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**Recognising a Model of Postmodern Pluralism
through Looking at Islam from the Standpoint
of Far Eastern Traditions¹**

A Dialogue between Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism

Abstract

Being a Bosnian pioneer in the field of Eastern and comparative philosophy, the author of this essay on understanding is personally dedicated to the cultivation of a new spirit of philosophy that cuts across classical borders and opens its understanding of “universality” to a multitude of cultural and intellectual histories. Paving the way for establishing a platform for an Islamic-Hinduist-Buddhist-Confucian dialogue in the Balkans, while simultaneously joining hands with what has already been done in the meantime by other researchers in this field, and exploring Buddhist, Chinese and Islamic studies in the context of the persisting challenges that India, China, and the Islamic world face, he believes that the broadening of philosophical horizons in this regard will be an exciting experience and a cross-cultural exchange taking into account that dialogue between them is more than necessary today – especially when dialogue increases the effectiveness of listening as the basis for symbiotic coexistence. Also, this essay underlines the importance of a relation between the contemporary Islamic, Chinese, and Buddhist thought and civilisation, as well as the importance of Islamic works in the language of neo-Confucianism, and the rise of an intellectual current in China called Han Kitab and prominent Chinese-Muslim thinkers such as Liu Zhi, Ma Zhu, Wang Daiyu and others. The interaction between the Islamic, Hinduist and Buddhist thought is also stressed in the paper. Finally, the author summarises what he had learned from Tu Weiming, Sachiko Murata, S. H. Nasr and other prominent scholars about the unique blend of Buddhism and Confucianism in their relation with Islam, which has made up its appearance and development in India and China for over one millennium and especially from the seventeenth century onwards. Those acquainted with Islamic languages will find a wealth of terminology that will help bridge the gap between the included philosophical and theological traditions in their quest for global peace. Finally, intersecting worlds and identities, the author presents a common universe of the included discourses, which is today pushed aside by tunnel vision and short-sightedness, in these miserable times of unprecedented parochialism and narrow-mindedness, instead of keeping the matter in these academic tracks, which will inevitably stimulate true intercultural thinking and dialogue between civilisations in relation to globalisation and cultural pluralisation embodying the wisdom of our predecessors in philosophy and creating a world-wide symbiotic society for the 21st century.

Keywords

comparative and Islamic philosophy, commonalities between Islam and Buddhism, commonalities between Islam and Confucianism, Liu Zhi, *Han Kitab*

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“I have found it very hard to work in my way into the subject of India, although I have a great liking for it, but in this respect I stand quite alone in my time.”

Al-Bīrūnī²

I

At the very beginning of this paper, I would like to say a few words about its purpose, which is that of creating an atmosphere of understanding between the traditions that this paper considers to be a good example of how the spiritual values of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism could meet, and how one could try to explain, understand, and appreciate the Other, not only as a process of cultural synthesis which takes place only on the higher levels of society, but also amongst common people as the result of their social intercourse and our increasingly interdependent world. Dialogue between various cultures and traditions in the global world becomes a prerequisite for their survival and that of the world community. These traditions include not only the Abrahamic faiths that are central to the making of Europe, but also other types of theistic and non-theistic belief systems. In 2010, at least 80% of the world's population then counting 6.7 billion belonged to one of the four main religions of the world, and four out of five people on earth were Christian (32%), Muslim (23%), Hindu (14%) or Buddhist (12%). This is quite an obvious reason why dialogue and mutual understanding between them become increasingly significant world-wide, intensively moving to the foreground the necessity for dialogue and cross-cultural exchange based on mutual understanding and respect of all the numerous cultures representing modern humankind.

“Tolerance is necessary, but not sufficient. Dialogue is not a panacea either, but, unlike tolerance, at least it provides a prospect for development.”³

In other words, to become deeply rooted and durable in establishing dialogue as a two-way street.

Despite a historical tradition in Asian studies lacking in the region of Southeast Europe, it seems to me that we are *hic et nunc* good at developing our ability to establish constructive and effective dialogue as a form of relations between individuals, communities and groups of people, between nations, states and, more broadly, between cultures in a time of migrant crises of biblical proportions and related problems. Having in mind the above mentioned circumstances, this is an additional reason for joining hands, enhancing and deepening our cross-cultural understanding in this increasingly interdependent world. Also, I would like to draw attention to new developments in the region of Southeast Europe, and to demonstrate the well-established ties between our university departments – something that will be advantageous if we apply for funding more substantial collaboration projects in the very near future. Of course, this is just an essay in mutual understanding, a preliminary attempt, and an introduction to exchanges and discussions with scholars of different disciplines, and the following presentation attempts to contribute to a better understanding between the included traditions through philosophical dialogue and the development of comparative philosophising. It is based on the conviction that there is a dialogue between our European and Indian philosophical traditions, and the same is the case with Chinese, Japanese and Islamic traditions, and this speaks to a large extent in a European idiom,⁴ but

there is no substantial dialogue between them, or it is very rare (you can count the number of such studies on the fingers of two hands), and my aim in this dialogue is to be as inclusive as possible, with regard to both the Other and our own tradition.

It seems that there is no alternative to dialogue in the age of globalisation, and the very first thing that philosophy must relinquish is provincialism. This is explained brilliantly in the work of the Serbian philosopher Radomir Konstantinović.⁵ The more we side with our co-religionists and remain within our historical cultural sphere and spiritual horizons, the smaller, narrower, and more restricted this same world – exclusively our own – becomes, and this contrary to our expectations. Also, the more we rush into the unknown, towards the Other and other cultural spheres – not in order to run away from and forget ours, not in order to alienate ourselves from it, but in order to be able to love it and appreciate it more – the wider our world becomes, the clearer our sight becomes, and the more lively our spirit becomes, for “truth cannot contradict truth, it can only affirm it and witness it”, to use Ibn Rushd’s (Averroës) widely known words from his *Faṣl al-maqāl* (*Decisive Treatise*). So, why fear the Truth and the Other and the different, why shrink from such a meeting? It seems to me that our narrower and wider cultural community is ready for this kind of openness, mutuality, and agreement. Obviously, this is a cumulative process that will probably take a long time, and for which joining forces is vital. For instance, insisting on a study of the Islamic philosophical tradition alone without comparativism reflected in its being brought into association with the Western tradition, as well as the philosophical contributions of the East, would imply its losing its distinctive relevance and significance. In fact, we can see that the field of comparative research is wide open there, and that it is so new and so extensive that it induces a *certain vertigo*, to use Henry Corbin’s phrase.⁶ Moreover, comparative philosophy as a subject must be regarded as a major team effort. Our peoples will benefit from this attitude in their self-enrichment.

