers Islamic governance on "the cosmology of *Ihsan* and the worldview

Luther King and Rosa Parks were deeply aware of Muslim figures like Malcolm X, and were constantly modulating their own stances in light of the more radical social justice stances of the Nation of Islam. While many people have looked at the centrality of love and nonviolence for the practice of the Civil Rights Movement, not many have sought to similarly center the teachings of *Ihsan* for the American Muslim experience.⁴⁴

The connection between love and spirituality in Islam goes back to the foundational passage in the Qur'an (16:90):

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Inna 'laha ya'miru bi 'l-adl wa 'l-ihsan

"Indeed, God commands you to Justice and Love."

The term translated here as Love is none other than *Ihsan*. The spiritual

of Al-Tasawwuf, the science of Islamic mysticism." See M.A. Muqtadar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*, 1-2. He has also explicitly called for American Muslims to adopt *Ihsan* and strive to become a community of Muhsins. M. A. Muqtadar Khan, "Live Life as if You have made Eye-Contact with God: Becoming a Virtuous Community," *Islamic Horizon*, (March/April, 2020), pp. 60-61.

background of the word *Ihsan* in Islamic thought goes back to the famed Hadith of Gabriel, which states:

أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ
يَرَاكَ

*Ihsan is that you worship God as if you see
Him*

*And if you don't see Him, remember that
He nevertheless sees you.*

[Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim]⁴⁵

The term *Ihsan* has been translated variously as “virtue” and “excellence.” It’s helpful to remember that the concept of *Ihsan* comes from the same Arabic triliteral root system (H-S-N) that means both Good and Beautiful. *Ihsan* is the very process of bringing goodness and beauty here and now and making them real. *Ihsan*, then, is nothing short of the *realization* of goodness and beauty.

In the Hadith of Gabriel quoted above, *Ihsan* is listed as the highest level of the spiritual path: first comes the actions related to the path, named as submitting of oneness to the spiritual path (such as testimony of Divine unity, prayer, fasting,

pilgrimage, charity). This is the level of *Islam*, that of a wholehearted and engaged surrender to the Divine will. Then comes *Iman* (faith), which is faith in God, the messengers, the scriptures, angels, predestination, and the day (of resurrection and judgement). Above both of these levels is *Ihsan*, which is a more subtle realm, not merely to do the prayers, not merely to worship God, and not merely to do so while having faith in God, but to do so as if one is witnessing (*mushahda*) God, and if not, to remember that one is always beheld by God.

While there are slight variations in the multiple versions of this famed Hadith, occasionally said to be the most important saying of the Prophet, in the version in the Sahih Muslim (one of two most influential Hadith collections in Sunni Islam), the order goes from *Islam* to *Iman* and ultimately to *Ihsan*. One can do the right religious deeds (including prayer) without faith having permeated one’s heart. This, in fact, seems to be the very insight mentioned in the Qur’an when a group of Arab nomads come to the Prophet asking him to bear witness that they have faith in God. The Prophet is commanded to say that while they have submitted themselves to God and are performing the right deeds (literally, that they are *islam-ing*), faith has

⁴⁵ <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/2/43> in the *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitab al-Iman, #37;

<https://sunnah.com/muslim/1/7> in the *Sahih Muslim* collection.

not yet taken root in their heart.

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا ۖ قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ
قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

[Qur'an 49:14]

The great Muslim poet and sage Rumi confirms this. In his *Fihi Ma Fihi*, he states that better than prayer is the soul of prayer, and better than prayer (key dimension of “Islam” above) is faith (“Iman”) since prayer takes place a few times a day, but faith is continuous; prayer can be stopped or even postponed, but faith is ongoing.⁴⁶

Ihsan is an even higher rank. *Ihsan* is about seeing God, and none other than God. *Ihsan* is also about transcending the ego to the point that one even if he does not see God, is conscious of being seen by God. It's for that reason the entire realm of Islamic spirituality is associated with *Ihsan*. As such, one can say that the whole realm of love, beauty, spirituality, and aesthetics have to do with *Ihsan*. In that sense, the entire domain of Islamic spirituality – also called the Sufi tradition but also goes beyond that to include many genres of Islamic poetry, music, philosophy, *Hikmat* (wisdom traditions), *Batini* (esoteric, often

traced to Ismai'ili teachings) dimensions, and Shi'i gnosis – is concerned with *Ihsan*.

This spiritual tradition took a special interest in the weak, the marginalized, the broken, and the suffering. The Sufis of the path of *Ihsan* were fond of quoting a Hadith *Qudsi* traced back to the Prophet Muhammad in which God whispered to him:

I am with those

whose hearts

*are broken.*⁴⁷

A Sufi no less prominent than Rumi identified the real chivalrous lovers as those who run down towards those who are hurting and suffering, as water would rush from the high and safe ground to the low ground.

A dragon was devouring a bear

A brave one

With heart of a lion

Heard the poor creature cry out

These are the brave ones:

Who tend to the lament of the oppressed

⁴⁶ Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Fihi Ma Fihi*, Chapter 8.

⁴⁷ Cited in Omid Safi, *Radical Love*, 223.

*Whenever they hear
 the heart's anguish of those oppressed
 They come running
 Like God's mercy
 These are the ones who hold up the
 world
 Healing diseases of the heart
 They are:
 Pure love
 Justice
 Mercy*

*Someone asked the brave soul
 Why did you come running
 When everyone ran away?*

*He said:
 I came
 because
 I heard his cry
 And saw his sorrow*

*Wherever there is pain
 The remedy runs towards it*

*Wherever there is lowliness
 The water flows towards it
 If you seek
 The water of mercy
 Go
 Become humble
 Drink the wine of mercy
 Become drunk like this
 Mercy upon mercy
 Will enfold you
 [Rumi, Masnavi, 2:1932 ff]*

For Rumi, this Radical Love ('*Ishq*) is like the waters of life itself, always flowing like mercy to those "at the bottom." This is the "pure love" that pours outward as justice, all mingled with mercy. As it has been said, when love pours outward it becomes justice, but when it moves inward, we recognize it as tenderness.⁴⁸

With that background, I would like to make a transition to a conversation about the Black-led Freedom Movement, that which commonly is referred to as the Civil Rights Movement. I write as both a student

⁴⁸ See my conversation with the late Vincent Harding on April 4, 2014, called "Riverside Now", on examining the ramifications of the Freedom Movement

for America's encounter with Muslims and Muslim-majority societies.

of the Movement and a participant in the ongoing struggle against what Dr. King referred to as the triple giant of evil: racism, materialism, and militarism. I was honored to be asked to [speak in the 50th annual commemoration of Dr. King's assassination](#) at the 2018 ceremony on the spot of his martyrdom, The National Civil Rights Museum at Lorraine Motel in Memphis, TN.

In 2019, I was invited back as the keynote speaker in the same ceremony.⁴⁹

My connection to the Black-led Freedom Movement has been immeasurably enriched by having a chance to be mentored by one of the giants of this movement, Vincent Harding. “Uncle Vincent” to all of us who knew and loved him—and love him still. It was Vincent Harding who wrote the first draft of Dr King’s most controversial speech, the “Beyond Vietnam” address in which Dr. King came out against the Vietnam War.⁵⁰ That speech, delivered at New York City’s Riverside Church on April 4th, 1967, came a year to the day before Martin Luther King was assassinated on the balcony of Room 306 in Lorraine Motel. The opposition to war, the positive insistence on a peace that mingles with

justice, the ongoing struggle for racial justice, as well as the

dismantling of the systems, structures, and institutions that inflict harm on weak and the vulnerable have never been separate from the concern for love.

Love, of course, had been the central leitmotif of Martin Luther King’s teachings. Dr. King was clear that love for him was not about mere sentimentality. In particular, Martin Luther King was fond of stating that love is not “emotional bosh”:

“And I say to you, I have also decided to stick to love. For I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. And I'm going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love, I'm talking about a strong, demanding love.

And I have seen too much

49

<https://www.facebook.com/NCRMuseum/videos/278256733085966>
[Go to 1:16:00]

50

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/beyond-vietnam>

hate. I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love."

Other giants of the Freedom Movement, like Rev. Jim Lawson, clearly connected love to nonviolence. For Lawson, who was a close reader of Gandhi, it was abundantly clear that if you love God, you love God's creation; and if you love God's creation, you would not and could not inflict violence on them. Love for Lawson and so many in the Freedom Movement led directly to a commitment to nonviolence. In Lawson's model of social transformation, there had to be a balance between tearing down old structures and building up new ones, and he urged his considerable following to remember that "we are merely in the prelude to revolution, the beginning, not the end, not even the middle."⁵¹

One of the lasting ways in which Jim Lawson left an indelible mark in bringing together love and social change was by impacting a group of young, Black, and committed university students. In 1960, this group of university students met at Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. The gathering was convened by the powerful Ella Baker, whose view of grassroots leadership stood in contrast to the top down model of Dr. King's own Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The chairperson of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in time would become none other than John Lewis. Martin Luther King spoke at that initial SNCC gathering, but the students were even more inspired by Jim Lawson's commitment linking together love, justice, and nonviolence. SNCC, whose members continued to push Martin to embrace more radical stances, came up with the following Statement of Purpose:

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian

⁵¹ James M. Lawson, Jr. "Eve of Non-violent Revolution?"