II

In addition, the need for a comparative method as here proposed necessarily entails a review of our comparative possibilities with regard to extending our objective knowledge of the sources of the Eastern philosophical traditions, given that the history of world philosophy can no longer ignore its Eastern component. The treatment of these Eastern traditions has yet to emerge from

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“Now such is the state of things in India, I have found it very hard to work in my way in the subject, although I have a great liking for it, in which respect I stand quite alone in my time [...]” *Alberuni’s India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, ed. by Edward C. Sachau, Vol. 1, London: Trübner & Co., 1888, p. 24.

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Mark Ratz, “Dialog v sovremenom mire”, *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 10/2004, p. 30.

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See Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, New York: State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1988, p. xiv.

5
See Radomir Konstantinović, *Filosofija palanke* [*Small Town Philosophy*], Beograd: Nolit, 1981.

6
See Henri Corbin, *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, trans. by Peter Russell, Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1995, p. 30.

the very cramped antechamber to which it is still confined, and this all too often.⁷ As Ben-Ami Scharfstein says in his *Philosophy East / Philosophy West*:

“[...] the effort we make to understand the others, who are so different from us, can help us to understand ourselves better.”⁸

Scharfstein also says that “contrast heightens visibility”⁹ and that “whenever we observe or think, we are in fact comparing, that is responding to similarities and differences”.¹⁰ He also says that “comparison is essential for perception and thought”,¹¹ realising that any attempt by someone to ignore or underestimate the worth of the other or to suppress its self-assertion will unavoidably damage the solidarity of the whole.

In fact, we have here rediscovered the secret of the European success, in which the whole idea of the European Union is based on the notion that you may be German and French, or Swedish and European, or British and German – all at the same time. The very notion of cultural homogeneity is a denial of reality, and the real standard of Europeanness lies in the answer to the following question: *What will make Europe more European?* Of course, the answer is a more cosmopolitan Europe, where national identity becomes decreasingly exclusive and increasingly inclusive on its path to creating a genuinely plural society. Things are exclusive from the very outset in the blinkered nature of the ethnic model of thinking, and I personally maintain that it is absolutely possible to be a Muslim and a democrat, just as it is possible, for instance, to be a socialist and a small businessman.¹² Actually, we have been learning this territorial ontology of identity with considerable difficulty on our path to Euro-Atlantic integration.

What follows are some of the questions that we need to ask ourselves with regard to the Islamic tradition itself:

- What constitutes today the warrant of substantiality and the value of the Islamic philosophical discourse in general?
- What is the standard mode of the Islamic philosophical discourse?
- What has become of those unfettered visions of life and reality that, even today, we can discern as pluralistic in the *The Charter of Medina*, or *The Charter of Yathrib* (Arabic: *Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah*, or *Mithāq al-Madīnah*), also known as *The Constitution of Medina*, or *The Constitution of Yathrib* (Arabic: *Dastūr al-Madīnah*), in its 63 articles drafted by Prophet Muhammad?
- Has the Islamic philosophical paradigm really lost its former vitality and vision, or how best are we to define today the theory of wisdom in contrast to the prevalent stagnation and tunnel vision of today’s world?

As we have been advancing into this new millennium, we need to learn how to reconcile new contradictions, not through polemic, which produces quarrels and disputes, and even leads to wars, but through a constructive dialogue with and a constructive engagement of Islamic philosophy, the only possible way to peace and the peaceful coexistence between peoples. By asking this, we are actually raising questions about the transformation of our Muslim identity and vision towards a global understanding of the human race and the world as a whole, Islam which is not confined to Abrahamic philosophical and religious traditions, but viewed as being in open dialogue without premeditated plans with regard to all world religions, and philosophies, Eastern and Western alike. The plurality of religious and philosophical traditions, as well as cultures, has come to characterise every part of the world today.¹³ *We are all multiculturalists now*, as the title of Nathan Glazer’s book claims.¹⁴ How-

ever, along the conflict over multiculturalism, what is pluralism? Here, we are faced with two interesting issues of multiple goals and multiple paths:

- How much diversity needs to be allowed for the state to be characterised by freedom?
- How much diversity is compatible with social cohesion?

Recognising a model of postmodern pluralism through looking at Islam from the standpoint of Far Eastern traditions here means that the *sine qua non* condition of our civilisation is the belief that the Truth is one, even if the wise describe it in rather different ways, and that it is not confined only to our Abrahamic philosophical and theological traditions, which is in accordance with a ground-breaking work in this field, namely *Deep Religious Pluralism* edited by David Ray Griffin,¹⁵ and which is based on the conviction that the philosophy articulated by Alfred North Whitehead encourages not only religious diversity, but also deep religious pluralism.

III

As for Islamic encounters with Indian philosophy and religion, Islam developed its own ways of approaching the Indian tradition and other phenomena pertaining to Indian religious life. In this regard, in applying the term and concept of philosophy cross-culturally and beyond the sphere in which it was created and originally used, in the reality of Indian-Muslim debates mentioning the greatest achievement in the history of the Islamic study of India is unavoidable. It is the description of India by one of the greatest scholars ever and devoted researcher of the Indian world, al-Bīrūnī (973–1048), and his amazing book *Tarīkh al-Hind* or *Kitāb al-Hind*, definitely the best manifestation of his scientific mind, an encyclopaedic work which contains much valuable information about various aspects of the Indian culture and civilisation, as well as a systematic study of the sources and a fundamental awareness of the hermeneutic obstacles in this task, with scholarly distance and objectivity, still authoritative in its English translation done by Edward C. Sachau,¹⁶ including its numerous reprints and editions. With its comparative method, al-Bīrūnī's work clearly reveals the scope of the work, the extent of the author's

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See Nevad Kahteran, *Komparativna filozofija* [*Comparative Philosophy*], Sarajevo: Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2009, p. 7.

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Ben-Ami Scharfstein (ed.), *Philosophy East / Philosophy West: A Critical Comparison of Indian, Chinese, Islamic, and European Philosophy*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, p. 7.

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Ibid., p. 29.

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Ibid., p. 28.

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Ibid., p. 29.

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See Nevad Kahteran, *Situating the Bosnian Paradigm: The Bosnian Experience of Multi-*

cultural Relations, New York: Global Scholarly Publications, 2008, p. 135.

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See Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-0229-4>, as well as the entire Kluwer book series on *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue*.

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Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1998.

15

David Ray Griffin (ed.), *Deep Religious Pluralism*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

vast knowledge, which is full of the independent spirit of philosophical and intercultural hermeneutical reflection. It is a presentation of the facts, a crystal clear description of a religion and philosophy which has been fully unknown and misinterpreted until his book, a pioneering work with its contents and methodology, including precise knowledge of Hindu sources and without a comparable precedent or preparation for his own research and his ideal of objective research in this early intercultural understanding and observations of this nature, which are totally unique to his own time. Actually, it seems that he adopted a method which presents all the rudiments of the modern principles of religious studies.

What can we learn from his methodological principles and the fundamental difficulties in his own undertaking beside antagonisms that exist between Hinduism, the philosophical systems of the Indians and Islam, being aware of these difficulties, otherness and hermeneutic distance? What is the common ground and what are the common denominators between Islam and Hinduism? How is this suggested comparative method, whatever it may be, applied to Hindu–Muslim relations? How does it contribute to our understanding of these relations? In this presentation, I can provide only a few brief hints regarding Indian diversity and the coexistence of these two traditions. However, as we all know, Islam itself penetrated India and established itself there over one millennium ago in an emerging plural society of India creating a new intercultural synthesis and a design of compatible pluralism. Actually, he sees the principle of monotheism, the idea of the One, Almighty God in the philosophical dimension of Hinduism using Sufism as a mediating element in his undertaking, and Sufis were the most important religious and philosophical meditators in India with an extremely important role in the process which represents a climax in the history of Hindu–Muslim reconciliations represented in the efforts of the Mogul emperor Akbar (d. 1605) and his great-grandson Dārā Shukūh. The Sufi idea of the “oneness of Being”, the supreme unity, was recognised as the “Great Secret” (*Sirr-i Akbar*) of the *Upanishads*. Dārā Shukūh, the son of the Mogul emperor Shāh Jahān, declared:

“The science of Sufism and the science of Vedāntas are one.”¹⁷

In the Hindu tradition, it is often referred to as the *Sanātana Dharma* (the ‘Perennial Law’ or the ‘Primordial Norm’).¹⁸

“Then Vidagdha Shākalya asked: ‘Who are these three and three hundred, three and three thousands?’ Yājñavalkya replied: ‘These are only the various powers’.”¹⁹

Or:

“There is one Truth, but the wise call it by different names as Agni, Yama and Mātariśvan.” (Rig-Veda, I.164.46)

Sages call the *One Reality* by many names, i.e., a unitary truth, underlying the many different paths, gives different Names and Personifications to the same One. In these teachings, “Personal” God corresponds to Being, and “Impersonal” (or “Supra-Personal”) God to Beyond-Being or Divine Essence,²⁰ so the “way of love” is thus a “bhaktic” way centred on Personal God, while the “way of knowledge” is a “jñānic” way that has in view Supra-Personal God or Divine Essence.

According to William Stoddart:

“Buddhism (with the expectation of some *Mahāyāna* currents) does not look on the world as a theophany, but as an exile; it does not look on it under its positive aspect of symbol or support, but under its negative aspect of corruption and temptation – and so of suffering (*duhkha*). It is

on this basis that Buddhism characteristically expresses a positive reality in negative terms: the intention is to underline the fact that *Nirvāna* (a negation of the negative) is Reality: absolute, infinite and perfect. In like manner, Ultimate Reality is also called *Shūnyatā* ('Void'), that is to say, it is empty of the ephemeral pseudo-plenitude of the world. Significantly, one of the titles of the Buddha is *Shūnyamūrti*, 'Manifestation of the Void'. This title is a clear indication of the Buddha's role as Logos or Avatāra."²¹

This is quite a sufficient reason for Stoddart and other perennial thinkers (Guénon, Pallis, Coomaraswamy and others) why the foregoing makes it clear why – regardless of whether Ultimate Reality is primarily viewed as a Supreme State (*Nirvāna*) or a Supreme Being (*Dharmakāya* or *Mahāvairochana*) – it is erroneous to call Buddhism "atheistic". This emerges as a standpoint from which a certain value and truth is assigned to Buddhism itself, or as that from which the horizon and context emerge in which they are supposed to be co-existing, reconcilable and accessible to comparative and harmonising studies.

As Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr points out, traditional Islam here refers to "those societal norms and institutions that [Muslims perceive] as congruent with or constituting older precedents and values, and as important if not essential to [their] identity", and which they believe that, in their totality and structure, entwine and envelope values, practices, and institutions – embody the truth of their faith and serve as a repository of its spirituality."²²

While browsing through a dictionary, it can be observed that 'henotheism' is sometimes confused with 'monolatry' (also called 'monolatry': belief in one supreme entity/being – beyond gender – that has "many faces" or different personality traits). Henotheism (from Greek 'ἕνας θεός', *henas theos*, *one god*) refers to religious systems that accept the existence of many gods, but worship one deity as supreme. A monolater or a henotheist is committed to one god, although he leaves room for other deities as well. Such belief systems can be found throughout human history and across the cultures of the world. This term was coined by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775–1854), and was later introduced to common usage by Max Müller (1823–1900).²³ In explaining this tendency, it has been said that "every god takes hold of the sceptre, and none keeps it".²⁴

Today, in both religion and philosophy, without all the possible meanings and translations of the word 'henotheism', we can say that henotheism is a super-structure of Hinduism, as well as Taoism. Actually, the henotheist position has an Oriental subtlety. It acknowledges the One God, but not numerically. All Deities are theophanies, Self-manifestations of the One God, who as such

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See footnote 1 in *Alberuni's India*. See also Fathullah Mujtabai, *Aspects of Hindu Muslim Cultural Relations*, New Delhi: National Book Bureau, 1978, p. 25.

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William Stoddart, *Outline of Hinduism*, Oakton, VA: The Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1993, p. 8.

18

See *ibid.*, p. 13.

19

Ibid., p. 26.

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See *ibid.*, p. 71.

21

Ibid., p. 27.

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See Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 6.

23

See "Henotheism", in: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade, New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1987, vol. VI, pp. 266–267.

24

T. M. P. Mahadevan, *Invitation to Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers (India), 1974, p. 17.

(in essence) remains hidden, nameless and unknowable. Nobody knows His Name, for the One God is All and nothing can move outside creation.

With using this term (very similar is ‘kathenotheism’ – the worship of one god at a time), we describe how the coexistence of many beliefs in one society twirls in the middle to form tolerance and acceptance. In the end, all are considered to be part of the One. Trying to wrap one’s mind around one all-encompassing entity can seem so grand in scope so that it is easier to focus on specific traits/energies/facets symbolised in a name. This is definitely not a religion. It is a religious descriptor, and can be applied wherever it fits. The Hindu faith is henotheistic. There are hundreds of Gods and people worship the ones they like, and Hinduism is a major example with its apparently polytheistic Vedic pantheon and consciousness that there is only one god whom we must pledge our allegiance to.