*tradition seeks a social order
of justice permeated by love.
Integration of human
endeavor represents the
crucial first step toward
such a society.*

*Through nonviolence,
courage displaces fear; love
transforms hate. Acceptance
dissipates prejudice; hope
ends despair. Peace
dominates war; faith
reconciles doubt. Mutual
regard cancels enmity.
Justice for all overthrows
injustice.*

*The redemptive community
supersedes systems of gross
social immorality. Love is
the central motif of
nonviolence.*

*Love is the force by which
God binds man to Himself
and man to man. Such love
goes to the extreme; it
remains loving and
forgiving even in the midst
of hostility. It matches the*

*capacity of evil to inflict
suffering with an even more
enduring capacity to absorb
evil, all the while persisting
in love. By appealing to
conscience and standing on
the moral nature of human
existence, nonviolence
nurtures the atmosphere in
which reconciliation and
justice become actual
possibilities.⁵²*

While the terminology of Judeo-Christian leaves out Muslims, there is so much to build upon. To begin with, it is the notion of love as not only a matter of faith, but one of action. The linking together of *iman* and *'amal* (practice) is a constant theme in Islamic thought. Martin Luther King, in particular, always reminded his followers that the goals we aspire to should be consistent with our means; that unjust means cannot be used to get to a just end.

Equally provocative for Muslims is the phrase in SNCC's statement about love:

Such love goes to the extreme

52

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pd>

[s/maai3/protest/text2/snccstatementofpurpose.pdf](http://maai3/protest/text2/snccstatementofpurpose.pdf)

This notion about love is deeply resonant for Muslims, who developed the teachings of '*Ishq* (*Eshq* in Persian) to mean love when it goes to extreme, *Hubb* (loving-kindness) or *Mahabba* when it exceeds all bounds. I have rendered '*Ishq* as Radical Love.⁵³ That definition goes back at least to the *Ikhwan al-Safa* (Brethren of Purity) and the philosopher al-Kindi (d. 870) who both defined '*Ishq* ("Radical Love") as *ifrat al-mahabba* (excess of loving-kindness). '*Ishq* is a love that goes too far, that goes beyond reason and rationality, and takes on a dangerous kind of unselfishness. Almost the entirety of the romantic poetry tradition in Islam, legendary tales like Layla and Majnun, Shirin and Khosrow, Yusuf and Zuleikha, deal with this theme of Radical Love. The Muslim devotees of '*Ishq* would have been fully at home with Martin Luther King and SNCC's ideas about a love that goes to the extreme.

But as Martin Luther King had described, '*Ishq* is not mere sentimentality. In fact, it is deeper and wider than human love. Rumi has a powerful poem in which he clearly comes to identify '*Ishq* as nothing less than the very being of God, unleashed upon this world. Radical Love is the Divine

⁵³ See Omid Safi, *Radical Love: Teachings from the Islamic Mystical Tradition*.

⁵⁴ See Omid Safi, *Radical Love*, 73-75.

outpouring that brings creation into being, that sustains us here, and if we can rise above our own ego and merge that with love, it will someday carry us back home.⁵⁴

In the radical love tradition, this '*Ishq* has to lead us to a passionate concern with and for our fellow human being. The South Asian 20th century mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan, the first known Sufi to have come to Europe and North America, stated: "The heart closed to humanity means the heart closed to God." Shaykh Sa'di, the sage of Shiraz, said:

*It's no great skill
to conquer the whole world*

*If you can
love someone.*⁵⁵

A female mystic, 'Aisha' bint Abu 'Uthman was asked about the need to show beautiful conduct towards humanity. She answered:

Whosoever loves the Artist

⁵⁵ Sa'di, *Golestan*, 590. Translation is from Omid Safi, *Radical Love*, 224.

*glorifies the art.*⁵⁶

Early Islamic texts on governance identified the goal as building what was referred to as the *al-Madinat al-Fadila*, the Virtuous City. This was the title of the famed text written by al-Farabi, who did much to harmonize Greek wisdom with prophetic dispensation. This City of Virtue is a city built on virtue, on *ihsan*, a piety and loveliness that swells up inside the hearts of humanity rather than being imposed from the above. In the parlance of the Black-led Freedom Movement, this community may be called the Beloved Community. And, of course, we cannot have the Beloved Community without having love. Love has to be the core of the Beloved Community.

Let us conclude with a story from the early Persian Sufi Kharaqani, whose life demonstrates the linkage of love and care for the most vulnerable amongst us, starting with those in our immediate community.

*Once there were two brothers, who lived
with their mother.*

*Every night one brother would devote
himself to serving the*

mother,

*whereas the other brother occupied himself
with worshipping*

God.

*One night the brother who worshiped God
had a dream, in
which he heard a voice from Beyond telling
him:*

*“We have forgiven your brother,
and for his sake, have forgiven you as
well.”*

*The brother said: “But I have occupied
myself with worshipping*

God,

*whereas he has occupied himself with
serving our mother.*

You are forgiving me for his sake?”

He heard the voice of God say:

*“That which you do for me, I have no need
for.*

⁵⁶ Cited in Al-Sulami, *Dhikr al-muta'abbidat al-sufiyyat*; Translation is from Omid Safi, *Radical Love*, 250.

*But your mother needs the service your
brother provides.”⁵⁷*

But your mother needs you.

Your brother needs you.

Your sister needs you.

The orphan needs you.

The homeless need you.

You need you.

The stranger needs you.

The refuge needs you.

Humanity needs you.

Nature needs you.

In conclusion, it might be helpful to talk about why this topic seemed relevant in this particular moment where the cry of Black Lives Matter is raised all over the world, and we have a mass movement of people demanding that the police not shoot and kill black folks.

In the last generation, we have had a significant number of scholars ranging from Sherman Jackson and Edward Curtis to Zareena Grewal, Sylvia Chan-Malik, and Julianne Hammer insist that the study of American Islam center the experience of Black Muslims—the community that until 1970 formed the majority of the American Muslim population and may still be the largest single group of American Muslims. Yet there has been a long debate about the extent to which the Black American Muslim community can generate its own normative and authoritative models of Islam without relying on Arab (usually Middle Eastern or North African) training and institutions. Some Black American scholars (most particularly Sherman Jackson) have tried to deal with the question of Black Suffering, but in order to articulate a “Normative” understanding of Islam that could withstand scrutiny, have stayed away from dealing with the Black-led Freedom Movement’s Christian roots, or the Sufi tradition, or Shi’ism, all of which have profound elements that deal with the questions of suffering.

I’d like to propose that the American Muslim community, highlighting the central role played by the Black Muslim community, can use the conversation about

⁵⁷ Kharaqani, quoted in Omid Safi, *Radical Love*, 244-245.

love and justice as a bridge to tap into both the deepest *Ihsan* dimension of Islam and the profound legacy of the Black-led Freedom Movement. Many veterans of the Civil Rights Movement from Cornel West to Rev. Barber and Harry Belafonte have reached out to Muslims during the last few years in an effort of solidarity with this community which has been (along with Hispanics, African Americans, and so many others) at the crosshairs of the Trump administration. Perhaps it's past time for American Muslims to also tap into the teachings and legacy of the Freedom Movement to return the favor, by connecting with the Love-and-Justice tradition that is equally at home in the prophetic dimension of Christianity and the *Ihsan* dimension of Islam.



Dr. Omid Safi is a scholar in the Sufi tradition of Radical Love & Founder of Illuminated Courses &

Tours. Omid is a professor at Duke University specializing in Islamic spirituality and contemporary thought. Omid is among the most frequently sought out Muslim public intellectuals in popular media, appearing in The New York Times, Newsweek, Washington Post, PBS, NPR, NBC, CNN, and other international media. His most recent book is Radical Love, which has been published by Yale University Press. He is currently teaching a course on Islamic Spirituality, focused on the mystical poetry of Rumi.

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

A Tragic Beauty?

Quakerism, Christian Tradition, and Secular Misconceptions:

A Christian's Thoughts on the Political Philosophy of Ihsan



Joseph Prud'homme

The Burton Family Chair in Religion, Politics and Culture

Director, The Institute for the Study of Religion, Politics and Culture

Washington College

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 10.47816/01.006.20

In his elegant and insightful book Muqtedar Khan admonishes Muslims to do beautiful things. It is an arresting call in a book itself beautiful in style, clarity, and boldness of vision for a better world. Professor Khan's quest for beauty in a specific Muslim context: the beauty that arises when actions are done with the inescapable sense that God sees all one does – or, *Ihsan*. But what exactly do the commands of God require of those who, knowing He is watching, set themselves the task of scrupulously doing His will?