Let me now mention only two authors, from amongst many, two great proponents of a dialogue between Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, Fathullah Mujtabai and Reza Shah-Kazemi. We could of course add, at this point, at least two others.²⁵

a) In his book *Hindu Muslim Cultural Relations*,²⁶ Fathullah Mujtabai focuses on one of the greatest Indologists of all times – Abū Raihan Al-Bīrūnī (973–1048). This itinerant/travelling scholar got acquainted with the roots of Hindu culture and philosophy at a time when, outside India, almost nothing was known about the range and richness of its heritage. Al-Bīrūnī and others compared the Hindus with the Greeks and with their own Muslim tradition.

Mujtabai, who is an Indologist acquainted with the nuances of its cultural diversity and who has an admiration for the cultural heritage of India, analysed the major question of Hindu–Muslim cultural relations with clarity and scholarship in an emerging plural society of India, deeply convinced that the cultural pluralism of republican federal India strengthens the cause of the new humanist world order.

b) *Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism* by Reza Shah-Kazemi²⁷ is an important and pioneering book, which seeks to find common ground between the teachings of Islam and Buddhism, explaining some of the central principles of Buddhism in the light of Islamic spirituality, and creating a basis for a comparison and an analysis of the two traditions. The book itself is about the basis for tolerance in Islam and a dialogue with Buddhism, and includes writings by the Dalai Lama, Muhammad Hashim Kamali, Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Shaykh Hamza Yusuf alongside the main text, which is masterfully composed by Reza Shah-Kazemi.

This book has had the same kind of global effect between Muslims and Buddhists as has *A Common Word between Us and You* between Muslims and Christians.²⁸ The “Common Ground” project – despite all the doctrinal, theological, juridical, and other differences – is enhanced from the Islamic point of view, and this book represents serious scholarly effort at comparison between Buddhism and Islam, so we are now better equipped in our facing the challenge of exploring our commonalities with the teachings of the Buddha. What is crucial to mention here is the fact, suggested in the said book, that Buddhists may, from the Islamic point of view, be regarded as followers of a revealed scripture and, in accordance with this stance, as *Ahl al-Kitāb* (‘Fellow People of a Revealed Scripture’, implicitly, if not explicitly, as recipients of an authentic divine revelation, thanks to which the rights of Hindus and Bud-

dhists were sacrosanct). Having said this here, I would like to include myself as a proponent of this open interpretation of this term, because of Qur'anic supportive evidence for a more inclusive understanding of it, and the author's effort to extend its application to the followers of Buddhism is nothing but keeping in the tracks of this evidence without any reasonable doubt.

It is for this reason that both earnest attempts, Mujtabai's and Kazemi's, deserved to be translated into our local languages, and I have almost done it myself hoping that, in the very near future, these translations will help Muslims to see Buddhism as a true religion or *Dīn*, and Buddhists to see Islam as an authentic *Dharma*.²⁹ This is evidence for those from the Islamic tradition with an open heart to enter this dialogue without hesitation of any kind and premeditated plans (the key premise of dialogue), as well as to be as inclusive and pluralistic as possible regarding the Other and his/her own tradition. Moreover, it is definitely possible to discern a common ground between these two included traditions even beside the great obstacle in the Muslim-Buddhist dialogue with regard to the supposed "atheism" or even the "non-theism" of Buddhism,³⁰ although Buddhist beliefs are certainly close enough to the Islamic ones to be regarded as authentic guidance in a vision of universal and inter-religious harmony based on the spirit of the perennial wisdom of *Dīn al-ḥanīf*.

Unfortunately, the above mentioned concordance between the principle levels is betrayed in the so-called Islamic world by relegating Buddhism to idolatry. Moreover, even certain Islamic theological principles, including the Qur'anic repeated teaching that no human community has ever been deprived of revelation – and over ten per cent of global population belong to the community inaugurated by Buddha himself – are also betrayed. These are Kazemi's central contentions, and I am pretty certain that these themes, raised and discussed in his and Mujtabai's book, will lead to the advancement of a fruitful dialogue between Muslims and Buddhists, and Islam is definitely – even beside its U-turned version of today or, as Henri Corbin calls it, "*trahison des clercs*" (betrayal of the clerics)³¹ – a bridge between Asian truths hidden in the treasures of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Hinduism on one hand, and the truths in the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism and Christianity on the other. In our increasingly interdependent world, it is no longer possible to ignore the imperative of understanding, or to quote Kazemi's, "the Golden Rule [...] of the common bonds of universal kinship".³²

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See Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964; Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1963.

26

Fathullah Mujtabai, *Hindu Muslim Cultural Relations*, Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2007.

27

Reza Shah-Kazemi, *Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism: Spiritual and Ethical Affinities*, Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010.

28

See the following website: <http://www.acommonword.com/>.

29

See the following supportive Qur'anic verses in respect to what has been said: 87:19; 26:196; 35:25; 3: 184; 16:44; 54:52.

30

See the following website: <http://ammanmessage.com/>. According to Islamic teachings, there is a belief in Personal Divinity, God as the Judge, and in Buddhism the principle of *karma* is strictly impersonal (i.e., Supra-Personal Essence, or the manifestation of the Void).

31

H. Corbin, *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, p. 30.

32

R. S. Kazemi, *Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism*, p. 134.

In this way, the universalism of the Islamic model of thinking is incorporated, on an equal footing, into the world's philosophical heritage in the most beautiful form and with the fullness of academic expression. In addition, it is possible to draw comparisons between Far Eastern philosophical traditions in general, and Zen Buddhism and Sufism in particular, following in the footsteps of one of the giants of spirit, namely the late professor Toshihiko Izutsu³³ and his former students Yasushi Kosugi, Yasushi Tonaga, and many others not only from Japan. Their works demonstrate the very possibility of a deepest and most fruitful comparative study of Islamic and Far Eastern thought, and there is no doubt that the same types of comparative study of Islamic and Japanese schools of thought can be conducted. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, there are currents in Sufism which correspond to Zen and Shingon, others to Jodo-Shin and yet others to Japanese neo-Confucianism, and I hope that such extensive studies will be conducted in the future following in the footsteps of and following the pioneering work of Izutsu-sensei.³⁴

As for the relation between Islamic thought and Confucianism and neo-Confucianism, which is what the next section of my paper focuses on, it is a newly discovered continent which is now being studied in depth for the first time in European languages, especially by Sachiko Murata, William Chittick, Osman Bakar, Tu Weiming and others under the influence and indirect presence of Izutsu.³⁵

IV

As far as the great Chinese-Islamic encounter through philosophy and religion is concerned, I do hope that our paving the way for establishing *A Platform for Islamic-Confucian-Daoist Dialogue in the Balkans* will broaden the philosophical horizons in our region.³⁶ I have initiated this pioneering project with a view to introducing the most recent remarkable scholarship in philosophical studies of Chinese philosophy to the philosophical circles of the former Yugoslav countries with the purpose of exploring the ways in which the philosophical ideas and approaches from this region (such as Islamic philosophy) and those from the Chinese philosophical tradition can learn from each other and make joint contributions to a common philosophical enterprise. The focus is on the new frontiers of contemporary philosophical studies of Chinese philosophy, which has been summarised in collaborative work with Bo Mou³⁷ in a separate book with our own editorial, and a series of issues or topics of philosophical magnitude.³⁸

I would dare say that, with the publishing of these works and some important translations already done in this field, we have already joined in the collaborative work done by a growing international community of such distinguished scholars as Sayyed Hossein Nasr,³⁹ Osman Bakar,⁴⁰ Sachiko Murata,⁴¹ William Chittick,⁴² Tu Weiming,⁴³ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite,⁴⁴ Raphael Israeli⁴⁵ and others. There is no doubt that Chinese philosophy should be considered to be a possible resource in both the development of a philosophical theory on and the solution of the existing problems in the world, especially through the constructive engagement of Chinese and Western philosophy as a contemporary trend towards world philosophy through a series of significant movements of thought and philosophical currents in Chinese philosophy. I am grateful in this regard to a distinguished Harvard-Yenching professor, Tu Weiming, who invited me to spend a month at his newly established Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University in the summer of 2010, with a view

to gaining a fresh, systematic and comprehensive insight into interpreting and critically understanding the subject matters dealt with by such original Chinese Muslim authors and key scholars as Wang Daiyu (pioneer writer of Islamic values in Chinese who coloured Islam with Chinese terminology and Confucian terms, having thus demonstrated the Sinicisation or Confucianisation of Islam in China), Ma Zhu (a towering figure in Islamic studies), and a seventeenth-century master of this school, Liu Zhi, who sought to legitimise Islam in terms of the Confucian moral tenets and discourse as the culmina-

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See Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Structure of Oriental Philosophy: Collected Papers of the Eranos Conference*, 2 vols., Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008.; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984; *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu*, ed. by Sayyid Jalal Al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, Hideichi Matsu- bara, Takashi Iwami, and Akiro Matsumoto, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 1999; *Japanese Contribution to Islamic Studies: The Legacy of Toshihiko Izutsu Interpreted*, ed. and with an introduction by Anis Malik Thoha, Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2010; *Toshihiko Izutsu and the Philosophy of Word: In Search of the Spiritual Orient*, ed. by Eisuke Wakamatsu, trans. by Jean Connell Hoff, Tokyo: International House of Japan, 2014.

34

See Nevad Kahteran, “The Interview with Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr”, *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, Vol. 3 (2009), No. 1, p. 278. See also the entry on Izutsu, the most linguistically gifted of all modern Japanese philosophers and the very first world-renowned scholar of Islam to have appeared in Japan, in: *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. by James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2011, doi: <https://doi.org/10.21313/hawaii/9780824835521.001.0001>. Actually, Izutsu was one of the first to suggest that certain currents in Islamic thought can profitably be compared with the Chinese tradition (concerning this issue, see especially Izutsu’s book *Sufism and Taoism*), including the implications from Islamic and Japanese experiences as well.

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See Shigeru Kamada, Haruo Kobayashi, “Islamske studije (u Japanu): ka civilizacijskoj dubini” [Islamic Studies (in Japan): Towards a Depth of Civilisation], *Glasnik*, No. 7–8/2003, pp. 701–716.

36

See Nevad Kahteran (ed.), *Platforma za islamsko-konfucijansko-daoistički dijalog na Balkanu / A Platform for Islamic-Confucian-*

Daoist Dialogue in the Balkans, Sarajevo: Sedam, 2010.

37

Bo Mou is the editor of the *History of Chinese Philosophy* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009) and the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Comparative Philosophy* (<http://www.comparativephilosophy.org>).

38

See Nevad Kahteran, Bo Mou (eds.), *Nove granice kineske filozofije / New Frontiers of Chinese Philosophy*, Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2010.

39

See the website of the Seyyed Hossein Nasr Foundation at: <http://www.nasrfoundation.org/>.

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Regarding Osman Bakar, see the following websites: <http://www.osmanbakar.com/>, <http://www.worldwisdom.com/public/authors/Osman-Bakar.aspx>.

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Regarding Sachiko Murata (村田幸子), see the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/asianamerican/facultystaff/SachikoMurata.html>.

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Regarding William Chittick, see the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/asianamerican/facultystaff/William-Chittick.html>.

43

Regarding Tu Weiming (杜维明), see the following website: <http://tuweiming.net/>.

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Regarding Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, see the following website: <http://www.history.fas.nyu.edu/object/zvibenite>. He is also the author of *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2005.

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Regarding Raphael Israeli, see the following website: <http://www.acpr.org.il/people/risraeli.html>.

tion of authorship in the field of “Sinica Islamica” or the so-called *Han Kitab* (Chinese Muslim scholarship, Muslim Chinese body of knowledge, or the “Dao of Islam”,⁴⁶ the interconnectedness of the Chinese Muslim scholarly network, which was a process whose nature was striking for its interactivity and cooperativeness).

The growing interest in Chinese philosophy during the last 25 years has been a challenge to the received perceptions of what counts as philosophy and what does not; it is also an opportunity to make the contributions of numerous scholars of the East and the West who have been influenced by this philosophical tradition known even better. For too long, the philosophical traditions of the East, of which the Chinese is only one representative, have found themselves excluded from the mainstream of philosophy, channelled into the tributaries of general Asian intellectual history or shunted off into the backwaters of mystical and esoteric literature, and I am speaking about the pressure to redraw the borderlines of philosophy that hung over most of the twentieth century with respect to this. There seems to be little point in rehearsing the arguments for and against redefining philosophy. And this is only a small sample of newfound enthusiasm. Intellectuals in our region caught up in the events of recent years are well aware of these questions. This is important not only for the healing of the scars of fragmentation in our region that have left a generation of people longing for a restoration of so much of their heritage lost along the way, but also for the human community as a whole that look to this part of the world for inspiration and guidance in achieving multi-religious and multi-cultural peace, and within peace thus achieved, writing a new chapter in the history of world philosophy. In other words, in order to further stimulate intercultural thinking amongst the next generation of students, let me quote Zvi Ben-Dor Benite:

“The joining of the Balkans in the ongoing Islamic-Confucian dialogue is most significant and most exciting. The Balkans were always a major zone of engagement where Islam and other cultures and religions met, exchanged and contended. Balkan scholars, bringing in Balkan heritage and legacies, are best suited to bring in new insights, new angles, and fresh perspectives. It is exciting to think that a major Muslim community from what was once the westernmost Islamic frontier is joining a dialogue begun by an Islamic community from the easternmost Islamic frontier. These volumes should, therefore, be seen as just the beginning of a new phase in this ongoing dialogue. And a most promising one.”⁴⁷