Khan's claim is that God wishes that Muslims should act in what he sees as the best traditions of Sufi Islam. Khan also argues that a broad embrace of the best in Sufism can enable contemporary Islam to avoid on one hand excessive religious legalism, and on another the siren song of contemporary secularism, understood as the erosion of attachment to the central tenets of Islam itself. Hence, Khan writes: "the high road" of *Ihsan* repudiates "harshness, intolerance, compulsion and violence." Yet it also refuses to counsel an

⁵⁸ M.A. Muqtedar Khan, *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan* (New York: Palgrave, 2019), 2.

"abandonment of the faith at the level of [personal] agency."⁵⁸

Concretely, the path between legalism and secularism lies through the human heart. In Khan's rendering, *Ihsan* seeks "love over law, process over structure" and "virtue" over "self-assertion."⁵⁹ As such, a culture of *Ihsan* will "nurture compassion, mercy and love in societies."⁶⁰

Khan's task is to highlight that such a tradition exists within Islam, to revivify its adherence, and to encourage its adoption not simply as an individual spiritual goal but as a guide for political philosophy in Muslim-majority nations. To do so, Khan's work traces, in turn, "the loss of *Ihsan*" occasioned by the expansion of rigorist extremism; the adoption of an equally distorted conception of Islam reducing faith to an "identity" bereft of spiritual depth, a hollow self-definition serviceable mostly as a vehicle for political mobilization, and, in its concluding section, an exegesis of *Ihsan* that celebrates it not simply as a path to personal spiritual

⁵⁹ Khan, *Islam and Good Governance*, 1-2.

⁶⁰ Khan, *Islam and Good Governance*, 2.

purity – as many across Muslim history have – but as a blueprint for good governance in our contemporary, broken world. *Ihsan* as a political program can help to heal the wounded world in part by giving to states that “forcibly implement divine law” no sanction.⁶¹

Khan’s bold vision, I believe, can benefit from a comparative religious studies perspective. In this regard, I think it is helpful to note the similarities between Sufism in Islam and Quakerism in Christianity. Quakers also arose against both proponents of a legalistic view of the faith and those who were espousing a kind of de-Christianization, and thus a kind of secularization. Additionally, the Quaker endeavor aligns well with that of the great Sufi mystics: a religion of what they call “the inner light,” which ensures possession of religious truth while inspiring an ethic of loving service. Further, as with Khan’s proposal so too with Quakerism: the internal guide is not simply the soul’s sourcebook for spiritual strength but is a blueprint for social and political reform – a template for “good governance.”

⁶¹ Khan, *Islam and Good Governance*, 2.

Can we gain some insights from Quakerism as applicable to Khan’s important book? If we look at this question from the view of a friendly outsider to Islam, as I am, I think we can see in the history of Quakerism a trajectory which might beset Khan’s noble enterprise – and discomfit his beautiful project. I present, in what follows, a sincere measure of external advice.

The Pre-history of Quakerism: The Traditional Christian View

The main thrust of Christianity understood as a body of theological truths stakes its claim on individuals “called to freedom.”⁶² Indeed, properly grasped, freedom suffuses Christianity through the concepts of creation, covenant, and conscience. As to creation, only God is sacred--not the moons, planets, or states that populate the created order. Due to the centrality of creation, neither the world nor any entity within it is permanent or necessary, as the whole universe is the free act of the creator’s will. God, in

⁶² Galatians 5:13.

turn, values the free will of created men and women – individuals made in the image of his own creative nature.⁶³ Free choice also radiates from the biblical notion of covenant: God directly asks men to act freely as He Himself freely created. Indeed, does God through leaders like Joshua – “if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”⁶⁴ – not ask us to *choose*?

And this choice cannot be coerced. As Jesus relates, “The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, but it shall not be so among you.”⁶⁵ The highly influential Gregory of Nyssa relates Christ’s point as follows: “Some are saying that God if he wanted could by force bring even the disinclined to accept the message. But then where would free choice be? Where their virtue? Where their praise for having succeeded? To be brought around [by force] to the purpose of another’s will

belongs only to creatures without a soul or rational mind.”⁶⁶ Or, as Lactantius, theologian to the Emperor Constantine, asserts: “Nothing is as much based on free will as religion, which, if the mind of the worshipper is disinclined to it, is already blown away and becomes nothing.”⁶⁷

Lastly, as to conscience, each person is gifted with an innate recognition, beyond the compulsion of external forces, of what is right, and a command to follow it – what Paul speaks of as an inner law “bearing witness.”⁶⁸ These concepts shaped not only the early church but remained relevant, in an important sense, throughout Christendom. They are found, for example, in the writings of Aquinas, for whom conscience binds – even when one’s conscience leads to an objective error. This means, for Aquinas, that if there is something that in good conscience one believes one **cannot** do

⁶³ Genesis 1:27.

⁶⁴ Joshua 24:15.

⁶⁵ Luke 22:25.

⁶⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Great Catechism of 383*, section 1034 in William A. Jurgens, ed., *The Faith of the Early Fathers*

Volume 2 (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 49.

⁶⁷ Maijastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Toleration* (London: Duckworth, 2009) 46; Lactantius, *Institutes* 5.19.23.

⁶⁸ Romans 2:15.

– even were the Catholic Church to command it – one could not do it without committing a sin.⁶⁹ Godfrey of Fontaines, a master at the University of Paris in the decades following Aquinas, echoes this point: “One sins more gravely in violating one’s conscience – even if it is in error – than acting in accord with it.”⁷⁰ Even the most powerful pope of the High Middle Ages, Pope Innocent III, concurred stating that “whatever is done against one’s conscience leads to hell” – a statement affirmed at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.⁷¹

At the same time, personal freedom for the Christian is to be guided by divinely instituted authority. For Christ has not left his followers orphaned⁷² but has given them “the Spirit of truth” who “will guide into all

truth.”⁷³ For the vast majority of Christians before the Reformation, this great divine gift of authoritative guidance through the Holy Spirit is found in the apostles and their successors, with an emphasis either on Petrine succession or the collegium of bishops. In fact, even among the great medieval heresies we also see a similar respect for establishment. The Cathars, for instance, held to their own counter-hierarchy of senior teachers.⁷⁴ The idea of religious hierarchy survives even after the Reformation, as in Calvin’s vision of authoritative guidance supplied to the faithful by the leaders of a righteous and godly city (as in Calvin’s own Geneva).

Given what is seen as the divine gift of authoritative insight on the Christian message, the core Christian concept of conscience, which one must

⁶⁹

<https://aquinasonline.com/conscience/>

⁷⁰ Robert Louis Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 41.

⁷¹ Quoted in Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God*, 41.

⁷² John 14:18.

⁷³ John 16:13.

⁷⁴ Catharism by the early 13th Century developed what appeared to be a fully constituted counter-church, with a fairly well-organized structure both at the local and international level. See Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050-1250* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 345; and Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 161.

always be free to follow, has usually taken a particular hue. As Robert Lewis Wilken remarks, “appeal to conscience is not a simple allowance for private judgment,” but is rather an inner feeling of “obedience to the voice of God revealed in scripture and handed down” through established structures.⁷⁵ Hence, Aquinas, who as we saw says one’s good conscience must ultimately be followed, also declares that one’s conscience is most in a position to be good – and so most in the condition to issue binding judgment – only if the individual has “taken care to form your conscience as well as you can”; this for Christians means only if one has immersed oneself in the teachings of Bible and the traditions of the Church. Likewise, non-Christians must in their own way fully trust their conscience only if it is informed by an impartial reception to the best guidance individuals can acquire.

Indeed, in Catholicism, refusal to follow one’s conscience can lead to hell if one has received the divine teachings

flowing from *Ecclesia Mater* with an open mind. Eastern Orthodox theologians give voice to this long-standing view by maintaining that conscience, in its truest sense, is “the internalization of th[e] voice of Christ through the Church,” since in its fullest substance, conscience is “essentially ecclesiastical.” In turn, “Depending on the ecclesial degree reached by conscience, one can talk about a warranty that Christ truly speaks in the depths of our hearts.”⁷⁶

So, yes, the conscience is free and must be followed, but the faithful should shape their consciences in accord with the protective *tendance* of God-given religious authority. In fact, it bears emphasizing that the traditional view of religious elect sees it as a great gift of divine *caritas*. As a loving Father, the creator has deeded to his children the reality of good counsel – empowering them to avoid the misuse of personal freedom. Indeed, both the ease and the consequence of such misuse of liberty

⁷⁵ Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God*, 40.

⁷⁶ Teofan Mada, “Moral Conscience in Eastern Patristic Theology,”

International Journal of Orthodox Theology 5:2 (2014): 75-102, 85.

can be shattering, especially for those compellingly exposed to the Christian truth. For error abounds and can readily tempt the faithful into a poor discharge of their personal freedom. Hence, in the New Testament we read, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”⁷⁷ Also: “Know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”⁷⁸ Similar messages are found in First Timothy⁷⁹ and Second Peter.⁸⁰

Conscience, therefore, is free and must be heeded, but “stay awake!”⁸¹ and “if anyone has ears to hear, let them hear” the guidance God has gifted his followers through the blessing of religious authority.⁸² In addition, more often than not, in Christian thought the

state has been seen as a surrogate force for the true confession. To be sure, inherent in Christianity is the superiority of the church, however defined, to the political state – a stand, nonetheless, that does not counsel anarchism since as Paul instructs, the state when not hostile to the faith must be seen as a force for effecting the basic desires of God for his creation to sustain itself in peace and commodious order.⁸³

However, given the dangers facing believers owing to the seductive ease of error, it should strike one as unsurprising that a great tradition in Christian thought holds that if the state can assist the body of true believers, it is appropriate for the state to do so. Hence, although Locke could write in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, “He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things most remote and opposite, who mixes the two societies [of church and state],”⁸⁴ England remains to this day

⁷⁷ Matthew 7:15.

⁷⁸ Acts of the Apostles 20:29-31.

⁷⁹ 4:1-2.

⁸⁰ 3: 17.

⁸¹ Mark 13: 33.

⁸² Mark 4:25.

⁸³ Romans 13:1.

⁸⁴ John Locke, *First Letter Concerning Toleration*, (1689), 15, at [file:///C:/Users/WAC/Dropbox/Locke's %20first%20letter%20on%20Toleration .pdf](file:///C:/Users/WAC/Dropbox/Locke's%20first%20letter%20on%20Toleration.pdf)

quite “jumbled,” with guaranteed seats in the House of Lords for high-ranking Anglican bishops to ensure a Christian voice informs governmental affairs. Lutheranism, too, sought to embed itself by force of law, as did the Calvinists and their progeny. In the United States, while the federal government is prohibited from “laws respecting an establishment of religion,” state governments retained extensive powers with which they encouraged and protected religion at the state and local level until the Supreme Court in the post-World War II period imposed a strict and now effectively complete separation of church and state.⁸⁵

The Bold and Beautiful Move: Quakerism

Enter the Society of Religious Friends, soon called Quakers. Quakerism arose, in the mid-1600s in England, from a period presented with

some of the same challenges for which Khan identifies Sufism as a remedy. It also saw itself (and to some degree still does) as adopting a bold vision that allows the faith to be neither mired in legalism nor put away by the secular sandstorms of contemporary life. Specifically, Quakerism emerged during a time that Paul Lim has called “The Modern Challenge in England to the Trinity.”⁸⁶ In the England of the 1600s, writers such as John Biddle (often called “the Father of English Unitarianism”), Paul Best, and others were denying the truth of the trinity – a core Christian doctrine. In response, traditional believers were rigorously defending the doctrine and with a commitment to a severe form of religious enforcement (Biddle’s books were seized; Best was imprisoned). In this context, Quakerism was born: Quaker theology represented a way to save Trinitarianism while repudiating harsh religious legalism.

Indeed, punitive legalism has

⁸⁵ See David Sehat, *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and Jonathan Zimmerman, “Anti-Blasphemy Laws Have a History in America,” *WHYY, PBS*, 9 October 2012, at <https://whyy.org/articles/anti->

[blasphemy-laws-have-a-history-in-america/](https://whyy.org/articles/anti-blasphemy-laws-have-a-history-in-america/)

⁸⁶ Paul C. H. Lim, *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

found expression throughout extended periods of Christian history. Despite the theological thrust of the Christian faith, we can see demonstration of the fragility of religious freedom in the history of Christianity since at least the emperorship of Theodosius I (reigned 379-395). At times, complete religious liberty came to be thwarted by Christian states who saw their mission not merely as providing some measure of external support to the faithful but as sustaining the faith through excessively bitter enactments. Angelo Cardinal Scola has recently argued that the primary (but not exclusive)⁸⁷ source of Christian religious repression was the pain of Christian heresy: the wretched presence of those who, told by religious authority

⁸⁷ One can think of the statement of Emperor Justinian (reigned 527-65) that “since we strive by all means to enforce the civil laws, whose power God in His goodness has entrusted to us for the security of our subjects, how much more keenly should we endeavor to enforce the holy canons and the divine laws which have been framed for the salvation of our souls,” which could imply a harsh legalism toward those inside the Empire but outside orthodox faith (Justinian, *Corpus Iuris Civilis* III, *Novellae*, ed. R. Sholl and G. Kroll, 8th ed. Berlin: Weidmann, 1963, 695); think also of the Baltic Crusades of the 12th century which, though endorsed by the papacy on defensive grounds, embodied

they were in theological error, refused to give up either their understanding of Christian doctrine or their membership in a Christian state.⁸⁸ The distressing existence of those eschewing the gift of divine guidance – who remained always fallen men – would eventually unleash among the Christian faithful what R.I. Moore labelled the “persecuting society.”⁸⁹

In response both to a legacy of harsh legalism and to the rising threats to traditional Christian claims, as Sally Bruynell documents, the early Quakers maintained Trinitarianism but experienced the Trinity in a way that “freed themselves from the need for the conciliar traditions railed against” by the new ‘secular’ (as in non-orthodox)

in the Christian military orders a desire for the Christian conquest of pagans.

⁸⁸ *Vide* Cardinal Angelo Scola, *Let's Not Forget God: Freedom of Faith, Culture, and Politics*. Trans. Matthew Sherry. (New York: Image, 2014), p. 42. Many heretical groups, especially in the East, would migrate outside the Roman Empire's borders. See Canan Seyfeli, “Byzantine Paulicians: Beliefs and Practices,” *Journal of Religious Inquiries* 3, 1 (2020): 45-68, 53.

⁸⁹ R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

thinkers, including the legendary Thomas Hobbes. The Quakers “found a novel way of coming to terms with” core doctrines ultimately traceable to the Bible, such as the Trinity,⁹⁰ “by espousing the idea that the Spirit which inspired scripture was the very same one that dwelt within them,”⁹¹ and which through an “inner light” taught them the truth of the Holy Trinity. Authority is now, by the power of the inner Spirit, wholly within you,⁹² resulting in the Spirit-lit personal conscience.

In an additional bold and beautiful move, Quakerism came to assert that its vision of the pure religious conscience should serve as the blueprint for the organization and operation of

governmental power. As Mahendra Kumar remarks,

questions of State and politics are not non-religious matters for Quakers. They aim at combining membership of political community with the practice of Christian life. They believe that the State should be Christianized and that the State needs the message of the Gospel to fulfil its task rightly. Thus, the Quaker concept of a secular State differs from the modern concept in so far as the former is concerned with

⁹⁰ In the Gospel of Mathew the risen Jesus commands his disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” the traditional Trinitarian formula (Matthew 28:19).

⁹¹ R. Scott Spurlock, review of *Mystery Unveiled: The Crisis of the Trinity in Early Modern England*, (review no. 1411) at <https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1411>. See Sally Bruynel, *Margaret Fell and the End of Time: The Theology of the Mother of Quakerism* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010).

⁹² To be sure, in elements of early Lutheranism and in the so-called Radical Reformation attempts were made to announce a religiosity of the Bible without further authority, or even a religiosity of the personal conscience, wholly alone before God. But these movements tended over time either to ramify into exiguous factions that faded from history, or to reassert a claim to divinely sanctioned guidance. Wilken writes of how Reformation groups that refused external authority “fragmented” and became “scattered throughout,” having no “staying power.” Wilkens, *Liberty in the Things of God*, 102.

an attitude of tolerance towards all faiths and views religion to be the basis of the State while the latter adopts an attitude of total indifference towards religion.⁹³

In addition to state-funded and Christian-fueled social benevolence, for Quakers this means the state should provide no secondary or supportive service defending the one true faith. Kumar summarizes this aspect of Quaker theology as it relates to state power: a “very important conviction of Quakers about the nature of the State [became their] insistence that the machinery of the State is not to be used to impose *any sort* of religious orthodoxy” in the form of a state-

⁹³ Mahendra Kumar, “The Quaker Theory of State and Democracy,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 22, 1/2 (1961): 144-158, 147.

⁹⁴ Kumar, “The Quaker Theory of State and Democracy,” 146. Emphasis added. No doubt with Protestantism individuals could remove themselves from one Erastian state to another. And for denominations not backed by the state, such as Methodists and Baptists, it became easier to leave this conference or that convention, etc.; but when individuals or groups did so, most often

preferred confession or creed.⁹⁴ What is new in Quakerism is not that religious truths should not be forcibly imposed through coercion; although observed often in the breach, that inheres in the predominant interpretations of the Christian faith. No, what is (effectively)⁹⁵ new is the idea that the state should do nothing *of any sort* within its scope of power to protect and advance the true confession: no government messaging on behalf of Christian truth; no special tax benefits for the faithful, and no privileging of the faith in the education of the young – for the inward light alone can protect Christian truth.

Seen from the external perspective of religious studies, it is safe to say that Quakerism became popular because it kept faith with core Christian

the first task came to be a re-integration within or a re-creation of some authoritative and guiding structure, on what was hoped would be an improved basis.