This paper tries to answer some of these questions and to offer a vista of the world of Chinese Muslim literati who produced the primary source material of their educational network, i.e., *Han Kitab*, a collection of over hundred texts of canonical status, the basic curriculum of the Chinese Muslim learned community and their education.⁴⁸ This corpus lies in the essence of the Chinese form of Islamic knowledge, the rise of an intellectual current in China, which was achieved through successful “Sinicisation” and accommodation. As far as this rise and development are concerned, there are several valuable contributions in book form, of which I would here like to mention such ground-breaking works as Osman Bakar’s editorial in *Islam and Confucianism*,⁴⁹ *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi* by Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick, and Tu Weiming,⁵⁰ as well as two masterpieces and landmark studies in comparative philosophy written by Sachiko Murata herself, *The Tao of Islam*⁵¹ and *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*.⁵²

Osman Bakar’s editorial in *Islam and Confucianism* is about a comparative study of Islam and Confucianism, and centres on issues of cultural and civilisational dialogue between these two religions. I have already translated it into our local languages, alluding to the possible major changes that have

been taking place during the second decade of the 21st century in the wake of the emergence of China as an economic superpower. I have done it in cooperation with Osman Bakar for all of us who are concerned with the promotion and advancement of intercultural dialogue in general and between Islam and Confucianism in particular, as the fruit of a historic seminar which Bakar helped to initiate and organise at the University of Malaya in 1995. It is our hope that this translation will help to generate new interest with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other former Yugoslav countries in the comparative study of Islam and Confucianism in their own quest for a new Asia and points of convergence, recognising religious pluralism and multiculturalism, and recognising that there is an urgent need for sharable common values and arguments for pluralism vs. exclusivism, especially amongst our academic and scholarly community. Personally, I agree with its contributors that “the most basic and the most intractable problem that stands in the way of understanding the first principles of Chinese civilization is not ignorance of China, but ignorance of the riches of the Islamic intellectual heritage”.⁵³ Or, as Chung-ying Cheng points out:

“We need to ponder whether Confucian culture and Islamic culture could indeed form a union, on the one hand to meet the challenges of Western domination and on the other to foster a greater mutual understanding, thereby presenting a model of postmodern pluralistic form of intercultural and international life.”⁵⁴

This is the suggested shift of transformation from localism to globalism and vice versa, and the very *raison d'être* why an open dialogue between these two traditions is imperative, an imperative for their better understanding, and why they can no longer stand aside from being involved in a dialogue of this kind. In fact, the interaction between Western, Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian/Daoist thought formed civilisation. Islamic thought had contacts with their intellectual dimensions, but contrary to the case of China, Muslim scholars did not use Sanskrit (if we here exclude al-Bīrūnī).

The huge volume of *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi* summarises the unique blend of Confucianism and Islam that appeared in China in the seventeenth century and above all in Liu Zhi's *Tianfang Trilogy*, which is a profound interpenetration of the Confucian and Islamic traditions without any syncretism.

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See Z. B.-D. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, p. 161.

47

Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “Afterword”, in: N. Kahteran, *Platforma za islamsko-konfucijansko-daoistički dijalog na Balkanu / A Platform for Islamic-Confucian-Daoist Dialogue in the Balkans*, p. 144.

48

See Z. B.-D. Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, p. 5.

49

Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue, ed. by Osman Bakar and Cheng Gek-Nai, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1997.

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Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick, Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic*

Thought in Confucian Terms, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2009.

51

Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992.

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Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yü's "Great Learning of the Pure and Real" and Liu Chih's "Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm"*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000.

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Islam and Confucianism, p. 38.

54

Ibid., p. 121.

According to Murata,⁵⁵ Liu Zhi explains that the three books together form some kind of unity. *Tianfang xingli* clarifies the Way (*dao*), *Tianfang dianli* explains the teaching (*jiao*), and *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* exposes the profound origin of the teaching and the Way, which refers to the embodiment of both the teaching and the Way in Muhammad. Those familiar with Islamic languages will find in this work a wealth of terminology that, according to Murata,⁵⁶ will help to bridge the gap between the Islamic and the Confucian conceptual universes.⁵⁷ Taking into account that, in recent years, academic interest in Islam's long history in China and its interaction with Chinese culture and civilisation has increased, the study of Islam and Muslims in China has to be promoted from a cross-disciplinary perspective with a view to making sure that the interlinking of the included traditions be very helpful to interested scholars in this field,⁵⁸ taking into account that their collection of *Han Kitab* is the product of a remarkable, centuries-long period of intense intellectual interaction between Islam and Confucianism. This is the very reason why Tu Weiming is convinced that it is a major contribution to neo-Confucian thought from a comparative philosophical perspective.⁵⁹ Actually, according to Tu Weiming,⁶⁰ Liu Zhi, as a great completion or the "Great Completer" of the Chinese Muslim tradition, takes for granted the existence of an Islamic-Confucian simultaneity and synchronicity, and was deeply convinced that Confucius, Mencius, the neo-Confucian masters, and the Sufi thinkers were fellow seekers of Truth and Reality. Although he preferred to underscore this commonality, he was not at all blind to the differences. To him, Islam and Confucianism share the same faith in human flourishing, and it seems that Chinese Muslims were at the overlapping centre of Islam and China.

Their self-understanding can be recognised in their view that they fully inhabit two worlds; they feel at home in both the Islamic and the Chinese worlds, which can be compared to our own situation as S. H. Nasr points out:

"Bosnia lies at the heart of the European continent, at once witness to the reality of Islam, a bridge between the Islamic world and the West, and for most of its history a living example of religious accord and harmony between the followers of the Abrahamic religions. Today, in a world so much in need of mutual religious and cultural understanding, Bosnia can play an important role far beyond the extent of its geographic size or population, provided it remains faithful to its own universal vision of Islam threatened nowadays by forces both within and outside its borders."⁶¹

The question is crystal clear: Will we focus on our differences, or on what we have in common? Hence, supporting the Bosnian model and paradigm is not a matter of choice, but a question which either makes or breaks the picture of the modern world, reinforcing or weakening our trust in the unity of this world.

Instead of concluding remarks

The universalist perspective of the Sufis in India and of *Han Kitab* authors has helped me to avoid falling prey to any of today's prevailing "philosophies of the herd" in Bosnia and the region, i.e., to parochial philosophy and narrow-mindedness, tunnel visions and intellectual myopia, the morass of "small town philosophy" (Konstantinović), which are unfortunately present in Bosnia at a time when it is most essential to affirm the said universalist perspective of our original impulses of not only the Abrahamic traditions, but also all the world religions and philosophy in our redefining philosophy.