⁹⁵ Little of course is genuinely new. Medieval Christianity would see occasional outbursts somewhat similar to Quakerism among, for example, the adherents of Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) or in certain later Franciscan groups.

tenets including the trinity but did so without deference to authoritative structures of any kind, relying only on the felt power of the inner spirit. In this way, Quakerism could present itself as avoiding legalism while keeping true to the deposit of faith.

The Power of Quakerism and its Tremendous Social Good

As is well known and amply documented,⁹⁶ Quakerism became a powerful ally for public good. Quakers were at the forefront of shaping a culture of financial savings and reinvestment of profits in lieu of luxurious living; they also spearheaded prison reform, anti-slavery activism, democratic reform, and women's rights (a long-held principle as one of their founding leaders was a woman, Margaret Fell, affectionately called the "Mother of Quakerism").

Core aspects of Quakerism impelled their social activism: the intrinsic egalitarianism of Christian

thought,⁹⁷ compounded by the radical egalitarianism of each individual as an equal soul bearing the inviolate inner light, and a complete freedom from compromising with political powers to secure their protection of a particular doctrine or canon. All of these propelled a bold and assertive self-confidence.

Here we can reflect briefly on the parallels between Quakerism and the political philosophy of *Ihsan* so brilliantly described by Khan. Both seek to chart a *via media* between secularism and rigid legalism; both affirm an inner illumination of the heart and the mind as a key to true faith; both seek to concretize these principles in public law, and both see the faith compelling adherents to great and noble causes of social reform and cultural improvement.

The Inner Light Eclipses Christian Truth

The inner light of the Society of Friends, however, could remain at once inviolate and orthodox only so long. By

⁹⁶ See Susan Sachs Goldman *Friends In Deed: The Story of Quaker Social Reform in America* (Highmark Press: Washington, D.C., 2012).

⁹⁷ For more see Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (Transaction: Piscataway, NJ, 2008).

the 19th Century, a major tumult wracked the Quaker community. The inner light came to teach that the trinity is a human construct. Such became the theology of the highly influential Quaker Elias Hicks. In the early 1820s, Hicks came to question the Triunity of God including the divinity of Jesus. Jesus, he held, was a “great pattern” for man, who can be called the son of God only because of his perfect obedience to the inner light within him; He was not God’s incarnate God in the orthodox sense.

In response to Hicks, many Quakers returned to the traditional Christian paradigm of constituting authoritative guidance for personal conscience. Some Quakers did so first by seeking a formalized binding creed and, second, by a policy of having Quaker elders conduct visitations to Quaker communities to ensure the inmost illumination was only to be obeyed when its deliverances proved consistent with traditional truth. In turn, many Quakers resented what they saw as fundamental breeches of the defining Quaker confidence in the individual inner light.

⁹⁸ Jessica Hubbard-Baily and Gabriel Cabrera, “We Don’t Need God?” *Quakers, Social Justice and Revolution*, 5 May 2018 at

So, schism erupted. And over time Hicksite Quakerism came to predominate. In fact, so powerful is the legacy of Hicks that social science research indicates that a great percentage of contemporary Quakers are not coherently describable as orthodox Christians at all. Indeed, according to a recent study, **“Atheists comprise a rising 14% of professed Quakers, while a full 43% feel ‘unable to profess a belief in God.’”**⁹⁸

Problems

What problems follow from the dynamic just described? First, from a Christian perspective, it is always disheartening and painful to witness apostasy. Second, this dynamic discloses the birth of a serious secular misconception about goodness and faithfulness. Hicks was an early abolitionist and a strong supporter of a range of noble social causes. To some extent, therefore, the virtue of abolitionism came in the popular mind to be co-mingled with unorthodoxy.

<https://kislingjeff.wordpress.com/2018/05/05/we-dont-need-god/>

Moreover, the Hicksite movement exercised a powerful influence on what at first were small groups, but which over time would rise to positions of great power – groups committed at once to social reform and to religious heterodoxy. Quakerism became an inspiring model for groups such as American Unitarians as well as Universalists and it had a generative influence on that most American of heresies, Transcendentalism. Walt Whitman, a paradigmatic Transcendentalist, was deeply impacted by Hicksianism. As Christina Davey remarks, “Whitman believed in the Inner Light. In 1890, he told Horace Traubel, who recorded Whitman's conversations from 1888 until the poet's death, that he subscribed to Hicks's views of spirituality.”⁹⁹

As to Unitarianism, although the movement arose at roughly the same

time as the first Quakers, Unitarianism fell into decline by the early 1800s along with its close cousin Deism. But the Unitarian movement by the 1830s was energized by the challenge of Transcendentalism. For “the Transcendentalists rejected everything formalistic, authoritarian, or doctrinaire in religion,” and Unitarian rationalism of the Deist sort had come to be defined in just these same terms. The Transcendentalists instead “preferred a first-hand experience of reality and the divine unmediated by church or clergy,” seeking in Emerson words, “a religion [of a] revelation to us.”¹⁰⁰ This new “revelation to us” led Transcendentalists to an unorthodox pantheistic spiritualism. Importantly, though, the spiritualism they adopted often had social reform as its cornerstone – a spiritualism of practical benevolence. We need look no further than Thoreau's

⁹⁹ Christina Davey, “Hicks, Elias (1748–1830)” in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*, J.R. LeMaster and Donald D. Kummings, eds (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998) at https://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/encyclopedia/entry_192.html.

¹⁰⁰ Barry M. Andrews, “[The Roots of Unitarian Universalist Spirituality in](#)

[New England Transcendentalism](#),” 1992 *Selected Essays*, Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, at <http://transcendentalistspirituality.com/roots-of-unitarian-universalist-spirituality-in-new-england-transcendentalism/>. Emerson, quoted from his essay *Nature*, which Andrews calls “The Transcendentalist manifesto.”

famous protests over the Fugitive Slave Act for evidence.

In response to the challenge Transcendentalism represented to Unitarians, Unitarianism sought to defend their conception of Christianity against the effectively non-Christian movement of Transcendentalism and its spiritual vision of mystical social benevolence. To do so, Unitarians doubled down on their own theology, one that saw divinity present in what Unitarian minister Barry Andrews calls “introspection ... necessarily wedded to social action.”¹⁰¹ Unitarianism began to claim that they too preached a message of the inner light, and that the spark of inner divinity flamed most warmly in the doing of societal good. Such a theology of worldly do-goodism, to the Unitarian mind, showed that one could be in their sense Christian and do beneficial works without adhering to the full repudiation of Christianity found in

Transcendentalism.

In turn, the success in doing good realized by Unitarians came to be seen as a challenge to some Christian movements that were initially more orthodox than Unitarianism – and especially by the “Social-Gospel” Protestants, who though formally adhering to the traditional faith, became so desirous of showing that their faith could be an agent of collective improvement that they over time collapsed the traditional faith into their sheer practice of doing social service.¹⁰²

In all, erosions of traditional Christianity – all colored with the doing of good works – became prominent in the spiritual landscape. This, consequently, gave rise to an unhelpful secular misconception: that one will have to choose between doing good or remaining true to the traditional faith. How did this emerge? While traditional Christian believers could well point to

¹⁰¹ Andrews, “[The Roots of Unitarian Universalist Spirituality in New England Transcendentalism](#).”

¹⁰² Did not key Social Gospel leader [Walter Rauschenbusch](#) say in the early 1900s that core tenets of the Christian faith are secondary, such as the reality of that paradise which Jesus promised the condemned man he would see that very

day (Luke 23:43)? Did Rauschenbusch not exclaim: “The kingdom of God is *not* a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life *on earth* into the harmony of heaven”? Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 65. Emphasis added.

how they themselves had done tremendous social benevolence (such as in Evangelical anti-slavery work, the expansion of female education, and advocacy for the rights of Indians), and although in many ways the unorthodox were themselves oddly counterproductive to the public good,¹⁰³ the fact is that the unorthodoxy of social welfare was at a decided advantage over traditional faith.

Indeed, traditionalism will always be at a disadvantage in such a contest. For it has to do *twice* the work of religions of social praxis: it both has to practice as well as defend the traditional faith *and* to do the social work that comes from a living faith. In

¹⁰³ Quakers, for example, had a pacifism that left frontier communities prey to Indian attacks, had an unwillingness to take oaths that meant that if they had needed testimony in court cases to convict violent disrupters of the public peace, they would often refuse to give it; and Transcendentalists at times could subvert social reform through their fascination with their own spiritual self-growth, so much so that one of its leading lights could say derisively of Christian poverty relief, “Are they *my* poor?” Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance.” Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ To be sure, global secularisms are diverse, and attempts have been made to cover a nature “red in tooth and claw”

comparison, this dual task was (and is) less pressing for those who put core beliefs behind the doing of good works – they can focus *only* on the doing of social good.

As a result of this entire unfolding, as mentioned, an ominous social misperception has come to light – a terrible disjunction: the doing of good *or* faithfulness. The “either/or” mentality in fact defines the apologetical challenge orthodox Christians face today. The faith’s primary and most effective opponents are not dour materialists with a reductive worldview, for their metaphysics is (to this author at least) unsuitable for human flourishing.¹⁰⁴ No, among the real

with a patina of grandeur and ennobling awe. See Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) and Alain de Botton, *Religion for Atheists: A Non-believers Guide to the Uses of Religion* (New York: Vintage, 2013). Whether these writers can overcome “the firm foundation of unyielding despair” to which so famous an unbeliever as Bertrand Russell was led by contemplation of man as “the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of

challenges are those who are content with vague spiritualisms but say Christianity is insufficiently committed to doing social good.¹⁰⁵ In fact, as the decline in Christianity recently has proven, atheism hasn't gained from Christianity's losses, but rather spiritualistic social welfarism.

The root of all this lies, to a very real degree, in Quakerism's bold and beautiful dream. A tragic beauty, indeed.

An Outsider's Friendly Advice

accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins"—seems, to this author at least, doubtful. Bertrand Russell, *A Free Man's Worship*, 1903 (Portland, ME: Thomas, Bird. Moher, 1923).

¹⁰⁵ The content of this social good also has become a challenge, no doubt. But this too is to be expected: unmoored to a traditional creed, why should a religion of social praxis remain committed to a traditional moral code?

The same fate that I described could also occur in Islam – absent, of course, a special protective grace. Sufi theology of the inner heart will, if centered in Islamic politics, achieve great deeds in the world. Yet, can it remain true to central Islamic teachings – especially as it enters the arena of contentious political and cultural debate? Will it once again be “lost” by experiencing its own Hicksian schisms?¹⁰⁶ If it were, then in response to more traditional Islamic criticism,

¹⁰⁶ To be sure, Quakerism and Sufism are not identical. (How could they be?) Sufism does not eschew all authoritative guidance, for segments within Sufism have long prized fraternal orders with strong spiritual leaders. Indeed, its focus on the tutelage of the spiritual master is so strong that it has been written of Sufism that “the disciple should be in the hands of the master ‘like a corpse in the hand of the washer’” (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism/Sufi-thought-and-practice>). To be sure, Sufism is internally diverse and has groupings which operate outside of hierarchical arrangements, and Professor Khan is drawing mostly on newer Sufi movements that eschew the strict *murshid/murid* hierarchy. In any case, the point is that there is little authority beyond the fraternal order, the pupil-master relationship, or the personal devotee. And here trouble might lurk.

these once-Islamic reformers might double down on the doing of good works to vindicate themselves through the fruits of their public benevolence. Further, it seems likely that other Muslim communities – inspired perhaps by the Qur'an's command "to compete in good works"¹⁰⁷ – will join the fray, seeking to exonerate their position through the immediate performance of noble deeds – even if unmoored to the disciplined thinking required in the Islamic tradition.

In turn, in the mind of the *ummah* could arise the misconception with which Christians now must contend: that to do good one has to decenter, or even eliminate, the faith of the fathers. In light of this possibility, let me end by offering my Muslim friends an outsider's friendly counsel. Aspire to the reforms Khan sets forward, by all means. But, in addition, make sure that reform is also seen to grow from a source more readily identifiable as within the more traditional views of the faith. Yes, the dual work of traditional piety and social benevolence is more laborious than the doing of good works alone. And, as Khan illustrates, it might

be especially hard to secure both when having to contend with a powerful legalistic ethos in substantial segments of contemporary Islam. But do not tire.

Anchor beauty also in the bedrock of more traditional faith so that the tragic beauty of a faith that has lost its way might either never become prominent or leave the core claims of the faith unscathed.



Joseph Prud'homme is an Associate professor of Political Science and the Director of the Institute for the Study of Religion, Politics, and Culture at Washington College. He received his doctorate from Princeton University, where he studied in the Interdepartmental Program in Political Philosophy, with additional

¹⁰⁷ 5:48.

specialization in legal and constitutional thought. He was awarded a Fellowship at Harvard University, where he studied at the Harvard Law School and served as a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Professor Prud'homme works in the areas of political philosophy, legal theory, intellectual history, and conceptual and historical approaches to the study of religion and political and cultural affairs. He has published numerous works in these fields,

including the books, *Religion and Politics in America from the Colonial Period to the Civil War*, *Curriculum and the Culture Wars: Debating the Bible's Place in Public Schools*, and the forthcoming book *State Religious Education and the State of Religious Life*. He directs a partnership between Washington College and the University of Oxford, and is a frequent guest lecturer nationally and internationally.

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

Islam and Good Governance:

An Annotated Bibliography



Mohammed Ayub Khan

Doctoral Candidate

McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Symposium on Islam and Good Governance

Muqtedar Khan (Ed.)

International Institute of Islamic Thought | October 2020

DOI: 47816/01.007.20

Abdelgafar, Basma. *Public Policy: Beyond Traditional Jurisprudence*. London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2018.

This work is an attempt to deploy the *maqasid* (higher objectives of Shariah) approach to public policy. It argues that public policy in Islam is a qualitatively distinct enterprise and should not be looked at only from the *fiqh* perspective. It is the author's contention that the *maqasid* approach can resolve many of the governance dilemmas which have been dogging the Muslim world throughout its history.

Afsaruddin, Asma (ed.). *Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

The diverse set of essays in this book address the "temporality" of Islamic notions of governance and cover both the pre-modern and modern periods. This book offers a comprehensive review of notions of governance from *Sunni, Shia, Mutazila*, and other sources. The chapters present new insights into the assumed relationship between theology and ideas on political authority in the writings of Muslim scholars.

Al-Ahsan, Abdullah, and Stephen Young (eds.). *Qur'anic Guidance for Good Governance: A Contemporary Perspective*. New York: Springer International, 2018.

This collection explores the principles of good governance deduced from the Holy Qur'an and their relevance to organizing of contemporary societies.

Alam, Muzaffar. *The Languages of Political Islam in India: 1200-1800*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004.

This book offers an analysis of political texts from Muslim-ruled India. The texts under study are of the *akhlaq* and *adab* genre which are generally classified under the "mirror of princes" literature. The author argues that there is a qualitative difference between them. The texts analyzed include Barani's *Fatawa-e-Jahandari*, Fakhr-i Mudabbir's *Adab al Harb*, and Hamadani's *Zakhirat ul Muluk*. In addition, the author also provides an overview of North Indian Sufis' visions of power. The author shows the creative tension

within Indian Islamic polities and demonstrates that they had much that was original about them.

Alvi, Sajida S. (ed.). *Advice on the Art of Governance: An Indo-Islamic Mirror for Princes* (Translation of Muḥammad Baqir Najm-i-Sanī's Maui'zah-I Jhangiri) Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

This work is a translation of a work on governance by a high-ranking Mughal noble of early seventeenth century. It provides a good introduction to the Mughal way of thinking on statecraft, justice, discipline, consultation as well as planning, and foreign policy. The translator's introduction provides a detailed thematic analysis of the Indo-Islamic Mirrors of Princes from thirteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Ardic, Nurullah. *Islam and the Politics of Secularism: The Caliphate and Middle East*. London: Routledge, 2017.

This book provides a historical description of the process of secularization in the Middle East in the nineteenth century. The author argues that the relationship between Islam and secularism was one of accommodation. He offers an in-depth analysis of Turkish modernists who deployed Islamic arguments in their quest to modernization of governing institutions.

Asad, Muhammad. *Principles of State and Government in Islam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

This book by the late scholar Muhammad Asad provides a contemporary approach to the relevance of Shariah to modern state building and statecraft. He contends that Shariah "is far more concise and very much smaller in volume than legal structure evolved through *fiqh* of various schools of Islamic thought." (p.12) He highlights the importance of *ijtihad* which allows for flexibility in the building of state institutions. He demonstrates that Shariah "does not prescribe any definite pattern to which an Islamic state must conform, nor does it elaborate in detail a constitutional theory." (p.22) He emphasizes the importance of consent and counsel in arriving at governing decisions.

Baali, Fuad. *Society, State, and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

This book offers a thorough analysis of ibn Khaldun's thought and convincingly demonstrates that he indeed laid the foundations of what came to be known as sociology (*ilm ul umran* in ibn Khaldun's words). Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are important from a governance perspective where Ibn Khaldun's thought on qualities of leadership, factors for the decline of the state, and the cyclical pattern of history are discussed in ample detail. Chapter 7 is an examination of urbanization and local governance (town planning, etc.) as expounded by ibn Khaldun.

Bennett, Clinton and Sarwar Alam (eds.). *Sufism, Pluralism and Democracy*. Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2017.

This volume brings together a range of scholarship on the involvement of Sufis in contemporary politics. The authors show that the prevailing notions of Sufis as apolitical are incorrect. This book makes an original contribution on the Sufi conceptions of power, state, democracy, and governance.

Boroujerdi, Mehrzad (ed.). *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017.