In this regard, I follow the seminal works of the mentioned authors who developed a more nuanced approach to the study of the included philosophical

and religious traditions. They have provided scholarly network mechanisms and strategies, through which the interpretation of their traditions and the complexity of their interaction would not be lost in our own deliberations, establishing and widening our own networks in this regard. It is not a U-turned version of Islam which we have been witnesses of today, but an identity that was lived, preserved, and developed through scholarship, perceiving Islam as comparable with and supplementary to Eastern and Far Eastern traditions, and as both encompassed by and encompassing those traditions. These authors viewed themselves as central to both worlds, were at the overlapping centre of Islam and other traditions, and were not in the state of being the “other” or a “minority”. Dialogue and exchange were, of course, not just concepts floating in the air, and this “dialogue of civilisations” or “ecumenical vision” is part of their own personality and perspective, holding an inexhaustible potential for exploration by scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Those acquainted with these issues will find a wealth of possibilities that will help to bridge that gap between the Islamic and Zen Buddhist conceptual universes, which we have just tackled thanks to Toshihiko Izutsu and his former students.⁶² Last but not least, I do hope that such conferences as the *Comparative Perspectives: Islam, Confucianism and Buddhism*⁶³ conference will undoubtedly initiate new research projects and interpretations in the comparative study of the religions and philosophies of all the traditions included in this paper.

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S. Murata, W. C. Chittick, T. Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, p. 8.

56

Ibid., p. 18.

57

See Bo Mou (ed.), *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy*, Hants, Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2003, a book which offers a refined introduction to the further reaches of Chinese philosophy in a comparativist context; Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1996, for *Hui hui*, *Hui jiao* and the ethnonym *Hui nationality (Hui minzu)* studying Hui and Uighar ethno-religious groups, and compiling a selected glossary of Hui Chinese Islamic terms; and Jianping Wang, *Glossary of Chinese Islamic Terms*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001 (it is from amongst the Hui hui, Muslim peoples, that this glossary draws most of its Islamic terms).

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See the website of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) at: <http://eurasia.nias.ku.dk/IsIaminChina/>.

59

See S. Murata, W. C. Chittick, T. Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi*, p. 598.

60

Ibid., pp. 600–601.

61

N. Kahteran, *Situating the Bosnian Paradigm*, p. 1.

62

See David Buchman, “Shingon budizam i islam: sličnosti u pojmovima postojanja i svrhe ljudskog stanja” [Shingon Buddhism and Islam: Similar Notions of Existence and the Goal of Being Human], trans. by Nevad Kahteran, *Odjek*, fall 2007, pp. 125–132, and the original text: David Buchman, “Shingon Buddhism and Islam at: Similar Notions of Existence and the Goal of Being Human”, http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/english/Paper%20Bank/Comparative%20Studies/David%20Buchman.htm. See also Alexander Berzin, “Islam from the Point of View of Buddhism” at: <https://studybuddhism.com/en/advanced-studies/history-culture/buddhism-islam-advanced/islam-from-the-point-of-view-of-buddhism>, and information about the webpages with similar content: http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/x/nav/n.html_1867868580.html.

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See footnote 1.

Nevad Kahteran

**Priznavanje modela postmodernog pluralizma
pogledom na islam sa stajališta dalekoistočnih tradicija
Dijalog između islama, hinduizma, budizma i konfucijanizma**

Sažetak

Kao bosanski pionir u području istočnjačke i komparativne filozofije, autor ovog eseja o razumijevanju osobno je posvećen kultiviranju novog filozofskog duha koji presijeca klasične granice i otvara svoje razumijevanje »univerzalnosti« mnoštvu kulturnih i intelektualnih historija. Utirući putove za uspostavu platforme islamsko-hinduističko-budističko-konfucijanskog dijaloga na Balkanu i ujedno združujući napore u vezi s onim što su već učinili u međuvremenu drugi istraživači u ovom području, te istražujući budističke, kineske i islamske studije u kontekstu trajnih izazova s kojima se suočavaju Indija, Kina i islamski svijet, autor vjeruje da će produbljivanje filozofskih horizonata u ovom pogledu biti uzbudljivo iskustvo i interkulturalna razmjena, uzimajući u obzir da je dijalog među njima nužniji nego ikad prije – napose kada dijalog povećava učinkovitost slušanja kao osnovu simbiotičke koegzistencije. Također, ovaj esej potcrtava značaj odnosa između suvremene islamske, kineske i budističke misli i civilizacije, kao i značaj islamskih djela u jeziku neokonfucijanstva i narastajućeg intelektualnog strujanja u Kini nazvanog Han Kitab te istaknutih kinesko-muslimanskih mislitelja kao što su Liu Zhi, Ma Zhu, Wang Daiyu i drugi. U ovome je radu također istaknuta interakcija između islamske, hinduističke i budističke misli. Konačno, autor je sumirao ono što je naučio od Tu Weiminga, Sachiko Murate, S. H. Nasra i drugih istaknutih učenjaka u vezi s jedinstvenom mješavinom budizma i konfucijanstva u njihovu odnosu s islamom, koja je omogućila njegovu pojavu i razvoj u Indiji i Kini dulje od jednog milenija, a posebno od sedamnaestog stoljeća naovamo. Oni koji su upoznati s islamskim jezicima pronaći će bogatstvo terminologije koja bi mogla pomoći u premošćivanju jaza između uključenih filozofskih i teoloških tradicija u potrazi za globalnim mirom. Konačno, presijecajući svjetove i identitete, autor bi želio predočiti zajednički univerzum uključenih diskursa koji je danas marginaliziran od strane tunelske vizije i kratkovidnosti, u ova huda vremena parohijalizma i uskogrudnosti bez presedana, umjesto ostajanja u akademskim strujanjima koja će neumitno poticati istinsko interkulturalno mišljenje i dijalog između civilizacija u odnosu na globalizaciju i kulturni pluralizam koji će utjelovljivati mudrost naših predšasnika u filozofiji te stvarati simbiotičko društvo za 21. stoljeće širom svijeta.