This collection of essays is an attempt to reinterpret and reassess the concepts of politics and governance in Islamic thought from Arab, Persian, South Asian, and Turkish traditions. The contributors demonstrate that there has been a great deal of diversity in Muslim thought over issues like the building blocks of an Islamic state, the meaning of public interest, and theory of government.

Diouf, Mamadou Seck (ed.). *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

This collection of essays emerged out of a conference at Columbia University in 2008. They offer original insights on Sufi engagement with political power in particular locales.

There is thorough discussion on the Senegalese social contract, dubbed the “Islam-Wolof model,” which is based on Sufi leaders mediating between their followers and the state.

Hashemi, Nader. *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This book challenges the assumption that Islam and liberal-democratic development are incompatible. It argues that an organic theory of Muslim secularism is possible and necessary for the development of liberal democracy in Muslim societies. The book offers a fresh democratic theory for Muslim societies.

Imamuddin, S. M. *Arab Muslim Administration*. Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1984.

This is an empirical study of administrative systems in Arab territories from 622-1258 CE. It provides a general overview of theories of administration and institutional change during the era.

Iqbal, Zafar, and Mervyn Lewis. *An Islamic Perspective on Governance*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2009.

The authors of this book apply the Islamic lens to important issues in public, economic, and corporate governance. They analyze theories of justice, taxation, budget deficits, accountability, and corruption. They bring together Islamic scholarly views on public welfare through the classification of spheres of liberties and violation. The authors bring to light the views of an eclectic mix of historical and contemporary Islamic scholars including al-Ghazali, ibn Rushd, al-Shatibi, Maududi, and the Pakistani theologian Tahir ul Qadri.

Khan, Muqtedar. *Islam and Good Governance: A Political Philosophy of Ihsan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

This book is a sophisticated analysis of good governance from the Islamic perspective. The author, using his expertise in both political science & Islamic studies, develops an Islamic political philosophy of governance grounded on *Ihsan*. *Ihsan* is defined as spiritual state which ‘privileges process over structure, deeds over identity, love over law and mercy and

forgiveness over retribution.’ The book calls for a rethinking of Islamic priorities and marks a shift from the structure oriented contemporary Islamist politics.

Kuru, Ahmet T. *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

This book is an attempt to understand the reasons behind authoritarianism and underdevelopment in Muslim countries. Moving away from essentialist arguments, the author traces a longer arc of decline marked by an alliance of conservative religious scholars and state officials. The author also demonstrates that the many of the models of governance in Muslim countries are based on national & cultural traditions and not on Qur’anic values.

Lambton, Ann K.S. *State and Government in Medieval Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

This volume is a study on the Muslim idea(s) of state as expounded by jurists from eighth to seventeenth centuries. It is limited to the central lands of the Caliphate, including Iran and North Africa. Some non-jurists, however, have been included because of their importance (like ibn Al Muqaffa and al-Jahiz).

Lakhani, M. Ali., Reza Shah-Kazemi, and Leonard Lewisohn. *The Sacred Foundations of Justice in Islam: The Teachings of ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalīb*. Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2006.

This book is a reflection on the teachings of Ali ibn Abi Talib on a variety of subjects, including governance. The authors argue that Ali ibn Abi Talib’s teachings called for “principled pluralism” in the realm of governance. It offers an enriching theoretical discussion related to governance.

Lo, Mbaye. *Political Islam, Justice and Governance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

This book is a study of contemporary Islamist movements and their conceptions of governance. He argues that modern Islamic parties failed to govern effectively because

they were not able to reconcile between individual freedoms and the literal ideas of justice. The book offers case studies from Egypt, Sudan, and Syria.

Malik, Maszlee. *Foundations of Islamic Governance: A Southeast Asian Perspective*. London: Routledge, 2018.

The author of this book introduces a prescriptive element to the issue of governance and Islam. He argues that Islam has much to offer to the contemporary world through the “micro-method” of producing “the homoislamicus” or the ideal Islamic person. He offers an expansive definition of good governance not limited to materialist components but encompassing a value-laden conception of humanity. He calls this “*ihساني* social capital.”

Mohamad, Maznah. *The Divine Bureaucracy and Disenchantment of Social Life: A Study of Bureaucratic Islam in Malaysia*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

This book is an empirical study of bureaucratic Islam in Malaysia. The author argues that the real agent of Islamization in the country is the bureaucracy which is advantageously situated and has divinity as well as sacrality attached to it.

Najem, Tom, and Martin Hetherington (eds.). *Good Governance in the Middle East Oil Monarchies*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2003.

This book studies the concept of good governance and how it is applied in the states of Gulf Cooperation Council. It argues that Western notions of good governance need to be modified in order to be effectively implemented in this region.

Riaz, Ali and C. Christine Fair (eds.). *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh*. London: Routledge, 2015.

This edited volume brings academics and journalists to examine the impact of Islamist politics on governance in Bangladesh. The authors argue that Islamist politics will

continue to have mass appeal in the country and charts how it has been impacting public policy over the years.

Rabi', Muhammad Mahmoud. *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967.

This book is an attempt to understand ibn Khaldun's political theory and its influences. Concepts like benevolence, force, etc., are discussed in adequate detail.

Rauf, Feisal Abdul. *Defining Islamic Statehood: Measuring and Indexing Contemporary Muslim States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

This book provides an analysis of the modern Islamic state applying a quantitative measurement of how Muslim majority nations meet the definition. It is a result of the author's engagement with a panel of *Sunni* and *Shia* scholars over seven years. The author deploys an innovative *maqasid* approach to score the Muslim countries on good governance.

Saeed, Abdullah (ed.). *Islamic Political Thought and Governance*. London: Routledge, 2011.

This three-volume collection of essays is concerned with the development of Islamic political thought and governance broadly defined. They cover an extensive period from pre-Islamic Arabia to contemporary times. *Shia*, *Sunni*, *Khariji*, *Mutazili*, and other groups' views are thoroughly analyzed. The importance of this work is further enhanced by the deployment of the gender lens on governance in the chapters by Michaelle Browers and Ziba Mir-Hosseini.

Santini, Ruth, Abel Polese and Rob Kevlihan (eds.). *Limited Statehood and Informal Governance in the Middle East and Africa*. London: Routledge, 2020.

This collection of essays is a study of hybrid forms of governance where the central state authority does not possess an exclusive monopoly of violence in Middle East and Africa. It redefines governance as inclusive of non-state actors.

Sherwani, Haroon Khan. *Mahmud Gawan's Political Thought and Administration*. Hyderabad, Deccan: Hyderabad Printing Works, 1937.

This book is a study of the fifteenth century Islamic scholar and Prime Minister Mahmud Gawan of the Bahmani kingdom of South India. Gawan is credited with improving bureaucratic and administrative practices in the region. This book is a close study of Gawan's *Kitab ul Insha* and charts out his influences in the quest for reform in a diverse polity.

Sherwani, Haroon. *Muslim Political Thought and Administration*. New Delhi: Mushiram Manoharlal Pub., 1981.

This neglected work, first published in 1941, provides a comprehensive view on Muslim political thought and administration. Sherwani provides an illustrative introduction by comparing Islamic thought with those of Confucius, Mencius, and Kautilya. He discusses the principles of order, peace and obedience, justice, social reform, toleration, and internationalism. He then provides a thorough overview of various Muslim scholars on governance and administration from ninth to fifteenth centuries. The scholars discussed include ibn Abir Rabi, al-Farabi, al-Mawardi, Amir Kaikaus, al-Ghazali, and Mahmud Gawan. This book presents in an accessible form the ideas of ibn Abir Rabi whose *Suluk ul Mamalik fi Tadbiril Mamalik* is “‘the earliest philosophical treatise’ by a Muslim in which are couched the principles of politics and administration.” (p.69) This book can be considered the first complete attempt on the topic in the English language.

Springborg, Robert (ed.). *Development Models in Muslim Contexts: Chinese, "Islamic" and Neo-Liberal Alternatives*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

This volume of collected essays offers a comparative analysis of competing models of development in the Muslim world. Special attention is paid to the Chinese model and how it can be recalibrated in Muslim majority countries. The authors point to the centrality of governance to development.

Stephens, Julia Anne. *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

This book is a study of the colonial roots of Islamic law as it is practiced in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. It provides a nuanced discussion on the struggle between Islam and secularism in everyday lives and how colonial laws fostered their entanglement. The book uses a diverse set of sources, including Islamic *fatwas* and court documents.

Tamadonfar, Mehran. *Islamic Law and Governance in Contemporary Iran: Transcending Islam for Social, Economic, and Political Order*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017.

Tamadonfar attempts to offer answers to questions about the nature of the Islamic state from the *Shia* tradition. He focuses on the four-decade-long experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the realm of governance. He argues that this model is in need of modification to be applicable to modern societies and that Islam provides doctrinal and practical instruments for transcending the restrictions of Shariah. He suggests that pragmatism is necessary for orderly management of societies.

Tripathi, Ram P. *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*. Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1992.

This book was first published in 1936 and emerged out of the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of London. This is a comprehensive treatment of the varying conceptions of sovereignty in the Muslim dynasties of India. The author provides original analysis of the relationship between the sultans of Delhi and the Caliphate. The author identifies the question of succession as a major weakness of these dynasties. The second part of the book is devoted to the office of the *wazir* along with the Muslim theories of taxation and administration as they were implemented in India.

Wahba, Wafa (tr.). *Al Mawardi's The Ordinances of Government*. Reading: Garnet, 2010.

This is a translation of the tenth century jurist al-Mawardi's seminal work *Al Ahkam Al Sultaniyya Wa'sal Wailayat al Diniyya*. This work is considered to be the most profound statement on Islamic political theory.

Walzer, Richard (tr.). *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State: Abu Nasr Al-Farabi's Mabadi Ara Ahl Al-Madina Alfadila*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

This book is a translation of al-Farabi's famous work, *The Virtuous City*. The translation is accessible and gives the reader a general understanding of al-Farabi's views on governance including the desirable qualities of rulers. The translation is useful despite some unsubstantiated claims of the translator like the enormity of Greek influence on al-Farabi.



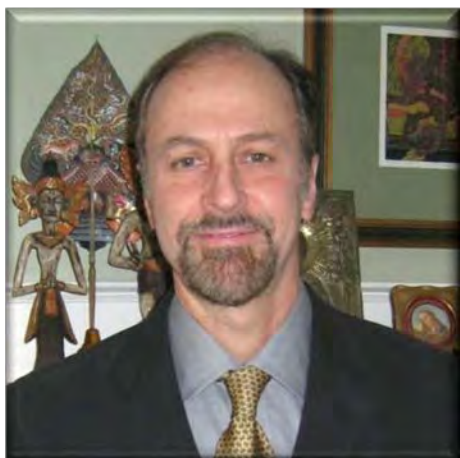
Mohammed Ayub Khan is a Toronto based researcher and public administration professional. He has worked at provincial and municipal levels of government and has vast experience of community engagement. He holds a BA in Political Science from York University (Toronto), MA from McMaster University (Hamilton), and is currently finishing his Phd.in Political Science. His academic research is focused on Muslim minority communities. His special areas of interest are waqf administration, affirmative action, social cohesion, and constitutional provisions for religious minorities. He has

published academic articles in Journal of Muslims Minority Affairs, Muslim World Book Review, Journal of Fraser Valley University, Sikh Studies, etc. His chapter on Global Muslim Demography was published this year in *Halal Food Production*. He is currently undertaking a project on studying the social infrastructure of Muslim communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

Mohammed Ayub Khan is involved with many community organizations and had served as the president of the American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin.

-----This page is intentionally left blank-----

Contributors Biographies



Robert W. Hefner is a professor in the Department of Anthropology and the Pardee School of Global Affairs at Boston University. From 1986-2017, he worked with the sociologist Peter L. Berger and served as director and/or associate director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) at Boston University. Hefner is a social theorist who specializes in the anthropology of religion, ethics and law (including shariah law), education and youth development, as well as the comparative study of gender, citizenship, globalization, and modernity. He

has directed some 24 major research projects and organized 19 international conferences, on issues ranging from Muslim politics and shariah law to citizenship and civic education in Western democratic societies. His research in recent years has had two thematic and areal foci: the politics and ethics of pluralist co-existence in the Muslim-majority world, including especially Indonesia and Malaysia; and, second, social recognition and citizenship among Catholics, Muslims, and secular-liberals in France and the United States. Hefner has published 21 edited or single-authored books, as well as seven major policy reports for the U.S. government and private foundations. Seven of his books have been translated into Indonesian and Malay; one has been published in Chinese. With the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, Hefner is currently (2019-2021) co-producing (with Zainal Abidin Bagir of Gadjah Mada University) six films on plurality, gender, and citizenship in Indonesia. He is also completing a book on Muslims, shariah law, and the quest for a modern Muslim ethics.



Dr. Asma Afsaruddin is Professor of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures in the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. She is the author and editor of seven books and has written over seventy journal articles and book chapters on topics as diverse as Islamic political thought, Qur'anic hermeneutics, Islamic approaches to war and peace, and gender. In 2015, her book *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought* (Oxford University

Press, 2013) won the World Book Prize from the Iranian Government and was a runner-up for the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Book prize in 2014. She has received research grants from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, the American Research Institute of Turkey, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, among others.

Professor Afsaruddin was the Kraemer Middle East Distinguished Scholar--Residence at the College of William and Mary in 2012. She is a past member of the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Religion and a current member of the Academic Council of the Prince al-Waleed Center for Muslim-Christian Relations at Georgetown University. She lectures widely in the US, Europe, and the Middle East and has served as an advisor to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the US State Department, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Woolf Institute at the University of Cambridge. In 2019, Afsaruddin was inducted into the Society of Scholars at Johns Hopkins University in recognition of her academic and professional achievements since receiving her PhD there in 1993.



Dr. Omid Safi is a scholar in the Sufi tradition of Radical Love & Founder of Illuminated Courses & Tours. Omid is a professor at Duke University specializing in Islamic spirituality and contemporary thought. Omid is among the most frequently sought out Muslim public intellectuals in popular media, appearing in The New York Times, Newsweek, Washington Post, PBS, NPR, NBC, CNN, and other international media. His most

recent book is Radical Love, which has been published by Yale University Press. He is currently teaching a course on Islamic Spirituality, focused on the mystical poetry of Rumi.



Dr. Amirullah Khan has a PhD in Economics and Business Studies from the Jamia Millia University and is a Professor of Economic Policy at the MCRHRDI (Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute) of the Government of Telangana in Hyderabad, India. A former civil servant, Amir has worked at Project LARGE (Legal Adjustments and Reforms for Globalising the Economy) of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India and the UNDP. He then worked with Encyclopedialike Britannica as executive director and editor which he was Senior

Fellow and Director at The India Development Foundation. He has been head of research and strategy at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Dr. Khan is currently a member of the Board of Governors at the Presidency University, Bangalore. He is also a member in the Telangana Government's Commission of Inquiry on Socio economic. He has been Adjunct Professor of Business and Law at the Edith Cowan University. He teaches at the Indian School of Business and the NALSAR University of Law in Hyderabad.



Dr. Peter Mandaville is Professor of International Affairs in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. From 2015-2016 he served as Senior Adviser in the Secretary of State's Office of Religion & Global Affairs at the U.S. Department of State where he led that office's work on ISIS and sectarian conflict in the Middle East. He has also been a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and a Visiting Senior Fellow at the Pew Research Center. From 2011-12 he served as a member of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Policy Planning Staff where he helped to shape the U.S. response to the Arab Uprisings. He is the author

of the books *Islam & Politics* (Third Edition, 2020) and *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (2001) as well as many journal articles, book chapters, and op-ed/commentary pieces in outlets such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic* and *Foreign Policy*. He has testified multiple times before the U.S. Congress on topics including political Islam and human rights in the Middle East. His research has been supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Henry Luce Foundation.



Joseph Prud'homme is an Associate professor of Political Science and the Director of the Institute for the Study of Religion, Politics, and Culture at Washington College. He received his doctorate from Princeton University, where he studied in the Interdepartmental Program in Political Philosophy, with additional specialization in legal and constitutional thought. He was awarded a Fellowship at Harvard University, where he

studied at the Harvard Law School and served as a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Professor Prud'homme works in the areas of political philosophy, legal theory, intellectual history, and conceptual and historical approaches to the study of religion and political and cultural affairs. He has published numerous works in these fields, including the books, *Religion and Politics in America from the Colonial Period to the Civil War*, *Curriculum and the Culture Wars: Debating the Bible's Place in Public Schools*, and the forthcoming book *State Religious Education and the State of Religious Life*. He directs a partnership between Washington College and the University of Oxford, and is a frequent guest lecturer nationally and internationally.

Graduate Student | Annotated Bibliography Writer



Mohammed Ayub Khan is a Toronto based researcher and public administration professional. He has worked at provincial and municipal levels of government and has vast experience of community engagement. He holds a BA in Political Science from York University (Toronto), MA from McMaster University (Hamilton), and is currently finishing his Phd.in Political Science. His academic research is focused on Muslim minority communities. His special areas of interest are waqf administration, affirmative action, social cohesion, and constitutional provisions for religious minorities. He has published academic articles in Journal of Muslims

Minority Affairs, Muslim World Book Review, Journal of Fraser Valley University, Sikh Studies, etc. His chapter on Global Muslim Demography was published this year in *Halal Food Production*. He is currently undertaking a project on studying the social infrastructure of Muslim communities in the Greater Toronto Area. Mohammed Ayub Khan is involved with many community organizations and had served as the president of the American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin.



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT

500 Grove St. Suite 200, Herndon, VA, 20170 USA
www.iiit.org | iiit@iiit.org



@IIITfriends



@iiit_insta



@IIITfriends



@IIITMedia