Ključne riječi

komparativna i islamska filozofija, zajedničkosti između islama i budizma, zajedničkosti između islama i konfucijanstva, Liu Zhi, *Han Kitab*

Nevad Kahteran

**Anerkennung des Modells des postmodernen Pluralismus
durch den Blick auf den Islam vom Standpunkt
der fernöstlichen Traditionen**

Ein Dialog zwischen Islam, Hinduismus, Buddhismus und Konfuzianismus

Zusammenfassung

Als bosnischer Pionier auf dem Gebiet der östlichen und komparativen Philosophie weicht sich der Autor dieses Essays über das Verständnis persönlich der Kultivierung eines neuen philosophischen Geistes, welcher sich über die klassischen Grenzen hinwegsetzt und seine Auffassung der „Universalität“ einer Vielzahl der kulturellen und intellektuellen Historien erschließt. Indem er den Weg zur Erarbeitung einer Plattform des islamisch-hinduistisch-buddhistisch-konfuzianischen Dialogs auf dem Balkan ebnet und sich zugleich dem anschließt, was inzwischen von anderen Forschern in diesem Bereich verwirklicht wurde, und indem er buddhistischen, chinesischen und islamischen Studien im Kontext der anhaltenden Herausforderungen für Indien, China und die islamische Welt auf den Grund geht, glaubt der Autor, dass die Erweiterung der philosophischen Horizonte in dieser Hinsicht eine spannende Erfahrung und ein interkultureller Austausch sein wird, wobei zu berücksichtigen ist, dass der Dialog unter ihnen notwendiger denn je ist – insbesondere wenn der Dialog die Effektivität des Zuhörens als Grundlage für eine symbiotische Koexistenz erhöht. Desgleichen unterstreicht dieser Essay die Tragweite der

Relation zwischen dem zeitgenössischen islamischen, chinesischen und buddhistischen Gedanken und der Zivilisation, als auch die Bedeutsamkeit der islamischen Werke in der Sprache des Neokonfuzianismus, wie auch die Bedeutung des Aufstiegs der intellektuellen Strömung in China namens Han Kitab sowie der prominenten chinesisch-muslimischen Denker wie Liu Zhi, Ma Zhu, Wang Daiyu und anderer. Die Interaktion zwischen dem islamischen, hinduistischen und buddhistischen Gedanken wird in dieser Arbeit ebenfalls hervorgehoben. Schließlich fasste der Autor zusammen, was er von Tu Weiming, Sachiko Murata, S. H. Nasr und anderen prominenten Gelehrten über die einzigartige Mischung aus Buddhismus und Konfuzianismus in deren Beziehung zum Islam gelernt hatte, der in Indien und China seit über einem Jahrtausend, und vor allem vom siebzehnten Jahrhundert an, zum Vorschein kommt und sich entfaltet. Diejenigen, die mit islamischen Sprachen vertraut sind, finden eine Fülle an Terminologie, welche die Kluft zwischen den beteiligten philosophischen und theologischen Traditionen auf ihrer Suche nach dem globalen Frieden zu überbrücken hilft. Indem er einen Querschnitt durch die Welten und Identitäten zieht, möchte der Verfasser selbst letztlich ein gemeinsames Universum von einbezogenen Diskursen vorstellen, das heutzutage, in diesen miserablen Zeiten des beispiellosen Parochialismus und der Engstirnigkeit, durch Tunnelblick und Kurzsichtigkeit beiseitegeschoben wird, anstatt akademischen Spuren nachzugehen, die unausbleiblich das wahre interkulturelle Denken und den Dialog zwischen den Zivilisationen in Bezug auf die Globalisierung und die kulturelle Pluralisierung fördern, also den Dialog, der die Weisheit unserer Vorgänger in der Philosophie verkörpert sowie eine weltweite symbiotische Gesellschaft für das 21. Jahrhundert schafft.

Schlüsselwörter

komparative und islamische Philosophie, Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Islam und Buddhismus, Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen Islam und Konfuzianismus, Liu Zhi, Han Kitab

Nevad Kahteran

La reconnaissance du modèle postmoderne de pluralisme à travers un regard sur l’Islam à partir de la perspective de la tradition orientale

Un dialogue entre l’islam, l’hindouisme, le bouddhisme et le confucianisme

Résumé

En tant pionnier bosniaque dans le domaine de la philosophie orientale et comparée, l’auteur de cet essai, qui porte sur la compréhension, s’est personnellement dévoué à façonner un esprit philosophique nouveau qui rompt avec les frontières classiques et ouvre sur une compréhension « universelle » des multiples histoires culturelles et intellectuelles. En frayant le chemin pour établir une plate-forme en vue d’un dialogue islamico-hindouistico-bouddhistico-confucéen dans les Balkans, et en joignant simultanément les efforts auxquels se sont entre-temps livrés les autres chercheurs dans le domaine, mais aussi en explorant les études bouddhiques, chinoises et islamiques dans le contexte des défis constants auxquels doivent faire face l’Inde, la Chine et le monde islamique, l’auteur affirme que l’élargissement des horizons philosophiques constituera, sous cet aspect, une expérience excitante et un échange interculturel, gardant à l’esprit que le dialogue est plus que jamais nécessaire – particulièrement lorsqu’il favorise l’efficacité de l’écoute en tant que fondement d’une coexistence symbiotique. De même, cet essai souligne l’importance des rapports entre les pensées et les civilisations contemporaines islamiques, chinoises, bouddhiques, et relève aussi l’importance des oeuvres islamiques dans la langue du néoconfucianisme, mais aussi la montée du courant intellectuel appelé Han Kitab avec des penseurs éminents chinois-musulmans tels que Lui Zhi, Ma Zhu, Wang Daiyu et bien d’autres. Ce travail fait également ressortir l’interaction entre la pensée islamique, hindouiste et bouddhique. Enfin, l’auteur résume ce qu’il a appris de Tu Weiming, Sachiko Murata, S. H. Nasr et bien d’autres savants éminents en ce qui concerne le rapprochement particulier du bouddhisme et du confucianisme dans leur rapport à l’islam, ce qui lui a par ailleurs permis d’apparaître et de se développer en Inde et en Chine pendant plus d’un millénaire, et spécialement depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu’à aujourd’hui. Ceux qui connaissent les langues islamiques trouveront une riche terminologie qui pourrait les aider à combler le fossé entre les traditions philosophiques et théologiques actives dans leur quête pour une paix globale. Enfin, en retranchant les mondes et les identités, l’auteur aimerait présenter un univers commun de discours pertinents aujourd’hui marginalisés par des visions courtes et atrophiées en ces temps misérables de parochialisme et d’étroitesse d’esprit sans précédent, et non pas s’en tenir aux courants

académiques qui encouragent, de manière inévitable, la réflexion et le dialogue interculturel entre les civilisations par rapport à la mondialisation et au pluralisme culturel qui vont intégrer la sagesse de nos prédécesseurs en philosophie et créer une société symbiotique pour le XXI^e siècle à l'échelle mondiale.

Mots-clés

philosophie comparée et islamique, points communs entre islam et bouddhisme, points communs entre islam et confucianisme, Liu Zhi, *Han Kitab*